

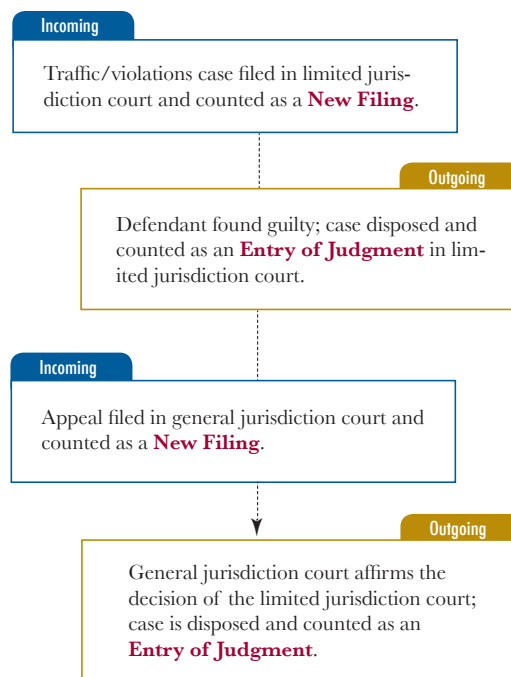
# Traffic/ Violations Section

Some cases shift from the jurisdiction of one court to the jurisdiction of another. In two-tiered court systems, traffic/violations cases originally filed and disposed in a court of limited jurisdiction

may be appealed to the court of general jurisdiction.

The example below demonstrates how a traffic/violations case can be processed and counted in two distinct court levels.

## Counting Traffic/Violations Cases in Multiple Jurisdictions



On the Web

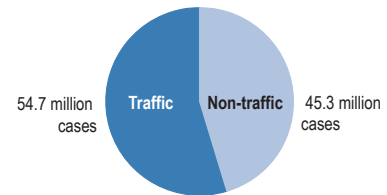


National Highway Traffic Safety Administration  
Traffic Laws and Regulations,  
Traffic Safety, Research

## Traffic/Violations Caseloads and Trends

Traffic/violations caseloads are composed of non-criminal traffic, parking, ordinance, and other violations. Nearly 55 of the 100 million cases filed, reopened, or reactivated in state trial courts during 2004 were traffic, parking, or ordinance violations cases—a rate of over 18,000 cases for every 100,000 residents of the U.S. To put that figure into perspective, the next highest population-adjusted rate is that of criminal cases at fewer than 7,000 cases per 100,000 residents. The sheer number of traffic cases demands a substantial commitment of resources on the part of state courts.

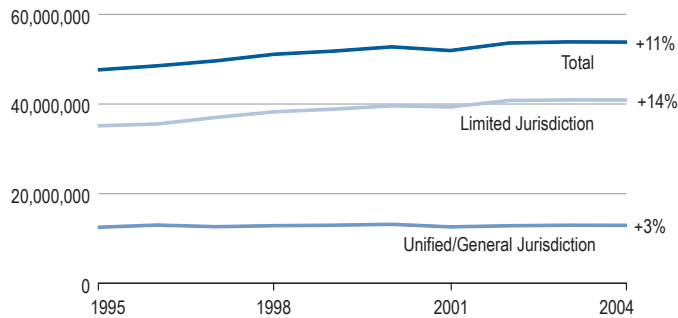
Traffic vs. Non-traffic Caseloads in State Trial Courts, 2004



Despite efforts in many states to handle these cases administratively outside the framework of the court, traffic caseloads continue to grow at an average pace comparable to that of the population, about 1 percent per year.



Incoming Traffic/Violations Cases in State Courts, by Jurisdiction, 1995-2004



The adjacent table shows the total number of incoming traffic and other violations cases in 18 states, as well as a population-adjusted rate of incoming cases. New Jersey's rate of over 67,000 towers above the next highest rate (Texas) and is three times greater than the median rate.

There appears to be little connection between the total number of incoming cases and the population of these 18 states. For example, Florida, the fourth most populous state, has the third lowest rate at 8,063. South Dakota's rate of 18,480 exceeds those of seven states on this table, all of whom ranked higher in terms of population.

