

**WELCOME TO
FEDERAL PETIT JURY SERVICE**



**United States District Court
District of Maine**

Juror Information Handbook

Welcome

Thank you for serving as a juror in the United States District Court for the District of Maine. We are aware of the burden that jury service places on you, your family, and your business or employer. But, did you know that jurors are an essential component of our legal system? Because the United States Constitution requires that we use grand juries to decide whether someone should be charged with a federal crime and because the Constitution also requires that we empanel juries to decide most civil and criminal trials, we simply could not do our work without you.

We want your experience as a juror to be a positive and rewarding one. Be assured that you will be treated with dignity and respect while you are with us, and that we will make every effort to respect your valuable time. When you have questions or concerns, we will try our best to answer them as completely and quickly as we can. Below are answers to some Frequently Asked Questions, which we hope will answer most of your questions. However, if you have additional questions, please feel free to contact us at the Clerk's Office. We are here to help you.

Jury Phone

Court schedules change quite frequently. It is important that you **call the Jury Phone after 6:00 p.m. on the night before you are to report** to confirm that you are required to report. Be sure to have your juror number in front of you when you call.

1. Call **1-800-578-5708**;
2. When you hear the court message press 6;
3. The message will inform you of any changes to the Court's schedule;
4. The message will refer to jurors by their juror numbers.
--Your juror number can be found on your summons. Your juror Number is the last three digits. For example, juror number 125 would look like this:

JUROR # 01-125

Important: You will not be paid for an appearance if you were instructed on the jury phone not to appear.

Rotary Dial Phones

NOTE: If you do not have a touch tone phone, you must call the Clerk's Office on the business day prior to jury selection to confirm that you are required to report.

Forms to Complete

Be sure to **complete the enclosed forms** and return them in the reply envelope within five days. (Even if you have previously completed these forms, you must complete them again.)

Frequently Asked Questions

How are jurors selected?

Potential jurors are randomly selected by a computer from Maine voter registration lists.

What is the difference between a petit jury and a grand jury?

- **Petit Jury:** A petit jury is a trial jury for both civil and criminal cases. The petit jury listens to evidence offered during a trial and returns a verdict. A verdict in a civil case may be a finding for the plaintiff or for the defendant. A verdict in a criminal case finds the defendant guilty or not guilty.
 - **Grand Jury:** A grand jury does not determine guilt or innocence, but whether probable cause exists that a crime was committed. Generally, the evidence is presented by an attorney for the government. The grand jury determines from this evidence whether the government files formal charges against one or more individuals. If probable cause exists, the grand jury will return a written statement of the charges called an "indictment."
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What is the length of service for a petit juror?

Petit jurors serve for two months. You will serve during The months to be served, ex: March and April.

- During this period, the Court will hold two jury selection dates, one per month, on the following dates: Dates of Jury Selection; ex: March 3rd and April 7th .
 - On each jury selection date, juries will be selected for all cases that will be tried in that month.
 - If on your first jury selection date, First date for Jury Selection; Example: March 3rd , you are not selected to serve on a trial, you will have completed that month's jury service. However, you may also be required to report for the second date of jury selection on Second date of Jury Selection; Example: April 7th. Call the jury phone to confirm that it is necessary for you to report (see instructions above.)
 - If you are selected to serve on a jury on the first jury selection date, you may be required to report on the second jury selection date if the trial ends before the second jury selection date on Second date for Jury Selection; Example: March 3rd . Call the jury phone to confirm that it is necessary for you to report (see instructions above.)
 - Typically, trials last from two to five days, but they are occasionally longer.
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What if I fail to appear when summoned?

Any person summoned for jury service who fails to respond or appear may be ordered by the Court to appear at their own expense to show good cause for their failure to comply with a summons. Any person failing to show good cause for non-compliance with the jury summons may be fined not more than \$100 or imprisoned for not more than three days, or both, pursuant to Title 28, United State Code, Section 1866.

What if I will be absent during jury service?

Occasionally, jurors may need to request a temporary absence from jury service due to scheduled vacations, business obligations, or other important and/or unavoidable events.

If you wish to be temporarily excused from jury service, you must:

- **Write a letter** to request a temporary excuse, explaining the circumstances of your absence – **all requests to be excused must be in writing.**
- Send the letter to the Clerk of Court with your completed questionnaire; the court must receive your request well before your scheduled appearance date.

Do not attempt to obtain a temporary excuse for absence using any other method than that described above.

- **Do not call the Clerk's Office** to request an excuse - **all requests to be excused must be in writing** and sent to the Clerk of Court with your completed questionnaires well before your scheduled appearance date.
- Do not have your employer or anyone else call or write on your behalf – all requests to be excused must be from the juror.

