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Jurisdiction of Criminal Courts

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We hope this information will be useful to you; reference to it will assist you with many of the questions that will arise in your tenure with county government. However, the *Tennessee Code Annotated* and other relevant laws or regulations should always be consulted before any action is taken based upon the contents of this document.

Please feel free to contact us if you have questions or comments regarding this information or any other CTAS website material.

Sincerely,

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Jurisdiction of Criminal Courts	3
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Jurisdiction of Criminal Courts

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The circuit courts have "exclusive original jurisdiction of all crimes and misdemeanors, either at common law or by statute, unless otherwise expressly provided by statute." T.C.A. § 16-10-102. The criminal and circuit courts have "original jurisdiction of all criminal matters not exclusively conferred by law on some other tribunal." T.C.A. § 40-1-108.

In addition to their original jurisdiction over felonies and misdemeanors, criminal courts have exclusive jurisdiction over special crime-related matters and noncriminal matters, including all matters relating to the seizure and destruction of intoxicating liquors when an offense against a state liquor law has been committed. T.C.A. § 57-9-105. Criminal court judges possess magistrate powers and may issue warrants for the arrest of a person charged with a public offense. T.C.A. §§ 40-5-101, 40-5-102.

Unless otherwise provided, the circuit courts have appellate jurisdiction in all criminal cases and actions originally tried in inferior courts "whether brought by appeal, certiorari, or in any other manner prescribed by law." T.C.A. § 16-10-112. Criminal courts have authority to grant extraordinary relief in appeals from courts of inferior jurisdiction. *Franks v. State*, 565 S.W.2d 36 (Tenn. Crim. App. 1977).

Criminal courts were also granted appellate jurisdiction over delinquency proceedings in the juvenile court by amendments to T.C.A. § 37-1-159 passed in 1997. These appeals are tried de novo by the criminal court.

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