

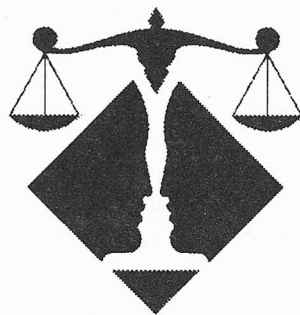
ABOUT

Deliberations (Or Deciding A Verdict)

After the facts of a case have been presented by each party the jury is sent to a jury room to decide the verdict. Inside the jury room the jury members will select a foreperson whose job it is to collect ballots and to announce the verdict when asked to do so by the judge. All jurors are individually independent and equal. **No one juror has more "weight" or power than any other juror.**

In reaching a decision jurors must remember to:

- keep an open mind;
- discuss the facts of the case by sharing information and points of view;
- apply "jury instructions" appropriately;
- decide on a verdict that is based on the facts of a case as they were presented **inside** the courtroom.



OVERVIEW OF JURY DUTY

THIRTY-FIFTH DISTRICT COURT

660 Plymouth Road
P.O. Box 3050-C
Plymouth, MI 48170-1890

(734) 459-4740

Office Hours: Monday thru Friday
8:30 am - 4:25 pm



John E. MacDonald
District Judge

Ronald W. Lowe
District Judge

OVERVIEW OF JURY DUTY



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IN THE

THIRTY-FIFTH DISTRICT COURT

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WHY

We Have a Jury System

Under the Constitution a U.S. citizen is given certain rights; the right to a jury trial is **one** of those rights.

Participation in jury trials provides citizens with an opportunity to:

- incorporate community values into dispute resolution;
- guard against abuse of power by legislatures, businesses, and government agencies;
- avoid arbitrary or unfair actions by individual judges;
- protect the rights of all citizens.

WHY

Jurors Are Selected

Jurors are important and necessary participants in our justice system. Legal disputes (cases) often will not actually go to trial (be heard by a judge or jury), because citizens are prepared to participate as jurors - sitting and waiting in the jury room.

A jury panel that is ready to hear a case can motivate all parties involved in a dispute to reassess their risks and claims. Much like in a game of poker, the attorneys for both sides of a dispute think that they have the "winning hand." The mere presence of the jury "calls all bluffs." For example, it is common for a court to schedule 30 to 60 cases for trial on a single day because the jury is waiting and available. Typically, **only three to five of those cases will actually go to a trial as scheduled!**

HOW

Jurors Are Selected

Step One:

Once a year the Secretary of State will compile a list of citizens who may be eligible to serve on a jury from a list that identifies citizens who possess a driver's license or State of Michigan identification card.

Step Two:

Identified citizens are mailed a Juror Qualification Questionnaire. After the questionnaire is completed, returned, and evaluated, a "qualified" citizen may be called to serve on a jury.

WHAT

To Expect If You Are Selected

As an active participant in the justice system, a citizen who serves as a juror can expect to:

- be treated with dignity and respect;
- have court facilities and procedures identified and explained, as needed throughout the assigned jury duty service period;
- have questions answered by the appropriate court staff member as allowed by law;
- be informed of and comply with rules and guidelines that are designed to ensure the integrity of our legal process.

WHEN

You Are Inside A Courtroom

Once a trial by jury begins, "qualified" citizens are convened inside the courtroom. A juror may be excused if the judge determines there is a valid reason that the juror should not serve in the case. In addition, each lawyer has a right to excuse a certain number of jurors without giving a reason for doing so. This jury selection process is called *voir dire*.

There are special rules and considerations that attorneys apply and make when conducting *voir dire*. The fact that a citizen is excused from jury service does **NOT** reflect on the citizen's fitness to serve. A citizen who is excused from jury duty on one trial may very well be selected to serve on another.

The judge is the final voice of authority for courtroom procedures.

Jurors are expected to pay close attention to and strictly follow all instructions given by the judge.

