

JUROR FAQs

How was I chosen? Names are randomly selected by computer from the County's per capita tax records and lists from the Pennsylvania Departments of Transportation, Voter Registration, Welfare, and Revenue. There is always the chance that a person may never be called while another may be called several times.

Do I qualify as a juror? You must be a Pennsylvania citizen and a resident of Crawford County; you must be able to read, write, speak and understand the English language; and you must NOT have been convicted of a crime punishable by imprisonment for more than one year (such as a felony or a misdemeanor of the first or second degree).

Am I exempt from serving? You are exempt if **1)** you are in active service in the PA or U.S. armed forces, **2)** you are an immediate family member of a victim of a criminal homicide, or **3)** you served as a juror within the past three years (*unless* you served for only 1 or 2 days).

Can I be excused from serving? You are automatically excused if you are **over** 74 years of age or are currently breastfeeding, and do not wish to serve. The Court may excuse you (permanently, or until a later term of court) if you demonstrate "undue hardship or extreme inconvenience," but you must report unless notified that you are excused; you will then have another opportunity to explain your particular circumstances to the presiding judge.

Note: The Court Administrator's Office will review your juror questionnaire in determining whether you are qualified to serve, exempt from serving, or are asking to be excused.

How long will I have to serve? Unless you are one of the twelve persons selected to be on a jury, or an alternate (there are usually two), you can expect your service to be brief – usually two or three hours on the morning you are told to report. Even if selected to be on a jury or an alternate, you normally will not serve more than three days, and if the trial is expected to last longer than that, you will be asked during jury selection whether this would substantially inconvenience you. By appearing for jury selection, and perhaps serving on a jury or as an alternate, you will then have completed your service, and probably will not need to return during this trial term.

Note: **Frequently, no trials are conducted during a trial term, due to pleas, settlements, etc.**

What about my job? What protection do I have while serving as a juror? By law, you cannot be fired, threatened or otherwise coerced because you have been called for jury duty. Any employer who violates this law is guilty of a crime. If an employer penalizes an employee for serving on jury duty, the employee may also bring a civil action against the employer to recover lost wages and benefits as well as attorney fees. However, there is no legal requirement that an employer pay normal wages while the employee is serving jury duty. Many employers compensate employees so that jurors suffer no monetary loss, but if your employer does not provide paid leave for jury duty, this by itself does not excuse you from serving.

Why do I have to wait until the night before to find out if I have to report? The number of jurors that may be needed is usually not known until the start of, or even during the trial term, and an adequate number of jurors must be summoned to cover potential trials. We try to summon as few jurors as possible. In the past, all jurors summoned were required to report to the Courthouse each day and then sent home if they were not needed. As a convenience to jurors, we established the call-in system to avoid an unnecessary trip to the Judicial Center. If you have supplied us with your text number or email address, we will also notify you if and when it is determined that you will not be needed.

What should I wear? There is no special dress code for jurors except good taste and common sense. Clothing such as t-shirts with offensive language or pictures, halter tops, and shorts are not permitted. Please remember that the parties in a case will look to jurors for justice, and that they are more likely to put their faith in the system if jurors dress appropriately.

What may I bring with me? You are permitted to bring cellphones and reading materials. Food and beverages are not permitted (snacks will be provided during trial). You should bring your Jury Summons postcard and Parking Pass (if you are able to print it, or were sent one).

When and where should I report? Unless otherwise instructed, you should report between 8:30 and 9:00 a.m. to the east side entrance of the Judicial Center, along Chancery Lane, as more fully explained in the Sheriff's jury duty letter. There will be signs to direct you. There may be other jurors waiting outdoors to get through the screening process, so please dress accordingly for weather conditions.

Where should I park? There is no reserved area for juror parking. With a juror parking pass, you may park free in metered spaces around Diamond Park and on adjacent streets. (A Parking Pass will be available when you report if you have not brought one.) Please do not park in metered city lots, in lots designated for County employees, or in church or other private lots. We cannot have tickets for illegal parking excused.

What security measures will I go through upon entering the Judicial Center? Upon entering the Judicial Center, you will be met by screening personnel who will ask you to remove belts that have metal buckles, and empty all articles in your pockets and place them in plastic bins. You will then be asked to pass through a walk-through metal detector. (Note: Some shoes containing metal reinforcement support or steel toes will activate the detector). If you activate the walkthrough detector you may be asked to step forward and a Deputy Sheriff will use a hand-held metal detector wand. You will experience some delay due to the high volume of people trying to enter at the same time; therefore, please attempt to limit bringing metal items into the Judicial Center. If you have medical implants, prosthetics, body piercing, or devices that contain metal, please advise the screener at the security station. You will be allowed to avoid the walk-through metal detector, if you choose, but the hand-held detector will be utilized.

What hours will I serve if I am selected to be on a jury or as an alternate? Our normal hours for trials are from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. If we need to hold court a little later into the day, the judge will try to tell you in advance.

Will we get breaks? There is generally a one hour break for lunch, and at least a short recess during both the morning and afternoon sessions. Breaks occur after approximately one and one half hours, and if you are on a jury or an alternate and need a break sooner than that, raise your hand and the judge will accommodate you. Staff will be available to address your concerns, and will take all appropriate measures to keep everyone safe with regular security screenings, health checks, social distancing, and disinfecting.

What about meals? Once all the evidence has been admitted, the judge has instructed the jury, and the jury is sequestered for the purpose of deliberating upon a verdict, jurors must eat together, with meals provided at county expense. Otherwise, you are on your own. You may go home if you live nearby, or you may purchase items from the vending machines in the Judicial Center, eat at a nearby restaurant, or (after the first day) bring a lunch.

What and when do I get paid? Juror pay is set by the Legislature at \$9 a day for the first 3 days of service, and \$25 a day for any additional days. Mileage is reimbursed at the rate of 17¢ per mile, as set by the Legislature. The Crawford County Finance Office will mail you a check shortly after your service has been completed. You have the option of donating your pay and mileage reimbursement to Crawford County Children and Youth Services, as explained in the Juror Donation Program brochure. You will otherwise need to complete an IRS Form W-9. A Juror Compensation Donation Form and a Form W-9 will be provided when you report, if you have not completed and brought one of these.

Will I be able to use my cell phone or other electronic device while serving as a juror? Under Pennsylvania law, jurors are not permitted to use a cell phone, computer, or other electronic device with communication capabilities while in attendance at trial or during deliberations. Jurors may not use these devices to obtain or disclose information about a case in which they have been chosen as prospective or selected jurors. Cell phones, computers, or other electronic devices may be used during breaks or recesses, but may never be used to obtain or disclose information about the case. NOTE: A juror who violates this rule may be found in contempt of court and sanctioned. Sanctions may include, but are not limited to, the confiscation of the electronic device.

What if I still have questions? Please call Court Administration at 814-333-7498.