

## Rules Regarding Case Numbers Used by People's Courts

These rules are made in order to unify the formation, usage and management of the People's Courts' case numbers in accordance with the relevant laws, administrative regulations, judicial interpretations, regulative documents of the Supreme People's Court, and current practices.

### I. General Rules

**Article 1** "Case number(s)" referred to in these rules are brief symbols used to identify the category and order of the cases decided by courts at each level in China's judicial hierarchy. Case numbers are formed from Chinese characters, Arabic numerals and parentheses.

**Article 2** The basic elements of a case number are: Year of Acceptance, Code of Court, Code of Category, and Number of the Case. "Year of Acceptance" means the calendar year when a case is accepted, and is indicated by Arabic numerals. "Code of Court" means the brief symbol of the court hearing a case and is indicated by Chinese characters and Arabic numerals. "Code of Category" means the abbreviation of the category of a case, indicated by Chinese characters. "Number of the Case" is the sequential number assigned in accordance with the date when a case was accepted by the court and is indicated by Arabic numerals.

**Article 3** The arrangement of the basic elements shall be: "(+year of acceptance+)" + code of court + Code of Category + number of the case + "number".

The case number for each case shall be unique.

### II. Code of Court

**Article 4** The Code of Court for the Supreme People's Court is "Zuigaofa" ( "最高法" ).

The Code of Court of the high court of each province, autonomous region and municipality directly under the Central Government is identical to the abbreviation of the province, autonomous region or municipalities where it is located, except for those courts provided for in the third clause.

The Code of Courts for the High People's Court of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, the Military Court of the People's Liberation Army, and the Branch Court of the High People's Court of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region in the Production and Construction Corps are "Nei" ( "内" ), "Jun" ( "军" ), and "Bing" ( "兵" ) respectively.

**Article 5** The Code of Courts of intermediate courts and basic level<sup>1</sup> courts are formed by the codes of the high court above them and their respective numerical codes.

The numerical codes of intermediate and basic level courts shall be respectively indicated by either two or four Arabic numerals, and comply with the following rules:

1. The intermediate courts established according to prefecture-level<sup>2</sup> areas, e.g. prefecture-level municipalities, regions, autonomous prefectures and leagues; and basic level courts established according to county-level areas, e.g. counties, autonomous counties, county-level cities, banners, autonomous banners, municipal districts, forestry districts and special districts, shall be assigned numeral codes identical to the middle two numbers or the last four numbers of the code of their corresponding administrative area

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<sup>1</sup> The official translation for "基层" is unclear.

<sup>2</sup> The official translation for "地级" is unclear. So are the translations for "地区", "盟", "旗", "自治旗", "林区" and "特区".

(i.e. the tiered code consisting of 3 tiers and 6 numbers).

2. The intermediate courts under the municipalities directly under the Central Government, the Military Court of the People's Liberation Army, and the Branch Court of the High People's Court of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region in the Production and Construction Corps shall be assigned numeral codes from 01 to 20.
3. The specialized intermediate courts for railways, the admiralty, intellectual property, oil fields, forestry, and agricultural cultivation under the high courts of provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the Central Government; the intermediate courts with jurisdictions that cross administrative borders and that are governed by high courts of provinces and autonomous regions; and the intermediate courts established for courts of the county level administrative areas directly led by provinces (autonomous regions) shall be assigned numeral codes 71, 72, 73, 74, 75-80, 81-85, 87-95 and 96-99.
4. The basic level courts<sup>3</sup> under the Military Court of the People's Liberation Army and under the Branch Court of High People's Court of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region in the Production and Construction Corps, and the basic level courts for railways, oil fields, forestry, and agricultural cultivation that are under specialized intermediate courts (within the jurisdiction of the same high court) for railways, oil fields, forestry, and agricultural cultivation shall be assigned a four digit numerical code with the first two digits being identical to the first two numbers of their respective intermediate courts, and the last two digits ranging from 01 to 40.
5. If a prefecture-level municipality does not have county-level administrative areas under it, the basic level courts under its intermediate court shall be assigned four digit numerical codes whose first two digits will be identical to the intermediate court, and the last two digits will range from 71 to 80.
6. For those basic level railway courts that are located within the jurisdiction of the same high court and do not have an intermediate railway court above them, their four digit numerical codes shall begin with the numbers '86,' and the last two digits of the code will range from 01 to 20.
7. The basic level forestry and agricultural cultivation courts for whom the intermediate courts above them are not forestry or agricultural cultivation courts, and the basic level courts established specially for development zones, new areas, parks,<sup>4</sup> reservoir areas and mining areas shall be assigned a four digit numerical code whose first two digits are identical to the intermediate court above them, and the last two digits will range from 91 to 99.

