

During the trial

Do

- Do arrive on time and return promptly after breaks and lunch. The trial cannot proceed until all jurors are present.
- Do pay close attention. If you cannot hear what is being said, raise your hand and let the judge know.
- Do keep an open mind throughout the trial.
- Do listen carefully to the instructions read by the judge. Remember, it is your duty to accept what the judge is saying about the law, and how it is to be applied to the case.
- Do take notes during the trial if necessary to help you remember critical information, unless the judge instructs you otherwise.
- Do express your viewpoint freely, completely and politely during jury deliberations.



Don't

- Don't let yourself get information about the case from the news media or any other outside source. If you accidentally hear outside information about the case during the trial, tell a member of the court staff in private.
- Don't try to guess what the judge thinks about the case. Remember the rulings from the bench do not reflect the judge's personal views.
- Don't talk about the case, or issues raised by the case, with anyone, including other jurors, while the trial is going on — unless the judge instructs you otherwise.
- Don't try to uncover evidence on your own. Decide the case only on the basis of evidence presented at the trial.
- Don't talk to the lawyers, parties, or witnesses about anything. This will avoid the impression that something unfair is going on.
- Don't let others talk about the case in your presence, even family members. If someone insists on talking to you or another juror about the case, please report the matter to a court employee. These rules are designed to help you keep an open mind during the trial.
- After a verdict has been announced, you may discuss the case with lawyers, media and family if you wish. Don't identify any particular juror in such discussions.

During deliberations you should:

- Work out any differences with other jurors through complete and fair discussion of the evidence and the judge's instructions. You should listen to the views of other jurors.
- Refrain from marking, writing, injuring, or changing the trial exhibits.
- Refrain from trying to guess what might happen if the case is appealed. Appellate courts deal only with legal questions; they will not change a verdict if the jury decided the facts based on proper evidence and instructions.
- Make sure you do not talk to anyone about deliberations or about the verdict until the judge discharges the jury. After discharge, you may discuss the verdict and deliberations with anyone you choose, but you are not obligated to do so.



ACCESSIBILITY. The Maryland Judiciary is committed to making jury service accessible to everyone. If you have any concerns about accessibility issues (for example, for disabled citizens), contact your jury commissioner in advance.

MARYLAND Jury SERVICE



MARYLAND JUDICIARY
MDCOURTS.GOV

Complete your juror qualification form online: mdcourts.gov/jury-service

Jury Service Q&A

How was I chosen? Juries are selected at random from a cross section of Maryland citizens and drawn from driver's license and voter registration pools.

Where do I report? Report at the time and place indicated on your summons unless you are notified by the court not to appear. The night before you are scheduled to report, call the number on your summons to be certain that you still must appear. If the message is not clear or silent, report as scheduled. You will be directed to a courtroom or given other instructions.

What happens next? In the courtroom, the judge will tell you about the case and introduce you to the lawyers and others involved in the case. You also will take an oath promising to answer all questions truthfully.

After you are sworn in, you and other potential members of the jury will go through a process known as "voir dire," or jury selection. During jury selection, the judge and the lawyers question you and other members of the panel to find out whether any of you have any knowledge of the case, a personal interest in the outcome, or any interest in the case that might make it hard to be impartial.

Each side is allowed to remove a certain number of prospective jurors without giving a reason for doing so (called peremptory challenges).

What types of cases will I hear?

Jury cases are either civil or criminal. Civil cases are disputes between private citizens, corporations, governments, government agencies, or other organizations. Usually, the party that brings the suit (the plaintiff) asks for money damages for some wrong alleged to have been done.

The state brings a criminal case against one or more persons accused of committing a crime. The person accused of the crime is the defendant. The state must prove "beyond a reasonable doubt" that the defendant committed the alleged crime.

How long will I serve? Most trials last one to two days. However, trials can last up to several weeks, however, and in rare occasions several months, depending on the complexity of the issues and evidence in a particular case. The judge will inform you during jury selection as to the anticipated length of the trial. You will have the chance to tell the judge whether a multi-day trial will present a hardship for you. If a trial lasts more than one day, the judge will tell you where and when to report the next day. In virtually all cases, you will be allowed to go home for the night.

During the trial, you may have to wait in the courtroom while the judge and lawyers settle questions of law. Judges and other courtroom staff will do everything they can to minimize the waiting both before and during the trial. You may bring reading material for use during waiting periods.

Parties often settle their differences moments before the trial is scheduled to begin. In such instances, the judge will instruct you on what to do next.

What about my job? Your employer cannot deprive you of your job because of job time you lose as a result of service as a juror.

Other important information.

You can generally bring an electronic device (for example: laptop, cell phone, MP3 player), but use is limited or prohibited in certain areas, such as the courtroom or jury deliberation rooms. Check with your jury commissioner or the court website about restrictions. Dress appropriately for the seriousness of the proceedings in clothing that is neat, clean, comfortable and not revealing. You may wish to bring a sweater. Children shall not accompany you to jury service.

What do I wear? To observe courtroom decorum, consider how you would dress for an office job, or for a job interview. Generally, no shorts, T-shirts with logos, uniforms, or revealing tops are permitted.

What if I have an emergency?

Your absence can delay a trial. It is important that you report each day you are required. If an emergency occurs, such as 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. Here is the usual order of events:

1. Selection of the jury and appointment of foreperson
2. Opening statements
3. Presentation of the evidence
4. Jury instructions
5. Closing arguments
6. Jury deliberations
7. Announcement of the verdict

