

General Jury Information¹

Security

- All persons entering the courthouse shall not bring the following prohibited items: sharp objects, mace, handcuff keys, pocket knives, nail files, and sharp combs. Food and beverages are also prohibited. Please do not bring these items with you. If such an item is in your possession, you will be asked to return the item to your vehicle. Please dress appropriately for court. See Courtroom Etiquette

Duty to Serve

- The right to a jury trial by a jury of one's peers is guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution and the Michigan Constitution. Jury service is one of the most important duties that members of a free society are called upon to perform.
- Persons selected for jury duty must appear as directed by this court, whether notified by written correspondence or directed on the juror telephone. Failure to attend as directed could result in fines or jail.
- **What Happens If I Do Not Show For Jury Duty?**
 - A failure to appear letter will be sent to you. If you do not respond or if you respond and do not follow through with reporting, you will be sent an Order to Show Cause. This form will order you to report before a Circuit Court Judge to show cause why you should not be held in contempt of court for failing to appear for jury service. If you fail to appear for the Show Cause hearing, a bench warrant will be issued for your arrest and you can be fined or sent to jail.

Requests to be Excused

- Any request to be excused from jury duty must be submitted in writing outlining the reason for not being able to serve, along with a return address and your juror number. Your request must be sent within 14 days of the date of your first notification letter. Please include any pertinent information. For example, a doctor's notes, travel plans or reservations or verification that you are over the age of 70 or no longer living in the county.
- **Who Can Be Excused From Jury Service?**
 - Those who are 70 years of age or older and do not want to serve
 - Generally speaking, other excuses are not considered, except for those who have their doctor fax an excuse for health-related reasons. Excuses should specify whether the health-related reasons are short-term or lifelong disabilities.

¹ Adopted from Kalamazoo County, Isabella County and Kent County

- Full-time, year round students must submit a copy of the class schedule that indicates that they are in class during the day. Full-time students who do not attend in the summer will be deferred (postponed) to a summer Term.

How Was I Selected?

- You were selected at random from a list of those who have a Michigan Driver's License or State of Michigan I.D.

Who Is Qualified To Serve?

- To be qualified, you must:
 - Be at least 18 years of age
 - Be a citizen of the United States
 - Be able to speak and understand English
 - Be a resident of the County
 - Have not served in District or Circuit Court in the past 12 months
 - Have not been convicted of a felony

What Are The Different Types of Cases?

- Jury trials may be scheduled for criminal, civil and family cases (child protective and delinquency), and probate matters.

Will I Be Paid For Being A Juror?

- For the first day of service, jurors are paid \$12.50 for a half day (prior to noon) and \$25.00 for a full day, plus round trip mileage reimbursement. Subsequent days of service will pay \$20.00 for a half day and \$40.00 for a full day.

Must My Employer Pay Me While I Am On Jury Service?

- Your employer is not required to pay you while on jury service. However, employers are prohibited by law from firing, disciplining, or threatening an employee for serving as a juror.

My Employer Wants To Know The Days And Times That I Serve. How Will I Obtain This Information?

- Some companies require "proof" that you served as a juror. The Jury Clerk prepares this information on the last day of the week. The information can then be faxed to your employer or mailed to your home.

Is Child Care Provided At The Courthouse While I Am Serving?

- No child care is provided. Please do not bring your children to the courthouse.

How Are Jurors Selected For A Particular Case?

- Cases are heard by juries of 8 (civil/family cases) or 14 (criminal cases). A larger group is sent to the courtroom where the jurors are questioned under the supervision of the judge.

What Is Voir Dire?

- It is a way for the parties to select a fair and impartial jury. You may be questioned by each of the lawyers before they decide to remove a certain number of jurors. Questions are not intended to embarrass you, but rather to help the lawyers in the jury selection process.
- During Orientation, jury staff will provide further details and answer questions when you arrive at the courthouse for your scheduled jury service date.

Attire

- The Court prefers that jurors dress in “business casual” attire. However, jeans are acceptable as long as they are in good condition without holes. Please do not appear for service wearing gym clothes or clothing that does not provide adequate coverage (for example: tank tops or shorts).
- Should you have a medical condition that requires you to wear comfortable clothing, please feel free to do so.
- Additionally, if you need to report to work after being released from jury duty and you are required to wear a uniform at your job, it is perfectly acceptable to appear in uniform.

If I am a nursing mother, can I be excused from jury duty service?

- If your doctor is comfortable writing a letter on your behalf to excuse you from the current term of summoning, we will honor that request.

May I bring my laptop, pager and/or cell phone with me?

- Yes. However, please turn them off during orientation and prior to entering the courtroom. Otherwise, you may conduct business as needed in the Jury Assembly Room. We would request, for the comfort of your fellow jurors, that you not use speaker or two way options on your cell phone.

What do I do if I live in another state for the Winter months?

- Being a permanent resident only part of the year, you will be rescheduled to a date when you have returned to Michigan. Please call the jury services office to have a new date reassigned.

If I am hearing impaired, do I need to get a doctor's note to be excused?

- The Court will provide audio enhancement equipment to assist you on the day of service. Should you need an ASL interpreter, please make this request on your questionnaire and one will be provided for you. If you feel uncomfortable serving on a jury with your level of hearing, you will need to provide the Jury Services office with an excusal note from your doctor.

I am legally blind. Can I still serve on a jury?

- Absolutely! There are many trials where visual testimony is not presented, in which case you are welcome to serve if you feel comfortable doing so. If you choose to not serve however, we will need a doctor's note asking to excuse you based on your visual impairment.

My job is too demanding (or I work in a small office/am self employed) and I don't have time to serve on a jury. Do I still have to serve?

- Yes. A summons is an official court order compelling you to appear for service. The Court does understand that every juror has personal or professional obligations that may make jury duty a difficult task to manage. However, jury duty is not an optional experience. If you are selected by the random computer process, you are required to report as scheduled. There are no categories of employment that result in automatic deferral or excusal.

I have recently moved to another county/state. What do I need to do to be excused from service?

- Please provide us with documentation of your new address, such as a copy of your driver's license (front and back) showing your address. However, if you do not have your new driver's license, other forms of documentation are accepted. Please contact the Jury Services Office for examples.

My summons states that my service term is the summons date and until discharged by the court. What does that mean?

- All jurors must plan on devoting the scheduled day of service to jury duty even though you may be released at any point throughout the day. Once the final panel of jurors is selected, those individual jurors will remain in service until discharged by the judge. The judge assigned to the case will advise the jurors of the expected length of the trial. Typically, Circuit Court Trial Division trials last three days to several weeks. Circuit Court Family Division trials average two to three days, and District Court trials generally start and end in one day. These are merely averages and durations may vary.

What if personal or religious beliefs prohibit me from passing judgment on others?

- You are still qualified to serve as a juror. However, when the judge asks if any juror in the courtroom has a particular hardship or concern regarding jury service, you may state your concerns at that time. The judge and attorneys would have the authority to excuse you based on that reason.

I am a smoker. Will I be able to go outside to take a break?

- No, you will need to wait until your lunch hour to smoke outside.