



# JUROR'S GUIDE

A QUICK REFERENCE TO YOUR ROLE IN  
THE TRIAL PROCESS IN PENNSYLVANIA





---

The right to a trial by jury is guaranteed by the United States and Pennsylvania Constitutions. The effectiveness of the jury system depends upon citizens' willingness to serve, as well as jurors' ability to be fair and impartial while deciding the facts and applying the law.

**COURT OF COMMON PLEAS  
FRANKLIN COUNTY**

**THIRTY-NINTH  
JUDICIAL DISTRICT  
CHAMBERSBURG, PA 17201**

*Judges*

Carol L. Van Horn.....President Judge  
Shawn D. Meyers..... Judge  
Angela R. Krom ..... Judge  
Jeremiah D. Zook ..... Judge  
Douglas W. Herman.....Senior Judge

*Administration*

Mark Singer ..... District Court  
Administrator  
Aimee R. Cook ..... Deputy Court  
Administrator  
Angela J. Stoner ..... Deputy Court  
Administrator

Published by Direction of  
The Court of Common Pleas  
of Franklin County

# HANDBOOK FOR JURORS

## *Introduction*

The purpose of this handbook is to acquaint jurors with a few methods and procedures that relate to jury service and selection in Pennsylvania's Courts of Common Pleas.

Please take the time to review so you are better informed about your responsibilities and the importance of your role in the trial process.

## *Parking*

Due to the number of people summoned for jury duty, please plan to arrive early as parking is limited.

Free parking is available at:

- \* King Street Church lot (unless otherwise posted by Church)
- \* Administration Annex Building  
218 North Second Street
- \* Queen Street Parking Lot

Paid parking is available at the Chambers Fort Lot (formerly, Rosedale Parking Lot).

Unfortunately, the Courthouse lot is by permit only.

## *When and Where to Report*

All trials are conducted in the Courthouse located in Chambersburg. Please review your printed notice for location of where to enter the Courthouse because there are two points of entry. You will either enter the Franklin County Courthouse Annex at 157 Lincoln Way East or The Franklin County Courthouse at 2 North Main Street which is directly off Memo-

rial Square. If summoned to the Annex, please report to the Jury Assembly Room located on the third floor; if summoned to the entrance off Memorial Square, please report to Courtroom 1 located on the second floor.

Review your notice for the time you are to report. Most notices are for 8:30 a.m., unless otherwise printed.

Allow enough time for security screening upon entry.

You will also be given a numbered ID badge. Display this badge on your outer garment during your service as a juror. This badge identifies you as a juror and will be collected following your service. It also helps prevent unwanted contact with clients, attorneys, and witnesses.

Please report for duty promptly at the time indicated on your jury notice and Jury Orientation/Selection will begin.

### *What to Wear*

There is no prescribed dress code for jurors except that the dress of any juror should not detract from the dignity of the Court. Women may wear slacks or pants outfits; provided they are appropriate for the courtroom. Men should dress conservatively. Coats and ties are encouraged, but not required. Often it is a good idea to wear something that can be easily removed or put on should you get cold or warm depending on your comfort level.

Keep in mind that the parties in any case look to the jurors for justice, so respect and professionalism help to establish faith in the system.

## *Length of Service*

Although you are summoned as a juror for a trial term lasting approximately two months, please note that you could be selected to serve on multiple juries on any date(s) in those two months. An effort is made to limit each juror's service to one trial, but the possibility exists that you could serve on more than one case. However, you will only have to report for jury duty on the day(s) scheduled for your trial(s). You will not have to come to the courthouse each day the entire trial term is in progress.

Jury Selection will take place on at least one day, but could take an additional day depending on the number of cases and/or time involved in selection.

Both civil and criminal trials will be set on specific dates later in the trial term. The dates for individual trials will be announced before each jury is selected.

# Courts

## *Courts of Common Pleas*

Courts of Common Pleas are Pennsylvania's general trial courts. These courts are organized into judicial districts, generally following the geographic boundaries of the state's counties. In most judicial districts, juries hear a wide range of cases.

**Juries  
are here**

**Courts of Common Pleas:**  
Are the primary trial courts with original jurisdiction in most serious criminal and civil cases.

**Commonwealth Court  
of Pennsylvania:**  
Hears cases where the government is a party.

**Superior Court  
of Pennsylvania:**  
Hears most criminal and civil appeals from the Courts of Common Pleas.

**Supreme Court of Pennsylvania:**  
Is the highest judicial authority in the state.

## **What kinds of cases will I hear as a juror?**

Jurors hear either criminal or civil cases.

In criminal cases, a district attorney acting on behalf of the citizens of Pennsylvania prosecutes a case against an individual or an entity accused of a crime. The district attorney is also referred to as the prosecutor. The person or entity accused of the crime is referred to as the defendant.