The intermediate and basic level courts mentioned in No. 2-7 of the clauses above, when under the same high court or intermediate court, shall receive a digit as required by certain factors including the order of establishment and the organizational system of the relevant courts.

**Article 6** In identifying which province, autonomous region or municipality's high court is above an intermediate or basic level court, the sole factor to be considered is the unified

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<sup>3</sup> These can also be referred to as low-level courts.

<sup>4</sup> Original text is “园区”, a highly vague word. Usually it is combined with words like “工业”, “创业” and “文化”, then they can be translated as “industrial park”, “enterprise park” or “cultural park”.

management of personnel, funds and property.

“The intermediate court above them” as mentioned in No.7, second clause of Article 5 means the intermediate court that principally hears the relevant basic level court’s appellate cases.<sup>5</sup>

### **III. Code of Category**

**Article 7** In identifying the Code of Category of a case, the factors to be considered are the characters of the relevant legal issues and the procedure applied to the case.

The Code of Category shall be brief and shall appropriately reflect the core characteristic of the category. A Code of Category shall consist of no more than three Chinese characters.

The Code of Category for each category shall be unique.

**Article 8** For a consolidated case where more than one kind of procedure is used, the Code of Category shall be determined by the issue that must be decided first and the procedure applied to that issue.

### **IV. Number of the Case**

**Article 9** The numbers of the cases shall be counted separately for the cases heard by different courts, or cases heard by the same court but belonging to different categories.

**Article 10** The numbers for cases under the same Code of Category shall be numbered according to the order of acceptance by presiding courts within the same calendar year with sequential natural numbers, except as provided in the next clause.

The number of the case for criminal cases under review shall consist of a fixed length of eight numbers, which shall be formed randomly by the court hearing the review case. Sequential numbering is not allowed.

### **V. Management of Case Numbers**

**Article 11** The basic elements, specifications and rules for the formation of case numbers shall be uniformly made by the Supreme People’s Court.

**Article 12** The Code of Courts for the High People’s Courts of the provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the Central Government, the Military Court of the People’s Liberation Army, and the Branch Court of High People’s Court of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region in the Production and Construction Corps, and of the intermediate courts and basic level court below them shall be announced regularly and uniformly by the Supreme People’s Court.

**Article 13** When administrative areas have changed but their corresponding intermediate and basic level courts have not been adjusted accordingly, the Code of Courts shall be formed in compliance with the code of the administrative area before the change occurred.

When changes in the circumstances specified in the second clause of Article 5 result in changes to the intermediate or basic level courts, the codes of courts shall be formed according to the changed circumstances and in compliance of the rules in Article 5.

**Article 14** The Supreme People’s Court shall make separate rules for the categories of cases and their codes in detail.

**Article 15** When the formulation, modification or abolishment of laws or administrative regulations cause changes in the categorization of cases, the Supreme People’s Court shall modify the categories of cases and the codes assigned to them in a timely manner.

When the Supreme People’s Court’s formulation, modification or abolishment of judicial interpretations or regulative documents might cause changes in the categorization of cases, the

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<sup>5</sup> Within the same jurisdiction.

categories of cases and the codes assigned to them shall be adjusted accordingly.

**Article 16** The department responsible for accepting cases or similar duties in each court shall be responsible for the specific formation of case numbers for each case.

#### **VI. Supplementary Provisions**

**Article 17** These rules shall enter into force on January 1st, 2016.

These rules shall preempt the previous regulations issued by the Supreme People's Court concerning case numbers that are inconsistent with these rules.

For the cases that have been assigned case numbers before these rules come into force and have not been finished by the effective date, their case numbers shall not be changed by these rules.

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