

## **57<sup>th</sup> District Court – Jury Duty**

### **Do I have to report for jury duty?**

Yes, jury service is a required constitutional duty and a valuable privilege of citizenship. State law exempts only those persons over 70 who request in writing to be excused. If you have a compelling reason that makes it difficult to attend the scheduled times, the court will make a reasonable effort to reschedule your service dates. You should address any request in writing as outlined in the notice you receive.

### **What kinds of cases are heard in District Court?**

District Court trials include misdemeanor traffic, criminal cases and general civil cases for money damages with the value of \$25,000.00 or less.

### **How did you get my name?**

Once a year the Jury Board receives a list from the Secretary of State of people who have a Michigan driver's license or a state identification card. Randomly selected citizens are mailed a Juror Qualification Questionnaire and return it to the Jury Board Office. After they have been screened, a "qualified" citizen may be called to serve jury duty. You are eligible for jury duty once every 12 months.

### **How do I get excused from jury duty?**

In the State of Michigan, no one is automatically exempt from jury duty - everyone who meets the qualifications is eligible. Occasionally, circumstances exist when a person cannot serve.

### **If you are a person who (is):**

- Not a United States citizen
- Not a resident of Allegan County
- Has served as a juror in the preceding 12 months
- Physically or mentally unable to carry out the functions of a juror
- Has been convicted of a felony
- Can elect to serve or not to serve because you are more than 70 years old
- Desires to be excused because the interest of the public or of the individual juror will be materially injured because of your health or the health of a member of your family
- Is a full-time high school student so that your jury duty could be postponed until after the school year
- Desires to have your jury service postponed to a later term for good reason.

**You must:**

Write out a full statement of the reasons why you believe you may be disqualified, exempt, entitled to excuse, eligible for high school postponement or seeking postponement for good reason. Include supporting documentation such as copies of flight schedules, reservation forms, class schedules.

If you are requesting to be excused for health reasons, you must obtain a doctor's statement to that effect and enclose it with your statement.

Sign and mail your statement and all supporting documents to Court Administrator, 57th District Court, 113 Chestnut Street, Allegan, MI 49010. Mail your statement and supporting documents within one week of the date that you receive the notice.

**How does the call-in procedure work?**

The evening before your term of service begins, you are to call our recording number. The recorded message will state whether you are to report the following day at 8:30 a.m. You should report only if the recorded message tells you to. The recording is accurate after 5:00 p.m. and is on all night. You must continue to call the recording each evening before your service dates and report if the recording tells you to do so.

**How long will I be there?**

Judges try to seat their juries in the morning, therefore, if you are not seated on a case, you are normally (but not always) released by 10:30 a.m. If you are a juror on a particular trial, you should plan on being at the courthouse until about 5:00 p.m.

**How long do trials last?**

The average trial length is one day. Occasionally, a case will last longer. The judge will inform you of the expected length of the case during jury selection.

**Does my employer have to pay me while I am on jury duty?**

No, an employer does not have to pay you, but they must release you from work if you are summoned as a juror.

**What should I wear?**

You should be properly dressed for jury service. Halters, shorts, tee-shirts, tank tops, beachwear, sweatshirts or bare feet are not suitable attire for jury service.

**Can I bring my laptop, pager, or cell phone with me?**

These items may be used while you are waiting in the jury quarters, however, they must be turned off in the courtrooms and during jury deliberation.

**Can I bring food with me?**

There is coffee provided. You may bring your own food if you are a diabetic or on a special diet. Open food and beverages are not allowed in the courtrooms.

**Where should I park?**

Parking stickers are available at the 57th District Court service windows if it is necessary to park on the street. There is a map enclosed in your jury packet outlining parking locations. There are handicapped spaces located at the east and west entrances of the County Building.

The District Court is located on the top floor of the County Building. Please report to the Jury Assembly Room which is located across from the District Court Clerk's Office. A name register will be in the room for you to sign and record your round trip mileage.

**What happens if I fail to appear for jury service?**

Failure to report on scheduled jury dates may subject you to penalties of contempt of court, including fine, costs, and incarceration.