

What to Expect When You're Expected to Report for Jury Service

Before Trial

You receive a jury summons in the mail. This will state when and where you are to report and will usually be attached to a short questionnaire that needs to be completed and sent back within the week.

Jury Selection Day

Report to the location and at the time indicated on your summons.

Selection Process

- Judge will give a brief description of case and names of parties and attorneys then ask questions of jurors - as a group or individually - to determine who legally cannot serve (due to potential bias or close relationship) and should be excused "for cause."
- Attorneys use peremptory challenges to excuse a certain number of jurors without reason
- Prosecution and Defense Attorneys will each elect to either excuse the juror or present/swear the juror

Excuse the Juror

You have not been selected to serve on this jury.

You will be asked to take your seat back in the jury room or court room until dismissed by the judge and will no longer be required to report for service. You will receive your per diem compensation in the mail within the next few weeks.

Present/Swear the Juror

You have been selected to serve on this jury.

(You may be selected as an "alternate juror." The only difference is you may be excused during deliberations if no other juror had to leave or be removed from the jury due to any unforeseen circumstances. You will still need to attend the trial and pay attention in the event you are asked to replace a seated juror during the trial.)

You will be asked to take a seat in the jury box. A Foreman will be appointed, and the Oath will be administered. You will then be given further instructions on when to report.

Trial Time

You will be representing an element of the Court. Please dress appropriately and be sure you are on time.

A few other notes about your time as a juror:

- Cell phones and other devices are not permitted.
- You will be asked to rise for the judge.
- In most cases, you will be allowed to leave for lunch and at the end of the day. Sequestration is only implemented in special circumstances - usually in very high profile cases.
- You will receive a per diem and mileage for your service. A check will be mailed to you after the conclusion of your service.

During the Trial

- You must give your undivided attention throughout the trial. If you cannot hear, please inform the judge immediately so you do not miss important information.
- Do not attempt your own investigation. Your judgement should be based on the evidence presented at trial.
- Avoid any media coverage (news, newspapers, radio, internet, etc.) of the case.
- Do not discuss the case with others. You should even refrain from discussing with fellow jurors until you have been excused to deliberate

The Verdict

After the Prosecution and Defense have rested their cases, the jury will be escorted to the deliberation room to assess and discuss the evidence presented at trial.

However, at any point in the trial, any one of the following things may happen:

- the parties may reach a settlement;
- the defendant may choose to plead guilty;
- the judge may decide to hand down a directed verdict; or
- a mistrial may be declared.

*A mistrial could occur if the jury is somehow tainted during the process or if the jury cannot reach a verdict after a satisfactory amount of deliberation.

Once a verdict has been reached, your service is complete.