In civil cases, an individual, entity or governmental agency brings a suit against another individual, entity or governmental agency. The party initiating the lawsuit is referred to as the plaintiff, and the party defending the suit is the defendant.

## **What is the role of the juror & what is the role of a judge?**

### J U R O R

- Listen carefully to all evidence presented during the trial.
- During deliberations, discuss the evidence with fellow jurors and decide what the facts are, based upon which witnesses and evidence you believe.
- Apply the law, as explained by the judge, to the facts, as determined by you.
- Do no independent research or investigation.
- Determine the money damages in some civil cases.
- In criminal cases, decide whether the defendant is guilty or not guilty.
- Arrive at a verdict.

## J U D G E

- Make sure that all parties have a fair opportunity to present their case.
- Make sure the trial process proceeds in a proper manner.
- Instruct the jury on the applicable law.
- Decide the punishment in most criminal cases.

## **Jury Selection**

### **How are jurors selected?**

Jury selection begins when a name is randomly selected from voter and motor vehicle registration lists. Your county may elect to supplement the master list of prospective jurors by the inclusion of additional lists from other sources such as personal tax roles. Those selected are sent a summons, which is a court order stating the required time and place to appear.

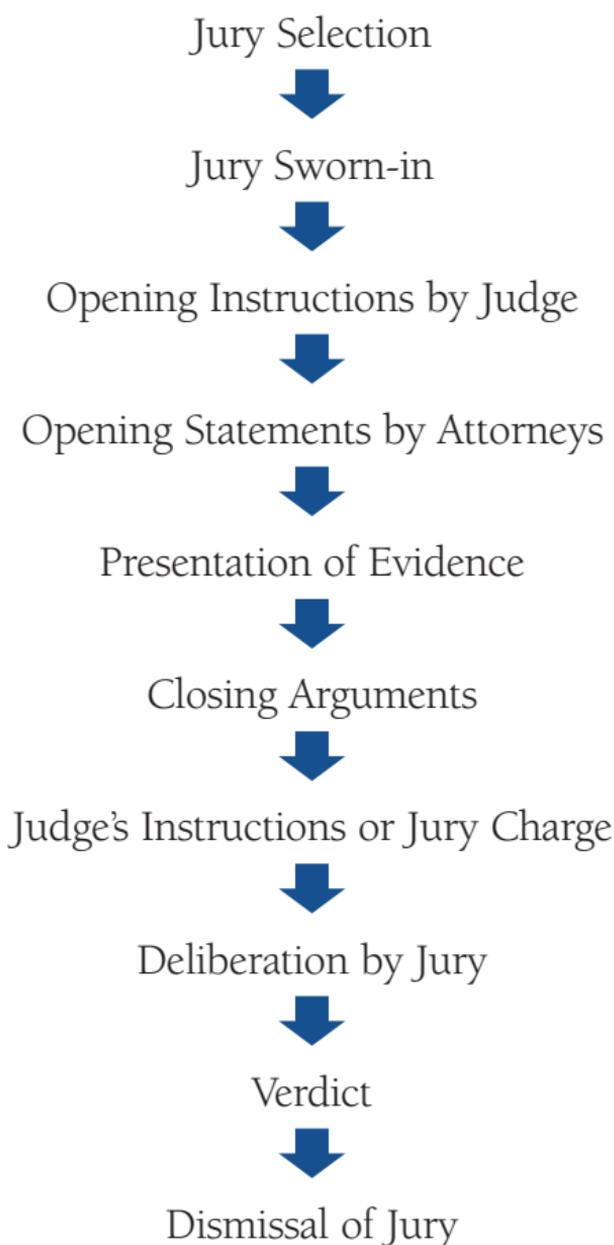
The jury pool is composed of those people summoned to appear on a particular day. Juries are selected from the jury pool.

In criminal cases, the jury is made up of twelve jurors, except in the rare case of the parties agreeing to fewer. In civil cases, the jury can consist of as few as six jurors or as many as twelve. Alternate jurors may also be chosen to avoid unnecessary delays or expense in the event of the incapacity of a juror.

## What is voir dire?

Voir dire is a French term that refers to the preliminary examination of an individual's qualifications to be a juror. Voir dire is sometimes conducted by the judge and sometimes by the lawyers. The purpose is to find out whether any views held by the potential juror hinder his or her ability to act impartially. Therefore, it is very important to answer these questions honestly.

## Trial Process



## **Jury Deliberations**

The judge explains the law and provides guidance on procedures to be followed in jury deliberations. One of the first things the jury does during deliberations is to choose a foreperson. The foreperson should make sure that each juror has a chance to speak; that each juror's opinion is treated with respect; that the jury does not rush to come to a verdict; that jurors carefully listen to one another; and that they return a fair and impartial verdict based upon the facts of the case.

