

14th Judicial District
CourTools Measure 2: Clearance Rates

Definition: The number of outgoing cases as a percentage of the number of incoming cases.

Purpose: Clearance rate measures whether the court is keeping up with its incoming caseload. If cases are not disposed in a timely manner, a backlog of cases awaiting disposition will grow. This measure is a single number that can be compared within the court for any and all case types, from month to month and year to year, or between one court and another. Knowledge of clearance rates by case type can help a court pinpoint emerging problems and indicate where improvements may be made. Courts should aspire to clear (i.e., dispose of) at least as many cases as have been filed, reopened¹, or reactivated in a period by having a clearance rate of 100 percent or higher.² This measure should be used in conjunction with *Measure 3 Time to Disposition* and *Measure 4 Age of Active Pending Caseload* to get an accurate picture of how a court is managing its caseload.

CLEARANCE RATES IN DURHAM							
	Preceding Fiscal Years			Current Fiscal Year 08/09			
Case Type	FY 05/06	FY 06/07	FY 07/08	Jul-Sep	Jul-Dec	Jul-Mar	Jul-Jun
Superior Civil	118%	111%	99%	126%	88%	98%	93%
Superior Criminal Felony	105%	105%	71%	150%	170%	154%	153%
Superior Criminal Misdemeanor Appeal	113%	151%	115%	159%	123%	119%	117%
District Civil	90%	112%	89%	97%	100%	94%	95%
District Domestic (no child support)	101%	100%	97%	103%	105%	100%	102%
District Child Support	111%	102%	96%	94%	103%	104%	105%
District Criminal	109%	110%	114%	122%	123%	121%	116%
District Motor Vehicle (criminal)	103%	98%	101%	100%	100%	100%	103%
District Infractions	102%	98%	105%	102%	97%	95%	98%
Magistrates Civil	102%	99%	99%	101%	102%	102%	99%
Clerk Estates	96%	99%	106%	117%	112%	106%	104%
Clerk Special Proceedings	83%	76%	91%	98%	98%	100%	98%

¹ The Judicial Department’s information systems do not include statistical counts on reopened or reactivated cases, only initial case filings. Therefore, none of these clearance rates includes these categories of cases. The number of reopened cases is minimal in some case types, but significant in others. For example, in District Domestic and Child Support cases, parties can file motions in closed cases until all children are over 18 years of age to change an earlier order based on a change in circumstances. Also, in District Child Support, the enforcement of existing orders is a significant caseload, but is not reflected in any statistical figures provided by the Judicial Department. How significant? In Durham, 120 court days each year are devoted to child support enforcement hearings.

² Categories highlighted in blue meet or exceed goal of 100% clearance rate.