Incoming Traffic, Parking & Ordinance Violations Caseloads and Rates in 18 States, 2004

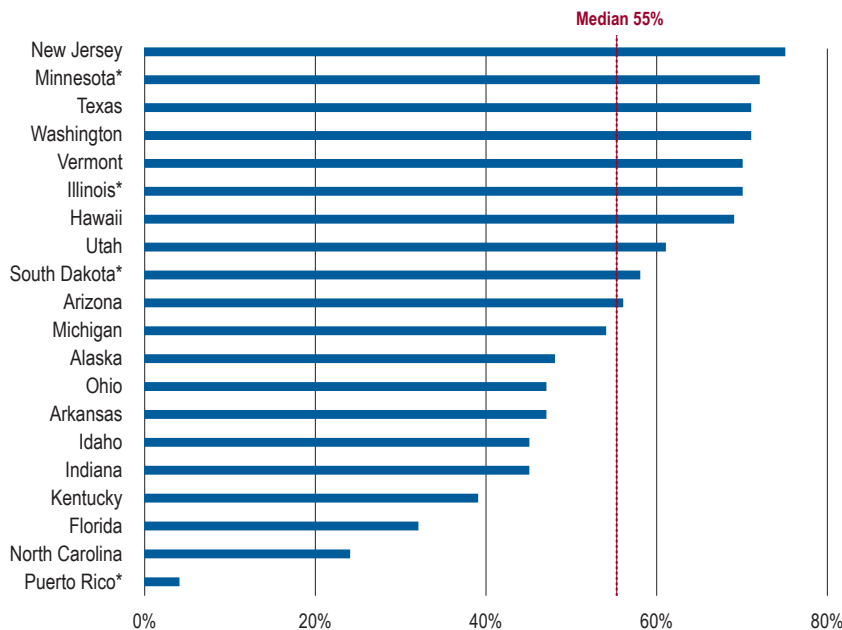
State	Incoming Traffic/Violations Cases		Population Rank
	Total	Per 100,000 Population	
New Jersey	5,870,235	67,483	10
Texas	9,026,577	40,136	2
Nevada	638,064	27,329	36
Washington	1,605,375	25,877	15
Arizona	1,448,420	25,217	18
Illinois	3,018,908	23,745	5
Arkansas	646,232	23,477	33
Vermont	143,378	23,074	50
Michigan	2,260,030	22,349	8
Utah	504,718	21,126	35
South Dakota	142,458	18,480	47
Ohio	1,859,197	16,225	7
Indiana	732,665	11,746	14
Wisconsin	563,703	10,232	20
North Carolina	749,014	8,769	11
Florida	1,402,736	8,063	4
New Hampshire	82,054	6,314	42
Puerto Rico	10,307	265	27
<b>Median</b>		<b>21,738</b>	



As indicated in the introduction to this section, traffic/violations cases represent about 55 percent of all trial court caseloads nationally. However, upon inspection of individual states, there are considerable variations in proportion.

The chart below displays traffic/violations cases as a percentage of all incoming cases in 20 states in 2004. Once again, New Jersey tops this list and reports the highest proportion of traffic/violations cases at 75 percent, twenty points higher than the median among these states.

Traffic/Violations Cases as a Percentage of All Incoming Cases in 20 States, 2004



\* These states have unified court systems.

NCS Resource



National Center for State Courts

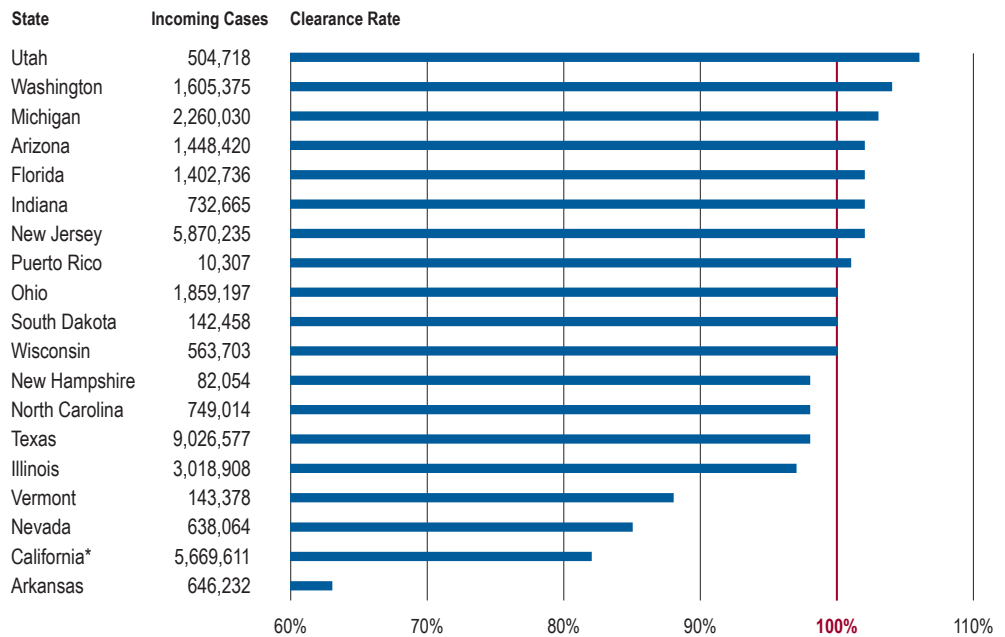
Traffic Citation  
Payments Online,  
State Links

## Traffic/Violations Clearance Rates and Composition

Clearance rates are especially important for traffic/violations caseloads due to the volume of cases reported in so many states. For example, a 98 percent clearance rate may appear to be quite reasonable for some case types, but if only 2 percent of the 9 million traffic/violations cases in Texas go unresolved, 180,000 cases will be added to their pending caseload in one year.