The Court will make every effort to accommodate temporary absences, however, these absences will not permanently excuse you from jury duty.

What if jury duty is an undue hardship or extreme inconvenience?

If serving as a juror would be an extreme inconvenience or undue hardship for you, you must:

- **Write a letter** explaining the circumstances of the hardship or inconvenience – all requests to be excused must be in writing.
- Send the letter to the Clerk of Court with your completed questionnaire. The court must receive your letter and questionnaire well before your scheduled appearance date,

Do not attempt to obtain an excuse for hardship or inconvenience using any other method than that described above.

- **Do not call the Clerk's Office** to request an excuse – all requests to be excused must be in writing and sent with your completed questionnaires and received well before your scheduled appearance date,

Do not have your employer or anyone else call or write on your behalf – all requests to be excused must be from the juror.

What if I am over 70 years old?

If you are over 70 years of age, and would like to be excused, you need only request this in a letter to the Clerk of Court and it will be granted.

Will I be compensated for jury service?

While serving as a juror, you will be compensated as follows:

Attendance Fee: A \$40.00 attendance fee is paid for each day you are required to report for jury duty. Federal employees will not receive any attendance fee since they will continue to receive their regular pay while they are performing jury service.

Mileage: Mileage is paid at a rate of .55 cents per mile round trip from your residence to the court, or the cost of public transportation. Please check your odometer readings on your first trip so that you can furnish the court with the number of miles traveled upon your arrival. You will also be compensated for any tolls that you incur round trip between your residence and the courthouse.

Overnight: If you travel more than one hundred miles from your residence to the courthouse, you may stay overnight on the evening prior to your report date, and while you are serving. You are responsible for payment of any bills you receive for lodging and meals, and you must submit your hotel receipt to the jury clerk in order to be reimbursed at the current per diem rate.

Payment: Typically your check for jury service will be mailed to you within one week from the completion of your service.

Will jury service affect my employment?

Under federal statute, Title 28 USC § 1875, your permanent employer is prohibited from discharging, threatening to discharge, intimidating or coercing you because of your jury service.

Directions to the Courthouse and Parking and Security Instructions

Directions to the Courthouse

The Edward T. Gignoux United States District Courthouse is located at **156 Federal Street, Portland, Maine.**

FROM INTERSTATE 295 (from either the north or the south):

Exit onto Franklin Street, exit #7. At the fourth traffic light, turn right onto Congress Street. At the first traffic light, turn left onto Pearl Street. Turn right onto Federal Street. The courthouse will be on your left, at 156 Federal Street.

Free Parking Available to Jurors

In Portland free parking for all federal jurors is available at one of two parking facilities: The Cumberland County Parking Garage and the Temple Street Parking Garage. (Directions below)

Directions to Free Parking for Jurors

While serving as a juror, free parking is available to you at the following garages:

Cumberland County Parking Garage – Entrance on Newbury Street

Traveling on Interstate 295:

Exit onto Franklin Street, exit #7. At the fourth traffic light, turn right onto Congress Street. At the first traffic light, turn left onto Pearl Street. Turn left onto Federal Street and follow this for one block to the parking garage, use the second entrance.

Temple Street Parking Garage – Entrances at Exchange Street and Temple Street

Traveling on Interstate 295:

Exit onto Franklin Street, exit #7. At the fourth traffic light, turn right onto Congress Street. At the second traffic light, turn left onto Temple Street. Halfway down the block, just before the Nickelodeon Movie Theater, turn left into parking garage.

Bring the parking ticket issued at the garage with you when you report for jury duty so that it can be validated when you check in. You should not park on the street or at a parking meter. There will not be enough time to leave the courthouse during your jury service to pay meter charges and the court will not reimburse you for any parking violations you incur.

***Note**

Please DO NOT park at the Top of the Old Port parking lot. Parking cannot be validated for that parking lot.

**Courthouse
Security
Guidelines**

When you enter the federal courthouse, you will have to go through a security checkpoint. Your bags and overcoats will be x-rayed, and you will be asked to walk through a metal detector. To speed this process, please note the following restrictions and leave these items at home:

- Cell phones, beepers, pagers (You may leave a cell phone with the Court Security Officer if you cannot leave it at home.)
 - Computers
 - Cameras
 - iPods, radios and other electronic devices
 - weapons, or anything that may be construed as a weapon (e.g. knives, scissors, mace or pepper spray, lighters)
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**Still have
questions?**

If, after reading this material, you still have questions you may contact the jury administrator, Devon Richards by:

1. phone - (207)780-3356 extension 2247, or
2. e-mail – ptljury@med.uscourts.gov , or
3. visit our website at www.med.uscourts.gov .