

# **Jury Duty FAQ**

## **I received a summons in the mail, now what?**

As an American Citizen, you are required by law to appear on the date listed in your summons. Those summoned for Superior Court jury duty should personally appear at the time listed on your summons. Please fill out and bring with you the Juror Information Form included with your summons.

## **What is a traverse jury?**

The traverse jury is a trial jury impaneled to hear evidence in a civil or criminal case.

## **How old do you have to be before you don't have to serve anymore?**

Persons aged 70 or above may sign an affidavit available in the Clerk of Court's office asking that their name be removed from the jury list.

## **How are the jurors picked?**

Jurors are picked randomly from a list of eligible citizens maintained by the County Board of Jury Commissioners. The Court notifies the Clerk of how many jurors are needed for a particular week of court. Utilizing the list of potential jurors, a computer randomly selects the required number of citizens needed for the service that week.

## **Are the jurors picked from the Voters list?**

The voter list is just one of several sources used by the Jury Commission to make up the jury list of eligible citizens. However, this should not deter you from registering to vote as other sources are the Department of Motor Vehicle (Driver's License list), church membership lists, high school annuals, etc.

## **How do I get my name out of the jury box?**

In Georgia, no citizen otherwise eligible for jury duty is exempt from jury service. Individuals aged 70 or older are the only ones allowed to request the removal of their name from the jury box. However, any person called to jury duty may request a deferral of service to another date.

### **How much do I get paid?**

Each county determines how much jurors are paid per day for their service. Additionally, if you have a job, your employer should still pay your salary. Under Georgia law, an employer cannot penalize an employee attending court in response to a summons for jury duty, Official Code of Georgia § 34-1-3 (c). Further, a 1989 Georgia Attorney General's Opinion states "an employee is entitled to be paid his or her salary while missing work to serve on jury duty," (Opinion of the Attorney General Number 89-55).

### **How should I dress?**

Wear business attire which reflects the seriousness of jury service. Shorts, t-shirts, and jeans are prohibited. Please do not wear uniforms. Please do not wear uniforms, especially those with badges and name plates.

### **What is the difference between a traverse jury and a grand jury?**

A traverse jury is generally composed of 12 people impaneled to try a criminal or civil case. In a criminal trial, the jury must determine whether the state has presented proof beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant is guilty. In a civil trial, the jury will decide all questions of fact and shall determine whether the plaintiff has a valid complaint and should be awarded the relief requested.

A grand jury is composed of not less than 16 nor more 23 people to hear evidence and to determine whether there is sufficient evidence to formally charge the defendant with committing a crime and to require an accused to stand trial. The grand jury does not determine the accused's guilt or innocence.

### **How long do I have to be there?**

Jury duty usually lasts one week. If your services are not needed on a particular day during the week you are summoned, you will be excused and told when to return. Some trials may last longer than one week, and jurors assigned to those cases will, of necessity, be required to continue to serve until the conclusion of the trial.

### **Can I be excused from jury duty?**

Georgia law allows exemptions for: (1) Any person who is 70 years of age or older and has requested a permanent exemption (2) Any person who has an affidavit from their doctor that states the person is permanently mentally or physically disabled and (3) Any person who is a legislator who is summoned to serve during a session of the Georgia General Assembly may be excused to another date when the Georgia General Assembly is not in session.

While not required, the Court may a onetime deferral if:

(1) I have my vacation planned for the week I am summoned, (2) My business has me scheduled for training, (3) I have a doctor's appointment, (4) I have surgery scheduled, (5) I am pregnant, (6) I am the sole proprietor of my business, (7) My job does not compensate me for jury service, (8) I am a care giver or (9) I don't have transportation (10) I homeschool my child (11) I am a university student?

A onetime deferral can be given under these circumstances, in order for you to make some arrangements, although some documentation may be required. Our office will attempt to schedule a more convenient date for you to the best of our ability, however, none of the above situations are grounds for jury exemption under Georgia Law. Requests may be submitted in writing to the Clerk of Court for the county in which you were summoned Please be sure to include phone numbers where you can be reached during office hours.