Despite the considerable size of the traffic/violations caseloads reported by the 19 states below, 11 states (58 percent) achieved clearance rates of 100 percent or more. Six of those 11 states had caseloads exceeding 1 million cases.

Traffic/Violations Clearance Rates in 19 States, 2004



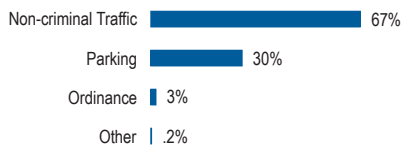
\* California's data include parking appeals but not parking violations.



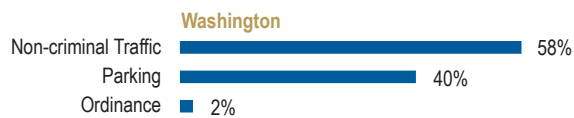
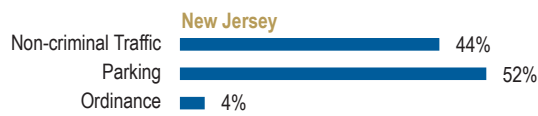
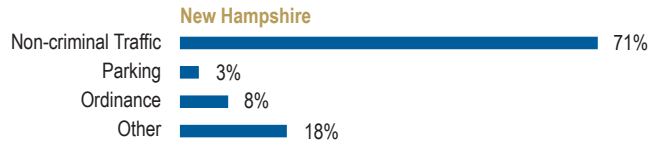
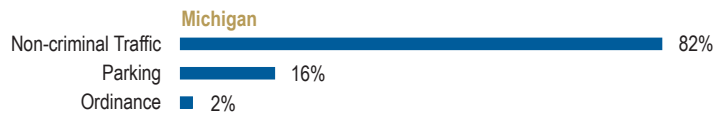
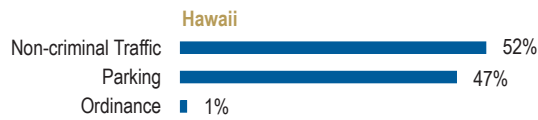
These charts show the composition of traffic/violations caseloads in seven states, in the aggregate and individually. Combined, two-thirds of these cases are non-criminal traffic and 30 percent are parking violations.

Clear differences appear when these states' compositions are shown separately. Non-criminal traffic cases range from 95 percent in Illinois to 44 percent in New Jersey. This is largely attributable to the varying methods used in the processing of parking caseloads (see next page).

Traffic/Violations Caseload Composition in 7 States, 2004



Traffic/Violations Caseload Composition in 7 States, 2004



## CSP Resource



National Center for State Courts

State Court Caseload  
Statistics, 2005  
Reported Grand Total State  
Trial Court Caseload, 2004

## ● Rerouting Parking Cases

The differing ways in which states handle traffic cases are borne out on the table below. A state that allows both contested and uncontested parking cases to be heard in its courts tends to have not only noticeably higher caseloads, but higher proportions of parking cases and per capita rates as well.

Alternatively, some states, such as Arizona, Nevada, and New Mexico, hear only contested parking cases. Illinois has removed all of its parking cases to an administrative agency and, in so doing, reduced its traffic/violations caseload by several million cases.

### Incoming Parking Violations Caseloads in 10 States, 2004

State	Incoming Parking Violation Cases			Type of Parking Case Jurisdiction
	Total	Percent of Traffic Caseload	Per 100,000 Population	
New Jersey	3,074,203	52%	35,396	Contested & Uncontested
Hawaii	184,982	47	14,656	Contested & Uncontested
Minnesota	628,230	44	12,327	Contested & Uncontested
Washington	634,928	40	10,229	Contested & Uncontested
Michigan	363,396	16	3,596	Contested & Uncontested
Arizona	136,361	9	2,376	Contested Only
New Hampshire	2,501	3	193	Contested & Uncontested
Nevada	13,850	2	594	Contested Only
New Mexico	1,603	1	84	Contested Only
Illinois	0	0	0	No Jurisdiction

