

# IDAHO'S COURT STRUCTURE

## Idaho Supreme Court:

Chief Justice + 4 Associate Justices. Justices selected for staggered 6-year terms in a non-partisan, at-large election. This is the highest state court.

### Jurisdiction:

**Original Jurisdiction in:** (1) claims against State (advisory opinions); and (2) Extraordinary Writs.

**Appellate Jurisdiction in:** (1) Appeals from interim orders and final judgments of District Courts; and (2) Direct appeals from certain administrative agencies.

## Idaho Court of Appeals:

Chief Judge + 3 Associate Judges. Judges selected for staggered 6-year terms in a non-partisan, at-large election.

### Jurisdiction:

Limited to appeals from District Courts which are assigned to the Court of Appeals by the Supreme Court.

## County District Courts:

42 District Judges presently authorized. Judges have 4-year terms after non-partisan election within the judicial district. Decisions of the District Court may be appealed to the Idaho Supreme Court (which may elect to have the appeal instead heard by the Idaho Court of Appeals).

### Jurisdiction:

**Jurisdiction over:** Civil and criminal cases including: (1) Personal injury and other civil claims; (2) Contract disputes; (3) Property disputes; and (4) Felony criminal matters.

**Appellate jurisdiction over:** (1) Appeals from Magistrate Division Courts; (2) Appeals from state agencies and boards; and (3) Appeals from Small Claims Department Courts.

## County Magistrate Courts:

87 Magistrate Judges presently authorized. Judges initially appointed by district magistrates commission for 18 months; subsequent 4-year terms by county retention election. Decisions of the Magistrate Court may be appealed to the County District Court.

### Jurisdiction:

(1) Civil actions [i.e., personal injury, property disputes, contracts, etc.] up to \$10,000; (2) Re-trial of small claims cases; (3) Traffic cases; (4) Probate of decedent's estates; (5) Juvenile correction proceedings; (6) Child protective proceedings; (7) Misdemeanor criminal matters; (8) Arrest warrants, searches and seizures; (9) Preliminary hearings for probable cause on felony criminal complaints; and (10) Domestic relations.

## County Small Claims Courts:

Magistrate Judges sit for small claims matters.

### Jurisdiction:

Limited to civil actions up to \$4,000 over defendants located within the county. Attorneys not allowed in the trial of small claims actions. No jury trials in small claims cases. Decisions in Small Claims Court may be appealed to the County Magistrate Court. This is the lowest state court.

### Note:

Except for Small Claims Courts, each level of the court system hears appeals of disputed decisions from the next lower court.

The Idaho Court of Appeals only hears appeals from County District Courts that the Idaho Supreme Court decides will be heard by the Court of Appeals.

If either party disputes the decision of the Idaho Court of Appeals, that decision may be re-appealed to the Idaho Supreme Court.