

JUSTICE COURT JUROR INFORMATION

POTENTIAL JUROR

Each year the District Court provides Justice Court with a list of potential jurors. This list is randomly selected by computer from the rolls of voter registration and Montana driver's licenses for the county. At the beginning of each fiscal year a pool of 250 potential jurors are selected from the list of registered voters and driver's licenses for the current fiscal year's jury pool. If a juror is drawn for that year's jury pool, a questionnaire is mailed to the potential juror requesting specific information to determine eligibility and ability to serve as a potential juror. If a potential juror is selected to serve on a jury, the Justice Court will send notice to the potential juror informing them of the date and time service may be necessary. A potential juror may or may not ever be summoned for jury service during the fiscal year. However, if a juror is selected in the Justice Court jury pool they will not be selected as a juror for the District Court jury pool.

The Judge will excuse potential jurors who have a physical or mental disability. The Judge may also grant a postponement of jury service if service would result in an unnecessary hardship or inconvenience. Any hardship or inconvenience must be real. Postponements are not common. Jury service is a solemn obligation and a burden of citizenship. A person cannot avoid this responsibility simply because it is inconvenient. Any claimed hardship must be real and substantial. A person who fails to appear when summoned could be subject to a Contempt charge and fine.

A potential juror should let their employer/teachers know they are "on call" for jury service, but should not take time off from work or school until having been summoned to appear in Justice Court.

JURY PANEL

When a jury panel is needed, approximately 24 persons from the potential juror list will be notified when to appear for service. From those drawn, six jurors and possibly one alternate will be chosen to hear the case.

Justice Court jury trials usually are completed in one or two days depending on the case. If a person receives a notice to appear for jury duty, the notice will advise of the date and time of the trial. It is important to arrive at the Courthouse on time. One person arriving late can hold up a trial and inconvenience many people.

Cases often settle just prior to trial. The parties are given a specific date in which to reach settlement so the Court may notify the potential jurors of a cancellation or postponement. However, if settlement has not occurred by this date it is possible that the attorneys for each side or the Defendant, if they are representing themselves, will be responsible for notifying the juror of settlement prior to trial.

Montana law sets the compensation and mileage rate for jurors and potential jurors. For questions regarding jury service, call (406) 436.2503.