

AUDIT TRAILS

Requirements

The Office of the State Courts Administrator (OSCA) conducts compliance audits of the Summary Reporting System (SRS) data. Audits help gauge compliance with the reporting requirements outlined in this manual.

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 compare 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 a uniform reporting system 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 report to specific case numbers. The audit trail information may be in any form (e.g., printouts, worksheets). The use of codes is permissible. 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 (OATS) do not have to maintain audit trails for the circuit and county criminal data submitted through the OATS. The OSCA will maintain and generate the audit trails when necessary. Any data reported to the OSCA that is not on the OATS should 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 or Juveniles

The number of defendants (circuit and county criminal sections only) or juveniles (juvenile division, delinquency only) is required only in instances or jurisdictions where the case number does not reflect one defendant or juvenile. For example, co-defendants or co-juveniles and multiple complaints filed on the same day against one person in the county criminal division.

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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 category and disposition category. In addition, citation numbers should be linked to the appropriate case type category and disposition category of the traffic SRS report.

Reporting Category

This information refers to the reporting categories on the SRS report and includes, but are 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 Category

This category refers to the specific case type category on the SRS report and includes, but are 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.

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Due to the diversity of the operations of the clerks' offices, there is no standard format that the clerks' offices must follow in order to meet the audit trail requirements. Each clerks' office has the option of developing the procedures that are best suited for its office.

Retention

All counties are required to maintain the audit trail information for three years following the submission of the SRS data to the OSCA, or sixty days after an audit has been conducted.