

Third Session Eleventh Parliament Republic of  
Trinidad and Tobago

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REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

**Act No. 12 of 2018**

[L.S.]

AN ACT to make jurisdiction for criminal matters exercisable in a division of the High Court to be known as "the Criminal Division" and to make jurisdiction for criminal and traffic matters exercisable in a division of Summary Courts to be known as "the District Criminal and Traffic Courts" and to make provision for matters connected therewith

*[Assented to 12th July, 2018]*

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Enactment      ENACTED by the Parliament of Trinidad and Tobago as follows:

PART I  
PRELIMINARY

Short title      **1.** This Act may be cited as the Criminal Division and District Criminal and Traffic Courts Act, 2018.

Commencement      **2.** This Act comes into operation on a date fixed by the President by Proclamation.

Interpretation      **3.** (1) In this Act—

No. 6 of 2016      “children matter” has the meaning assigned to it under section 3 of the Family and Children Division Act;

“Court Executive Administrator” means the person who, subject to the Chief Justice, is charged with responsibility for the administration of the Judiciary and heads the Department of Court Administration;

“Criminal Court” means the Criminal Division of the High Court established under section 4;

“Criminal Court Judge” means a Justice Judge referred to in section 8(1);

“Criminal Court Master” means a Master referred to in section 8(2);

“criminal matter” means a criminal offence but does not include a children matter;

“Department of Court Administration” means the administrative arm of the Judiciary of Trinidad and Tobago which is headed by the Court Executive Administrator of the Judiciary and comprises various administrative units;

“Deputy Court Executive Administrator” means the Deputy Court Executive Administrator referred to in section 19(1);

“District Criminal and Traffic Court” means a Summary Court referred to in section 12;

“District Court Judge” means a Magistrate referred to in section 13;

“Magistracy Registrar and Clerk of the Court” means a person holding the office of Magistracy Registrar and Clerk of the Court;

“Senior Magistracy Registrar and Clerk of the Court” means a person holding the office of Senior Magistracy Registrar and Clerk of the Court;

“traffic violation” has the meaning assigned to it under the Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic Act, but does not include a children Chap. 48:50 matter.

(2) In any written law in relation to proceedings in respect of a criminal matter or traffic violation, a reference to—

(a) the High Court shall be read and construed as a reference to the Criminal Division of the High Court;

(b) a Court of summary jurisdiction or a Magistrate’s Court or a Summary Court shall be read and construed as a reference to a District Criminal and Traffic Court;

(c) a Judge shall be read and construed as a reference to a Criminal Court Judge;

(d) a Master shall be read and construed as a reference to a Criminal Court Master;

- (e) a Magistrate shall be read and construed as a reference to a District Court Judge;
- (f) a Clerk of the Court shall be read and construed as a reference to a Senior Magistracy Registrar and Clerk of the Court; or
- (g) a Clerk of the Peace shall be read and construed as a reference to a Magistracy Registrar and Clerk of the Court.

## PART II

### THE CRIMINAL DIVISION OF THE HIGH COURT

Establishment of  
Criminal Division

4. There shall be a Criminal Division of the High Court which shall comprise a court known as “the Criminal Court”.

Authority and  
jurisdiction in  
criminal matters  
exercisable by the  
Criminal Court

5. On the commencement of this Act, authority and jurisdiction in all criminal matters exercisable by the High Court or a Court of summary jurisdiction shall be exercisable by the Criminal Court.

Sittings of the  
Criminal Court

6. (1) Sittings of the Criminal Court shall be held at such locations and at such times as the Chief Justice, in consultation with a Judge assigned to that Court, may appoint in accordance with the Supreme Court of Judicature Act.

Chap. 4:01

(2) Notwithstanding subsection (1), the Criminal Court may, when required and appropriate, sit at any time, and may conduct hearings by telephone, video conference or any other appropriate electronic means.

Assignment of  
Judges and  
Masters to the  
Criminal Court

7. (1) The Chief Justice may assign to the Criminal Court such Puisne Judges and Masters as he thinks fit.

(2) A Puisne Judge or Master assigned to the Criminal Court under subsection (1) may apply to the Chief Justice for reassignment to any other Court within the High Court.

8. (1) A Judge when sitting in the Criminal Court shall be known as “a Criminal Court Judge”.

Criminal Court  
Judge and  
Criminal  
Court Master

(2) A Master when sitting in the Criminal Court shall be known as “a Criminal Court Master”.

