



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS BY GRAND JURORS

**HOW WAS I SELECTED FOR JURY DUTY?** In the Abingdon Division of the Western District of Virginia, jurors' names are drawn at random by computer from the voter registration lists for the counties of Bland, Buchanan, Dickenson, Grayson, Lee, Russell, Scott, Smyth, Tazewell, Washington, Wise, Wythe and the cities of Bristol and Norton.

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

Not necessarily. **Do not** report until you receive a **Notice for Jury Service** that will tell you 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.**

**WHERE SHOULD I REPORT FOR JURY SERVICE?** 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 Jury Clerk. You are to follow the instructions of the Jury Clerk concerning days and times of attendance.

**WHAT IS MY SCHEDULE THE FIRST DAY I REPORT?** A representative of the District Court and the United States Attorneys Office will present a brief orientation and answer any questions you may have. Members of the grand jury panel are sworn in by the courtroom deputy and the presiding judge will advise the panel of its obligations and how best to perform its duties. Please pay close attention to these instructions which contain rules and directions the panel must follow during its term of service. After the grand jury has been charged, the panel will be taken to the grand jury room, where they will begin to hear testimony and consider evidence in order to determine whether such evidence justifies an indictment.

**HOW MANY DAYS WILL I HAVE TO APPEAR FOR GRAND JURY DUTY?** The number of days you might be required to report varies. As a normal practice, you may serve two days a month for a period of one year. At the beginning of your term, you will receive a schedule of the days your panel will meet.

**HOW MANY HOURS WILL I SPEND AT THE COURTHOUSE EACH DAY?** The number of hours will vary each day that you are here. The first day the grand jury is in session, you will be asked to report between 8:00 and 9:00 a.m. Orientation and Grand Jury selection lasts approximately three hours.

**CAN I BE LATE?** Sixteen of the 23 members of the grand jury constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. It is extremely important to be prompt both in the morning and after lunch. If fewer than this number are present, even for a moment, the proceedings for grand jury must stop. This shows how important it is that each grand juror conscientiously attend the meetings.

**WILL I EVER HAVE TO SPEND THE NIGHT?** Not likely. But if you live 80 miles one-way from the courthouse, you may travel the day before you are to report for jury service. Please call the Jury Clerk before you make plans to spend the night to determine if you qualify to be reimbursed for these fees.

**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.

**WILL I BE REIMBURSED FOR MILEAGE?** Yes. 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 Jury Clerk when you report for jury duty.

**WHEN WILL I GET PAID?** Checks will be issued twice a month.

**ARE MY JUROR ATTENDANCE FEES TAXABLE?** Yes. The \$50.00 attendance fee is taxable income but no taxes are deducted from your check. Additionally, you will only receive an IRS 1099 Form if you earn \$600.00 or more in juror attendance fees.

**MAY I WITNESS ANY TRIALS WHILE SERVING AS A JUROR?** No. Jurors are not permitted to witness any trials in session while they are on jury duty. Once you have completed your service permanently, you may visit any courtroom you choose.

**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 amount of attendance fees you were paid.

**WILL THERE BE LONG PERIODS OF WAITING?** Because a schedule may be delayed by last minute 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 courtrooms for your convenience. Telephones are provided for your use.

**MAY I LEAVE THE WAITING AREA?** Not without notifying the jury personnel. This rule is necessary because panels may be needed at a moment's notice.

**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.

**WHERE CAN I GO FOR LUNCH?** There are many different types of restaurants within driving distance from the Federal Building. Please ask the Jury Clerk for directions.

**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 employee's 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 United States Attorney's Office and the District Court.

**WHAT SHOULD I DO DURING INCLEMENT WEATHER?** You should always call the answering service at 1-866-470-6760 before you leave your home the day grand jury service is to begin. 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.