In criminal cases, a unanimous jury is required to find the defendant guilty. In civil cases, 5/6 of the jurors must be in agreement.

## **After the Jury Reaches a Verdict**

Once a jury reaches a verdict, the foreperson informs the court that the jury has reached a verdict, and the judge calls everyone back to the courtroom. The verdict will then be announced. After the verdict is announced and recorded, the jury has completed its duties and is discharged.

After discharge, jurors are permitted, but not required, to talk about the case. Jurors are not permitted, however, to disclose what another juror said in the jury room. If anyone attempts to communicate with a juror regarding his or her role as a juror in a way that one feels is improper, the juror should report the incident to the court as soon as possible.

## **Commonly Asked Questions**

### **Who is eligible to serve?**

Anyone 18 years of age or older who is a United States citizen and resident of the county and who has not been convicted of a felony within the last five years is eligible.

### **What happens if I ignore my summons for jury service?**

A jury summons is a court order. If you ignore it, you are subject to arrest and prosecution.

### **Will I be paid for serving as a juror?**

Yes, \$9/day for the first three days and \$25/day thereafter, and in some counties mileage for transportation to and from the courthouse is included. These fees are set by the state legislature.

### **What if my employer doesn't allow me to serve?**

The law prohibits any employer from preventing an employee to serve as a juror. The law also prohibits an employer from depriving a juror of benefits because of jury service, such as requiring you to use vacation time to serve.

### **Is my employer required to pay me while I serve as a juror?**

If you work for the government, your employer must pay you. If you work in the private sector, your employer does not have to pay you.

## **Is it possible to appear for jury service and not sit on a jury?**

Yes. More people are called than actually serve because it is not always possible to estimate accurately the number of jurors who will be needed to serve each day.

## **May I go home at the end of the day?**

Jurors almost always go home at the end of the day. Sequestration is a term used to describe jurors staying at a local hotel at the county's expense during the trial. Sequestration occurs rarely.

## **Are accommodations available if I have a disability?**

Accommodations are available to people with disabilities. Call your local jury coordinator or court administrator to find out what accommodations are available in your county.

## **What happens if I'm late and can't get to the court before the time the trial starts?**

Telephone your county's court administrator or the judge assigned to your case as soon as possible.

## **How often do I have to serve as a juror?**

There is no limit on the number of times your name may be drawn for service. However, anyone who has served does not need to serve again for one year. Anyone who has served three days or more does not have to serve again for three years.

## Tips

- Bring something to read or do to pass the time spent waiting.
- As a prospective juror, you are permitted to bring hand-held electronic devices (smartphones, tablets, laptops, etc.) with you to the courthouse; HOWEVER, they are not permitted to be turned on when Court is in session and/or while in jury deliberation rooms. Electronic devices shall not be used to obtain or disclose any information about any cases. No exceptions.
- Get directions to the courthouse in advance.
- Before the date you are scheduled to appear, find a convenient place to park if you are driving. The county provides free parking at the lots described and in the FAQ section on this website.
- If you use public transportation, find out which route you need to take and time schedules so you arrive on time.
- All jurors will be required to go through a metal detector. When in doubt, leave items at home or in your car.
- Food in general is not permitted in the Courthouse; however, given the importance of your duty, the Courts recognize medical, dietary, and related needs. Food for these noted needs will be permitted in the Courthouse on selection days.
- In the event of inclement weather or an emergency develops on selection days, please call Court Administration at 717-261-3848 and leave a message. Staff needs to hear from you and will follow up accordingly.

## Conclusion

The Judges of this Court thank you for contributing your time for jury duty. The performance of jury service is the fulfillment of a most important civic obligation. Conscientious service brings its own reward in the satisfaction of a task well done. Jury service is one of the most valuable public services that the average citizen has an opportunity to perform.

Trial by an impartial jury of citizens from the community is the cornerstone of the American judicial system by which our people judge and settle all

controversies. Many other systems have been tried throughout the world, but our system is the one believed most likely to accomplish justice and fairness. It guarantees that no one person or government will dictate his or her opinion to others. It further guarantees that all final decisions involving our rights, liberty and property rest in the capable hands of the honorable men and women of the community who serve as jurors.

The purpose of this pamphlet is to help you better understand the Pennsylvania courts, inform you of what you can expect when serving as a juror, and emphasize the critical role jurors play in our justice system. It is not a substitute for the instructions given by the judge during trial.



**Pennsylvania Bar Association**  
100 South Street • P.O. Box 186  
Harrisburg, PA 17108-0186  
(800) 932-0311  
[www.pabar.org](http://www.pabar.org)



**Pennsylvanians for Modern Courts**  
100 North 17th Street • Suite 700  
Philadelphia, PA 19103  
(215) 994-5196  
[www.pmconline.org](http://www.pmconline.org)