

INSTRUCTIONS

1. **Call the Court 1 day before the trial date (after 4 pm)** to confirm the trial will be held. There will be a recorded voice message with the jury trial status. **(253) 564-8922**
2. Bring your summons with you and record your mileage for reimbursement. Upon check-in you must present photo identification.
3. Check-in at the Court Clerk window located inside Fircrest City Hall at 115 Ramsdell St, Fircrest, WA 98466.
4. Be prepared to stay all day including lunch, breaks, and waiting. Jurors will be on their own for lunch. No refrigerator available, please pack accordingly. Trial is typically* for ONE DAY; beginning and ending on the same day. *Special circumstances may occur; you will be notified ASAP if anticipated longer than one day.
5. The court may not discriminate due to any disability. Should you need special accommodations please contact the court immediately upon receipt of this summons.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who is eligible for jury duty?

To be eligible for jury service, you must be at least 18 years of age, a citizen of the United States, a resident of the county in which you are to serve as a juror, and you must be able to communicate in English. If you have ever been convicted of a felony, you must have had your civil rights restored.

Do I have to respond to the jury summons?

RCW 2.36.170 states, "A person summoned for jury service who intentionally fails to appear as directed shall be guilty of a misdemeanor." Please respond to your summons. The justice system in Washington State cannot function without citizens willing to serve on jury duty. As one juror said, "if everyone tried to dodge jury duty, then what?"

Who can be excused from serving?

Those eligible may be excused from jury service if they have illnesses that would interfere with their ability to do a good job, would suffer unusual hardship if required to serve, or are unable to serve for other legitimate reasons.

What if I have a disability?

For disability accommodation, contact the jury administrator or a member of the court staff.

What about my job?

Washington law says employers, "shall provide an employee with sufficient leave of absence from employment when that employee is summoned" for jury duty. It also says employers, "shall not deprive an employee of employment or threaten, coerce, or harass an employee or deny an employee promotional opportunities" for serving as a juror. It does not say your employer has to pay you while you serve.

How much do jurors get paid?

RCW 2.36.150 specifies that jurors may receive up to twenty-five dollars but in no case less than ten dollars for each day's attendance. Most Washington State counties pay \$10 per day. Jurors are also eligible for mileage reimbursement.

How long does jury duty last?

How many days and hours you work as a juror depend on the jury selection system in your county. The judge may vary daily working hours to accommodate witnesses who have special travel or schedule problems.

You may be struck by how much waiting you have to do. For example, you may have to wait before you are placed on a jury. During the trial, you may have to wait in the jury room while the judge and the lawyers settle questions of law.

Judges and other courtroom personnel will do everything they can to minimize the waiting both before and during the trial. Your understanding is appreciated.

What should I wear?

Dress comfortably. Suits, ties, and other, more formal wear are not necessary. But don't get too informal-beach wear, shorts, halter or tank tops are not appropriate in court. Hats may not be allowed unless worn for religious or medical purposes.

Might I be called but not sit on a jury?

Yes. Sometimes parties in a case settle their differences only moments before the trial is scheduled to begin. In such instances, you will be excused with the thanks of the court.

What happens if I'm late?

As the trial cannot proceed until all jurors are present, it is important that you are on time. If you are unavoidably delayed, please call the court immediately.

What if I have an emergency?

Because your absence could delay a trial, it is important that you report each day you are required to. If a real emergency occurs — a sudden illness, accident, or death in the family — tell the court staff immediately.

What happens during a trial?

Events in a trial usually happen in a particular order, though the order may be changed by the judge. The standard order of events begins with the selection of the jury, followed by opening statements, presentation of evidence, jury instructions, closing arguments, jury deliberations, and an announcement of the verdict.

What happens during jury selection?

In the courtroom, your judge will tell you about the case, then introduce the lawyers and others who are involved in it. You will also take an oath, in which you will promise to answer all questions truthfully.

After you're sworn in, the judge and the lawyers will question you and other members of the panel to find out if you have any knowledge about the case, any personal interest in it, or any feelings that might make it hard for you to be impartial. This questioning process is called voir dire, which means "to speak the truth."

Though some of the questions may seem personal, you should answer them completely and honestly. If you are uncomfortable answering them, tell the judge. Questions are not asked to embarrass you. They are intended to make sure members of the jury have no opinions or past experiences which might prevent them from making an impartial decision.

What is the role of the juror?

Your job as a juror is to listen to all the evidence presented at trial, then "decide the facts" — decide what really happened. The judge's job is to "decide the law" — make decisions on legal issues that come up during the trial. All must do their job well if our system of trial by jury is to work.

You do not need special knowledge or ability to do your job. It is enough that you keep an open mind, use common sense, concentrate on the evidence presented, and be fair and honest in your deliberations.

Remember, don't be influenced by sympathy or prejudice. It is vital that you be impartial with regard to all testimony and ideas presented at the trial.

What are alternate jurors?

Additional jurors are chosen, known as alternates, in the event that any members of the jury are unable to complete the trial for some reason. Alternate jurors participate in the trial proceedings but do not take part in deliberations unless they have been called to replace members of the jury.

Can I take notes during the trial?

Yes, you may take notes in all trials if you wish. The judge will explain the procedure.

Can I ask the witnesses questions during the trial?

In civil trials, you may propose questions for the witness. In criminal trials, you may only propose questions for the witness if the judge gives you permission. The judge will explain the procedure.

For further questions please contact the Fircrest – Ruston Municipal Court, via email court@cityoffircrest.net or by telephone at 253-564-8922. *Please note verbal excusal requests cannot be accepted.