

AUDIT TRAILS

Requirements

The Office of the State Courts Administrator (OSCA) conducts compliance audits of the Summary Reporting System (SRS) data. Audits determine compliance with the reporting requirements outlined in this manual. Further, audits verify the accuracy and reliability of SRS data submitted to the OSCA.

A county can be selected for an audit based on a prescribed rotation schedule or when the county/circuit requests additional judgeships. The OSCA must verify the SRS data before additional judgeships can be certified to the Legislature. On occasion, the OSCA will audit a county if there is a question of reliability of the SRS data.

During an audit, OSCA staff documents the information in the case files and compares their findings to the audit trail and SRS report maintained by the county. If discrepancies are discovered, the OSCA requires the county to submit amended SRS data. This ensures that the county is in compliance with all reporting requirements and provides for uniform reporting statewide.

If your county is selected to be audited, please make sure that all requested case files are pulled and audit trails (with the information identified in the Specifications Section below) are available for inspection. This step will expedite the audit process.

Specifications

All counties are required to maintain audit trails for each court division with the exception of civil traffic infractions. Audit trails link each activity reported on the monthly SRS report to specific case numbers and should validate whether the data was accurately reported to the OSCA for the SRS. The audit trail information may be in any form (e.g., printouts, worksheets) and may include the use of codes (a code sheet must be provided for data verification if codes are used). Regardless of the format developed, the following information must be retained for each reporting category on the SRS report:

Note: Counties reporting through the Offender Based Transaction System (OBTS) do not have to maintain audit trails for the circuit and county criminal data submitted through the OBTS. The OSCA will maintain and generate the audit trails when necessary. Any data reported to the OSCA that is not on the OBTS is required to be maintained by the county.

Court Division

This information refers to the various sections of the SRS report and includes the following:

- C Circuit Criminal - Defendants;
- C Circuit Criminal - Counts;
- C Circuit Criminal - Special Proceedings;
- C Domestic Relations;
- C Other Circuit Civil;
- C Circuit Probate;
- C Circuit Juvenile - Delinquency;
- C Circuit Juvenile - Dependency;
- C County Criminal - Defendants;
- C County Criminal - Special Proceedings;
- C County Civil; and
- C Criminal Traffic.

Activity Date

The date should reflect the month and year of activity. Noting the actual day within the month is optional.

Case Number and Citation Number

This refers to the sequential number assigned to the case.

Number of Defendants, Juveniles, or Parcels

The number of defendants (Circuit and County Criminal sections only), juveniles (Juvenile, Delinquency section only), or parcels (Other Circuit Civil section only), is required only in instances or jurisdictions where the case number does not reflect only one defendant, juvenile, or parcel. For example, co-defendants and multiple complaints filed on the same day against one person in the county criminal division.

Number of Counts and Citations (if applicable)

On the **Counts** portion of the circuit criminal SRS report, the number of counts for each case number should be linked to the appropriate case type and disposition category. In addition, citation numbers should be linked to the appropriate case type and disposition category of the SRS traffic report.

AUDIT TRAILS

Reporting Category

This information refers to the reporting categories listed on the SRS report and includes, but is not limited to:

- C Filings;
- C Specific disposition category if applicable (e.g., after trial - by jury convicted; dismissed before hearing);
- C Reopened cases;
- C Appeals filed;
- C Detention hearings;
- C Foster care review hearings; and
- C Bond hearings.

Specific Case Type

This category refers to the specific case type on the SRS report and includes, but is not limited to:

- C Capital Murder;
- C Burglary;
- C Dissolution;
- C Auto Negligence;
- C Probate;
- C Baker Act;
- C Substance Abuse Act;
- C Misdemeanors;
- C County Ordinances;
- C Small Claims; and
- C Replevins.

Due to operational diversity of the clerks offices, there is no standard format that must be followed in order to meet the audit trail requirements.

Quick Tip: When corrections are made to the database, or previously omitted data is discovered and entered in the case management system after the audit trail run date, audit trails should be regenerated, or manually adjusted to reflect the new data entered (and amended SRS reports should be prepared and forwarded to the OSCA). Otherwise, these changes will go unreported for SRS. Accordingly, it is recommended that procedures that provide for periodic audit trail updates be implemented (and amended SRS reports submitted to the OSCA when applicable) in order to ensure data accuracy. Monthly SRS data should then be reviewed for comparison to prior submissions and any reporting changes should be forwarded to the OSCA via an amended SRS report with changes highlighted to facilitate accurate data entry.

Retention

All counties are required to maintain the audit trail information for three years following the submission of the SRS data to the OSCA.

NOTES