



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS BY PETIT JURORS

### 1. HOW WAS I SELECTED FOR JURY DUTY?

In the Abingdon Division of the Western District of Virginia, all juror names are drawn at random from voter registration lists for the cities and counties of Bristol, Buchanan, Russell, Smyth, Tazewell, Washington and all cities and towns within the territorial limits.

### 2. WILL I SERVE ON BOTH CIVIL AND CRIMINAL TRIALS?

This Court tries both civil and criminal cases, and it is possible that you may be selected for either or both.

### 3. HOW MANY DAYS WILL I HAVE TO APPEAR FOR DUTY?

You will be on call for two (2) months. The number of days you might be summonsed varies according to the trial schedule and number of trials for which you are selected. An average trial lasts one to three days, but some may be longer, and you may be summonsed three to five times during your term. Court is usually in session from 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.

### 4. DO I NEED TO REPORT THE FIRST DAY MY TERM BEGINS?

Not necessarily. **Do not** report unless you receive a **Notice for Jury Service** that will tell you the length of the trial, what day and time to report and when to call the answering service. You must call **1-866-470-6760** after 6:00 p.m. the evening before you are summonsed to appear to determine whether your panel is needed for the next day.

Each juror is assigned a nine-digit participant number for their term of service. Your number is located below your name in the upper left-hand section of the Summons and the Notice for Jury Service. You must enter your nine digit participant number for your special reporting instructions. You **do not** need to report for jury duty until instructed to do so by the message or court personnel. **You do not need to call the automated service daily.**

### 5. WHERE SHOULD I REPORT WHEN SERVING ON A TRIAL?

You are to report to Room 104 each day you are serving jury duty to report your round-trip mileage and parking fees to the Clerk. You are to follow the instructions of the judge or his staff concerning days and times of attendance.

### 6. HOW MANY HOURS WILL I BE AT THE COURTHOUSE EACH DAY?

The number of hours will vary each day you are here. The first day the trial is to begin, you will be asked to report between 8:00 and 9:00 a.m. Jury selection lasts approximately three hours. Your arrival time, lunch break, and departure time will be set by the trial judge while you are serving on a trial.

### 7. WHAT HAPPENS IF I AM LATE?

It is extremely important to be prompt both in the morning and after lunch. It is particularly important when serving on a trial since the entire proceeding can be delayed because of the tardiness of one juror.

### 8. WILL I EVER HAVE TO SPEND THE NIGHT?

Not likely. Sequestration is very rare in this district. If you live more than 80 miles one-way from the courthouse to your home, you may spend the night if you wish. The Court will reimburse your subsistence fees in addition to your attendance and parking fees.

**9. WHEN SHOULD I REPORT MY VACATION PLANS OR MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS?**

**As soon as** your plans are definite, you must write a letter immediately and notify the Clerk of the days you plan to take vacation or that you have scheduled a medical appointment. Your written request must also include your name, address and your nine-digit participant number. (Located below your name on the first page of the summons.) If approved, these dates will be added to your jury record and you will not be summonsed during that time. To find out if your request to be excused has been granted, call our automated telephone system at 1-866-470-6760 and enter your nine-digit participant number.

**10. MAY MY EMPLOYER ASK THAT I BE EXCUSED FROM JURY SERVICE?**

No. Requests from your employer will not be considered. Employers are required by statute to allow their employees to serve and shall not “discharge, threaten to discharge, intimidate or coerce any permanent employee by reason of such jury service, or the attendance or scheduled attendance in connection with such service, in any court of the United States.” Any employer who violates the provisions of that section faces very serious penalties which will be enforced through the office of the United States Attorney and the District Court.

**11. WHAT CAN I SHOW TO MY EMPLOYER AS PROOF OF SERVICE?**

The Jury Clerk will prepare a certificate of attendance for you to show your employer. This certificate will state the days you served and the total of attendance fees paid.

**12. IS THERE A DRESS CODE?**

Jurors play an extremely important role in the very serious process of adjudicating cases. It demeans the process and distracts from the decorum of court proceedings if jurors fail to dress appropriately. Jurors are, therefore, expected to dress in a manner reflective of the formality of the court proceedings. **DO NOT** wear shorts, leather, fleece, collarless shirts, T-shirts, sandals, flip flops or any clothing that would distract from the court proceedings.

**13. WHAT SHOULD I DO IF THERE IS EXTREME WEATHER CONDITIONS?**

In case of snow or other extreme weather conditions, you should call our answering service **1-866-470-6760** before leaving your home to attend court. If there is no message on the answering service, you should assume that court will be in session and you should report for jury service as directed.

**14. WHERE DO I PARK AND WILL I BE REIMBURSED FOR MILEAGE?**

There is a municipal parking lot across the Cummings Street side of the Federal Building which is within walking distance. The parking in the municipal parking lot is free. Please note that parking at the back of the Federal Building is prohibited and towing is enforced. You will receive the standard mileage reimbursement rate per mile from your home to the courthouse. Please calculate your **round-trip mileage** from your home to the courthouse and submit this information to the clerk when you report for jury duty.

**15. HOW WILL I GET PAID?**

Each day you are to serve on a trial, you must report to Room 104 to record your attendance prior to going to the courtroom. You will be paid approximately two to three weeks after the completion of the trial. If you are sitting on an extended trial, you will receive your check at one week intervals.

**16. SHOULD I PAY TAXES ON MY JURY FEES?**

Yes. The \$50.00 attendance fee is taxable income, but no taxes are deducted from your check. At the end of the tax year, a Form 1099 will be sent to those jurors who have received \$600.00 or more in attendance fees. This form will be received by January 31. Questions regarding taxability of attendance fees should be referred to a qualified tax advisor.

**17. WILL THERE BE LONG PERIODS OF WAITING?**

Because trial starting time may be delayed by last-minute pre-trial proceedings in the courtroom, there may be periods of waiting. The Court appreciates your time and attempts to avoid these delays as much as possible. Soft drink machines,

snack machines, and restrooms are located near the courtroom for your convenience. A telephone will be provided for your use.

**18. MAY I LEAVE THE WAITING AREA?**

Not without notifying the jury personnel or a court security officer. This rule is necessary to avoid contact with individuals involved with the trial pending before the court. Also, panels may be needed at some moment's notice.

**19. WILL JURY STAFF ASK FOR CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION IN A TELEPHONE CALL?**

Federal Courts do not require anyone to provide sensitive information in a telephone call. Most contact between a federal court and a prospective juror will be through the U. S. Mail and any contact by court officials will not include requests for credit card numbers, social security numbers, or any other sensitive information.

**20. CAN MY FAMILY REACH ME IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY?**

Yes. Please call the Jury Clerk at **1-866-470-6760** and she will forward the message to you immediately.

**21. WHERE CAN I GO FOR LUNCH?**

There are many different types of restaurants within driving distance of the Federal Building. Please ask the jury clerk for directions.