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Latvian

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National ordinary courts

Latvia

This section provides you with information on the organisation of ordinary courts in Latvia.

Ordinary courts: introduction

In Latvia, judicial power is exercised by **city and district courts**, **regional courts** and **the Supreme Court**.

Civil and criminal proceedings in Latvia can be heard in 40 courts, which are divided into **three tiers**: there are 34 city or district courts (*rajonu vai pilsētu tiesas*), five regional courts (*apgabaltiesas*), and the Supreme Court (*Augstākā tiesa*).

The city and district courts in Latvia are:

Within the territorial jurisdiction of **Kurzeme Regional Court (*Kurzemes apgabaltiesa*)**:

Kuldīga District Court (*Kuldīgas rajona tiesa*);

Liepāja City Court (*Liepājas tiesa*);

Saldus District Court (*Saldus rajona tiesa*);

Talsi District Court (*Talsu rajona tiesa*);

Ventspils City Court (*Ventspils tiesa*);

Within the territorial jurisdiction of **Latgale Regional Court (*Latgales apgabaltiesa*)**:

Balvi District Court (*Balvu rajona tiesa*);

Daugavpils City Court (*Daugavpils tiesa*);

Krāslava District Court (*Krāslavas rajona tiesa*);

Ludza District Court (*Ludzas rajona tiesa*);

Preiļi District Court (*Preiļu rajona tiesa*);

Rēzekne City Court (*Rēzeknes tiesa*);

Within the territorial jurisdiction of **Rīga Regional Court (*Rīgas apgabaltiesa*)**:

Jūrmala City Court (*Jūrmalas pilsētas tiesa*);

Ogre District Court (*Ogres rajona tiesa*);

City of Rīga Central District Court (*Rīgas pilsētas Centra rajona tiesa*);

City of Rīga Kurzeme District Court (*Rīgas pilsētas Kurzemes rajona tiesa*);

City of Rīga Latgale District Court (*Rīgas pilsētas Latgales priekšpilsētas tiesa*);

City of Rīga Vidzeme District Court (*Rīgas pilsētas Vidzemes priekšpilsētas tiesa*);

City of Rīga Zemgale District Court (*Rīgas pilsētas Zemgales priekšpilsētas tiesa*);

City of Rīga Northern District Court (*Rīgas pilsētas Ziemeļu rajona tiesa*);

Rīga District Court (*Rīgas rajona tiesa*);

Sigulda City Court (*Siguldas tiesa*);

Within the territorial jurisdiction of **Vidzeme Regional Court (*Vidzemes apgabaltiesa*)**:

Alūksne District Court (*Alūksnes rajona tiesa*);

Cēsis District Court (*Cēsu rajona tiesa*);

Gulbene District Court (*Gulbenes rajona tiesa*);

Limbaži District Court (*Limbažu rajona tiesa*);

Madona District Court (*Madonas rajona tiesa*);

Valka District Court (*Valkas rajona tiesa*);

Valmiera District Court (*Valmieras rajona tiesa*);

Within the territorial jurisdiction of **Zemgale Regional Court (*Zemgales apgabaltiesa*)**:

Aizkraukle District Court (*Aizkraukles rajona tiesa*);

Bauska District Court (*Bauskas rajona tiesa*);

Dobeles District Court (*Dobeles rajona tiesa*);

Jelgava City Court (*Jelgavas tiesa*);

Jēkabpils District Court (*Jēkabpils rajona tiesa*);

Tukums District Court (*Tukuma rajona tiesa*).

Administrative proceedings are heard by:

the District Administrative Court (*Administratīvā rajona tiesa*);

the Regional Administrative Court (*Administratīvā apgabaltiesa*);

the Administrative Affairs Division of the Supreme Court Senate (*Augstākās tiesas Senāta Administratīvo lietu departaments*).

The territorial jurisdiction of the **District Administrative Court** and the **Regional Administrative Court** covers the entire administrative territory of Latvia in each case. The District Administrative Court has five courthouses, one in each judicial region, i.e. one each in Rīga, Jelgava, Rēzekne, Valmiera and Liepāja.

Jurisdiction by subject-matter

Pursuant to the [Law on criminal procedure](#), a city or district court hears all criminal proceedings as the court of first instance. The City of Rīga Vidzeme District Court has jurisdiction as court of first instance over criminal proceedings whose files include matters of state secrecy. A ruling of a district or city court

appealed against under the full appeals procedure (*apelācija*) is considered by a regional court as the appellate court. Any judgment of any lower court may be appealed on a point of law only (*kasācija*) to the Senate of the Supreme Court. In city or district courts, criminal proceedings are heard by a single judge. If the criminal proceedings are particularly complex, the president of the court of first instance may determine that the case is to be tried by a panel of three of that court's judges. Criminal appeals, whether full appeals or appeals on a point of law, are heard by a panel of judges.