9. A Criminal Court Judge or a Criminal Court Master shall, in addition to the powers conferred under the Supreme Court of Judicature Act, have all the powers exercisable by a Magistrate in criminal matters under—

Powers of a Criminal  
Court Judge and a  
Criminal Court  
Master

(a) the Summary Courts Act, including the power to hear indictable offences summarily; and

Chap. 4:20

(b) any other written law.

10. (1) A Criminal Court Master shall exercise all the authority and jurisdiction of a Judge which are conferred on Masters under the Supreme Court of Judicature Act.

Authority and  
jurisdiction of  
Criminal Court  
Masters

(2) Any order made by a Criminal Court Master shall have the same effect as if it had been made by a Criminal Court Judge.

11. Where a Criminal Court Master exercises jurisdiction in relation to any criminal matter, he shall have all the rights, immunities and privileges of a Criminal Court Judge in relation to that matter.

Rights, immunities  
and privileges  
of Criminal  
Court Master

### PART III

#### THE DISTRICT CRIMINAL AND TRAFFIC COURTS

12. A Summary Court when exercising its authority and jurisdiction in relation to a criminal matter or a traffic violation, shall be known as “a District Criminal and Traffic Court”.

District Criminal  
and Traffic Courts

13. A Magistrate when sitting in a District Criminal and Traffic Court, shall be known as “a District Court Judge”.

District Court  
Judges

Hearings of District  
Criminal and Traffic  
Courts

**14.** A District Criminal and Traffic Court may conduct hearings by telephone, video conference or any other appropriate electronic means.

Senior Magistracy  
Registrar and Clerk  
of the Court

**15.** (1) There shall be in the Judicial and Legal Service a Senior Magistracy Registrar and Clerk of the Court.

(2) The Senior Magistracy Registrar and Clerk of the Court shall be *ex officio* a Justice of the Peace and Commissioner of Oaths.

(3) The Senior Magistracy Registrar and Clerk of the Court shall report to the Chief Magistrate.

Magistracy  
Registrars and  
Clerks of the Court

**16.** (1) A Magistracy Registrar and Clerk of the Court shall be *ex officio* a Justice of the Peace and Commissioner of Oaths.

(2) A Magistracy Registrar and Clerk of the Court shall report to the Senior Magistracy Registrar and Clerk of the Court.

Functions and duties  
of the Senior  
Magistracy Registrar  
and Clerk of the  
Court and  
Magistracy  
Registrars and  
Clerks of the Court

**17.** The functions and duties of the Senior Magistracy Registrar and Clerk of the Court and a Magistracy Registrar and Clerk of the Court are to—

- (a) supervise employees of a District Criminal and Traffic Court who are engaged in legal, *quasi-judicial* and other related duties and ensure compliance with the law;
- (b) be the Keeper of the Record of a District Criminal and Traffic Court;
- (c) be the custodian of anything detained by a District Court Judge in accordance with any written law;
- (d) perfect orders of a District Criminal and Traffic Court;
- (e) certify extracts of the proceedings of a District Criminal and Traffic Court;
- (f) certify appeals proceedings of a District Criminal and Traffic Court for transmission to the Court of Appeal;

- (g) fix and grant bail;
- (h) take and witness oaths;
- (i) draft or direct the drafting of complaints;
- (j) carry out any other function or duty required by an order of a District Criminal and Traffic Court, Practice Directions, Rules of Court or any other written law; and
- (k) perform any other functions or duties pertaining to the operation of a District Criminal and Traffic Court as may be required for the operations of that Court.

#### PART IV

##### ADMINISTRATION OF THE CRIMINAL DIVISION OF THE HIGH COURT AND THE DISTRICT CRIMINAL AND TRAFFIC COURTS

18. (1) There shall be established an administration department for the Criminal Division of the High Court and the District Criminal and Traffic Courts which shall be known as “the Criminal and Traffic Court Administration Department” and which shall be a subdepartment of the Department of Court Administration.

Establishment of the  
Criminal and Traffic  
Court Administration  
Department

(2) The Criminal and Traffic Court Administration Department shall comprise:

- (a) a Human Resource Management Unit;
- (b) a Finance and Accounts Unit;
- (c) a Fines and Fees Unit;
- (d) a Records Management Unit;
- (e) a Court Reporting Unit;
- (f) a Statistical and Evaluation Unit;
- (g) a Drug Treatment Court Unit;
- (h) a Criminal Court Information Communications Technology Unit;

- (i) a Witness Support Unit;
- (j) a Bail Management Unit;
- (k) a Court Office Unit; and
- (l) such other units as may be determined by the Chief Justice.

