

Common Pleas Court

“Common pleas court is the highest level trial court in Ohio.

I’m Tom Hodson, and I’m a retired common pleas court judge.

There’s a general division, there’s a probate division, there’s a juvenile division, and a domestic relations division.

Criminal felony cases, civil cases of major consequence, those are in the general division of common pleas court.

Domestic relations judges, they handle divorces, and dissolutions of marriage, which is Ohio’s version of no fault divorce in Ohio. They handle separation agreements. But they also handle the designation of custody, parental rights and responsibilities for children, and monitor child support as a result of domestic relations cases.

A probate division handles wills, trusts, people’s estates, guardianships that are set up to protect people.

Probate judge also issues marriage licenses.

Then there’s the juvenile judge, and the juvenile judge handles crimes of juveniles up ‘til they’re 18 years of age.

The juvenile court judge handles abuse cases and neglect cases. So, the juvenile court judge acts as the protector of the child, works very closely with children’s services in a particular county to make sure the children are safe and secure.

Judges look at cases without bias, neutrally. They must apply the law fairly and impartially.”