According to the [Law on civil procedure](#), proceedings are considered at first instance by a district or city court, except in the case of proceedings which by law are considered in a regional court. Claims for undisputed enforcement of obligations (*bezstrīdus piespiedu izpildīšana*) and enforcement of obligations on court notice (*saistību piespiedu izpildīšana brīdinājuma kārtībā*) are considered by the land registry office of the relevant district or city court. Regional courts consider the following proceedings as courts of first instance:

proceedings in which there is a dispute over the right of ownership of immovable property, with the exception of the division of property between spouses;
proceedings arising from the law of obligations, if the amount of the claim exceeds LVL 150 000;
proceedings concerning the protection of patent rights, trademarks and protected geographical indications;
proceedings concerning the insolvency and liquidation of credit institutions.

According to the Civil Procedure Law, if a case combines several claims of which some fall within the jurisdiction of a district or city court, while others fall within that of a regional court, or a city or district court has accepted a counterclaim which falls within the jurisdiction of a regional court, the case is heard before the regional court. Riga Regional Court has jurisdiction as court of first instance over civil cases whose files contain a matter of State secrecy. In the court of first instance, civil cases are heard by a single judge, whereas on appeal (full appeal or appeal on a point of law) they are heard by a panel.

Cases concerning administrative infringements are heard by district or city courts and regional courts having jurisdiction in civil and criminal matters.

Pursuant to the [Latvian Administrative Infringements Code](#), a decision adopted by a higher authority may be challenged in a district or city court. A ruling by the judge of a district or city court may be appealed to a regional court, if the Latvian Administrative Infringements Code explicitly provides for this. A ruling of an appellate court in administrative infringement proceedings cannot be appealed and takes effect on the day it is handed down.

Pursuant to the [Law on administrative procedure](#), administrative proceedings are heard at first instance in a courthouse of the District Administrative Court, unless the law provides otherwise. If proceedings are heard in the District Administrative Court as court of first instance, and that court needs to verify information which involves a matter of State secrecy, the proceedings are heard in the courthouse of the District Administrative Court in Riga. If the law provides that administrative proceedings are to be heard at first instance by the Regional Administrative Court or the Administrative Affairs Division of the Supreme Court Senate rather than by the District Administrative Court, the relevant application is to be submitted to the Regional Administrative Court or the Supreme Court Senate as the case may be. A party in administrative proceedings may lodge a full appeal against a judgment or ancillary judgment of the court of first instance, except if the law provides that the judgment cannot be appealed, or can be appealed only on a point of law. A District Administrative Court judgment that has not yet taken effect may be appealed before the Regional Administrative Court. A party in administrative proceedings may lodge an appeal on a point of law against a judgment or ancillary judgment of the appellate court if the court has infringed substantive or procedural rules or has exceeded its remit during the proceedings. In the court of first instance, administrative proceedings are heard by a single judge or a panel of judges, whereas in a court of appeal—full appeal or appeal on a point of law—they are heard by a panel.

Pursuant to the [Law on patents](#), Riga Regional Court hears the following cases concerning the legal protection of inventions in civil proceedings, as court of first instance:

cases concerning the restoration of rights to a patent;
cases concerning the declaration of a patent as invalid;
cases concerning pre-use rights;
cases concerning the infringement of a patent;
cases concerning the declaration of an infringement of a patent as null and void;
cases concerning the granting of a licence, the contractual provisions of a licence or compliance with those provisions;
cases concerning the right to compensation for the inability to use an invention publicly.

Pursuant to the [Law on designs](#), Riga Regional Court hears the following disputes concerning the legal protection of designs as court of first instance:

disputes over the recognition of rights to a design;
disputes over a finding that the registration of a design is invalid;
disputes over illegal use of a design (infringement of a design);
disputes over the granting of a licence, the contractual provisions of a licence or compliance with those provisions.

The Supreme Court comprises the **Senate**, which has three divisions (Division of Civil Cases, Division of Criminal Cases and Division of Administrative Cases) and two **chambers** (the Chamber of Civil Cases and Chamber of Criminal Cases). The chambers hear full appeals against judgments given at first instance by regional courts. The Senate is the court that hears appeals on points of law against all judgments of district or city courts and regional courts, and is the court of first instance for cases relating to decisions of the Council of the State Audit Office (*Valsts kontroles padome*) adopted in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 55 of the Law on the State Audit Office. Cases are heard in each chamber by a panel composed of three judges. In the Senate of the Supreme Court, cases are heard by a panel of three judges or, in certain cases prescribed in law, in extended composition.

Legal databases

Name and URL of database

[National Courts Portal](#)

[Supreme Court](#)

Is access to the database free of charge?

Yes, access is **free of charge**.

Content of the database in brief

The National Courts Portal contains a selection of judgments in civil and criminal proceedings by all ordinary courts and also judgments of administrative courts. The information can be found in the sections *Tiesu nolēmumi* ('Court rulings') and *E-Pakalpojumi* ('e-services').

The Supreme Court Portal contains an archive of case-law rulings which contains both topical Senate rulings and compilations of case-law. The information can be found in the section *Tiesu informācija* ('Judicial information').

Background

The information published in the National Courts Portal and the Senate rulings and compilations of case-law published in the portal of the Supreme Court are currently available only in Latvian.

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