Deputy Court  
Executive  
Administrator

**19.** (1) The Criminal and Traffic Court Administration Department shall be headed by a Deputy Court Executive Administrator who may be—

- (a) a public officer employed; or
- (b) employed on contract by the Court Executive Administrator for a term of up to five years but be eligible for re-engagement,

on terms and conditions equal to those of a Deputy Permanent Secretary and shall report to the Court Executive Administrator.

(2) The Deputy Court Executive Administrator shall have overall responsibility for the administration of the Criminal and Traffic Court Administration Department and may assign staff of the Criminal and Traffic Court Administration Department to the Criminal Court or a District Criminal and Traffic Court.

Criminal Division  
Administrator and  
District Criminal and  
Traffic Court  
Administrator

**20.** The Deputy Court Executive Administrator shall be assisted by a Criminal Division Administrator and a District Criminal and Traffic Court Administrator, both of whom shall possess the appropriate training and experience as required by the Judiciary.

Staff of Criminal  
and Traffic Court  
Administration  
Department

**21.** The Criminal and Traffic Court Administration Department shall, in addition to judicial officers, be staffed with an appropriate number of suitably qualified persons as determined from time to time by the Court Executive Administrator and shall include—

- (a) public officers; and

- (b) an appropriate number of other persons engaged on contract by the Court Executive Administrator and who shall hold office for a term not exceeding five years, but may be eligible for re-engagement.

**22.** (1) The Criminal Court and the District Criminal and Traffic Courts shall have in each location, a Court Manager who shall be responsible for the management of the particular location and may be assisted by Assistant Court Managers.

(2) The Court Executive Administrator shall assign Court Managers and Assistant Court Managers to the Criminal Court and to a District Criminal and Traffic Court.

(3) Notwithstanding subsection (1), the Court Executive Administrator may assign an Assistant Court Manager to a District Criminal and Traffic Court and the Assistant Court Manager shall be responsible for the management of the District Criminal and Traffic Court.

(4) The Court Managers of the Criminal Court shall report to the Criminal Division Administrator and the Court Managers of the District Criminal and Traffic Courts shall report to the District Criminal and Traffic Court Administrator.

(5) The Assistant Court Managers of the Criminal Court shall report to the Court Manager of the Criminal Court and the Assistant Court Managers of District Criminal and Traffic Courts shall report to the Court Manager of the District Criminal and Traffic Court.

## PART V

### MISCELLANEOUS

**23.** A member of staff of the Criminal Court or a District Criminal and Traffic Court shall, prior to the assumption of duty, make an oath or affirmation of secrecy before a Judge or Justice of the Peace.

Rules

**24.** (1) The Rules Committee established under section 77 of the Supreme Court of Judicature Act may make Rules of Court—

- (a) establishing a special criminal court procedure for the management of case types and offences referred to in subsection (2);
- (b) for the hearing of traffic violations; and
- (c) generally for carrying this Act into effect.

(2) The Chief Justice may, by Practice Direction, determine the case types and offences which are appropriate for the special criminal court procedure provided for in Rules of Court made under subsection (1)(a).

(3) Rules made under this section shall be subject to negative resolution of Parliament.

Consequential  
amendments  
Chap. 6:01

**25.** The Judicial and Legal Service Act is amended to the extent as is specified in the Schedule.

#### SCHEDULE

(Section 25)

#### CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS

| <i>First Column</i>                            | <i>Second Column</i>                                                                                                                                                |
|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The Judicial and Legal Service Act, Chap. 6:01 | In the Second Schedule by inserting before the words “Magistracy Registrar and Clerk of the Court”, the words “Senior Magistracy Registrar and Clerk of the Court”. |

Passed in the House of Representatives this 6th day of June, 2018.

J. SAMPSON-MEIGUEL

*Clerk of the House*

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Passed in the Senate this 21st day of June, 2018.

B. CAESAR  
*Clerk of the Senate (Ag.)*

Senate amendments were agreed to by the House of  
Representatives this 29th day of June, 2018.

J. SAMPSON-MEIGUEL  
*Clerk of the House*