

COVID-19 SPECIAL JUROR FAQ'S

Why is the Court summoning jurors during a pandemic? In the midst of these uncertain times, the Crawford County Judicial Center is working hard keeping the public and the staff safe. We are taking steps to focus on your safety and well-being as a juror during the public health emergency from COVID-19. In the State of Pennsylvania we need to be looking ahead to the future when we will be easing up, to a degree, on the current restrictions. The right to a jury trial is a fundamental constitutional requirement of our form of government. We also recognize that victims of crime and those accused of crimes have a constitutional right to have those accusations addressed by a trial by jury. Therefore, we will be resuming criminal jury trials on a limited basis beginning October 12, 2020.

What steps are being taken to ensure health and safety standards? The Court takes public health and safety seriously. Jurors will be spread out to maintain social distancing guidelines. Frequent, rigorous cleaning and sanitizing protocols are in place. Access to certain common areas and amenities (coffee maker, refrigerators, water coolers) will be restricted. Face masks are required at all times and hand sanitizer is available.

Are masks being provided to jurors? We ask all jurors to bring their own masks, as they are required before you arrive at the Judicial Center. However, if a juror arrives without a mask, one will be provided. If a juror's mask malfunctions in any way (e.g. strap breaks) a replacement will be provided.

What happens at lunch? Jurors will be given a lunch break. The Judge will announce the given time for said lunch break. Jurors are encouraged, but not required, to bring their own lunch in a portable container. Jurors are also encouraged to bring their own water bottle. Please, no glass bottles. Please make sure your containers and bottles are able to be tightened to reduce spills and/or messes. There are several restaurants around the Judicial Center in the city of Meadville if you prefer.

What if I am unable to serve as a juror? If you have established travel plans, a family or work conflict, a health problem, or some other type of temporary problem with jury duty, we may be able to reschedule your jury service for another time. You should call the **Crawford County Court Administrator's Office, between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., by calling (814) 333-7498** as soon as possible after receiving your notice.

What if I have symptoms of illness? If you are currently experiencing flu like symptoms (fever, cough or shortness of breath), have been diagnosed with COVID-19 in the last 30 days, been directed to quarantine/self-monitor for COVID-19 by a medical authority or employer, or are a caregiver for/have had close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 in the last 30 days, please DO NOT report for your service; instead, you must contact the **Crawford County Court Administrator's Office, between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., by calling (814) 333-7498** as soon as possible after receiving your notice.

What if I am a “high risk” individual? The CDC defines at-risk people as anyone over age 65 or people with underlying health conditions. Jurors who are considered high or medium risk for exposure to the COVID-19 virus should contact the Court Administrator’s Office at (814) 333-7498 and may be directed not to report as summarized. The Crawford County Court Administrator’s Office should also be made aware if someone has traveled outside of Pennsylvania within the last fourteen (14) days or have had direct contact to a person diagnosed with the virus in the last fourteen (14) days, or has a high probability of having the virus but that has not been confirmed by a test.

What if I fail (refuse) to appear without explanation? A Judge has many options to address failure to appear, including contempt. However, our Judges are certainly aware of the current health situation. Please contact the Court Administrator’s Office at (814) 333-7498 rather than fail to appear without explanation.