

PETIT JUROR GUIDE

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
Pittsburgh Division
13 County Jurisdiction
(NOT A COUNTY COURT)

Welcome to the United States District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania. The federal courthouse is located in downtown Pittsburgh in the U. S. COURTHOUSE BUILDING AT THE CORNER OF SEVENTH AVENUE AND GRANT STREET. Be aware that our court IS NOT associated with the Federal Building OR the Allegheny County Courthouse building in downtown Pittsburgh. Your term of jury service is determined by the court. During your term of service, we ask that you use good judgment in attire (no shorts, tank tops, torn jeans, flip flops, tee shirts, etc.). Business casual is appropriate. The Court asks that the rules of etiquette be followed in the courtroom.

Firearms, pocket knives, scissors, razors, mini batons, etc., are NOT permitted in the courthouse. These items, as well as any others that can be construed as a weapon, will be confiscated at the entrance of the courthouse by security officers. You and any personal belongings brought into the building will be required to pass through electronic security equipment. While cell phones are permitted in the building (turned off) for now, cameras and recording devices are NOT. Cell phones with these features MAY be retained by court security until you exit the building. Picture taking and video/voice recording is PROHIBITED throughout the entire Courthouse.

JUROR HANDBOOK

The juror handbook is intended to inform you of your responsibilities as a federal juror. The handbook will acquaint you with terms and procedures you will use and hear in the courtroom. You are urged to review the handbook.

PROTECTION OF JUROR'S EMPLOYMENT U.S. CODE 28 USC 1875 SECTION (a)

"No employer shall discharge, threaten to discharge, intimidate, or coerce any permanent employee by reason of such employee's jury service or attendance in connection with such service, in any court of the United States." You should contact the court immediately if such a situation arises.

SUMMONS FOR JURY SERVICE

Immediately, complete the "Jury Information" portion of this form and return it in the self addressed stamped envelope also enclosed in this packet. Follow the "Instructions for Request for Excuse/Deferral for Hardship" for additional information on being excused from Jury Service. **The Jury Information Form and Excuse/Deferral process must be completed and returned within 5 business days of receiving the summons.**

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INSTRUCTIONS FOR REQUEST FOR EXCUSE/DEFERRAL FOR HARDSHIP
Include all information requested in steps 1-4 in the self-addressed stamped envelope and return it within 5 days of receipt.

1. You must complete the lower portion of summons (Jury Information Form). Complete **ALL** fields, **including phone numbers**.
2. Requests for excuse must be written and signed **by the juror** and be included with juror information form.
3. Hardship requests **must** be specific (dates, times, etc). The court may grant partial excuses, depending on the nature of request.
4. **Additional documentation** for two categories is **required along with written the juror request** for excuse and is to be included with juror information form.
 - a. *If medical*, a doctor letter is **ALSO** required explaining why he/she does not feel you should serve (in layman terms) & with original signature (“for medical reasons” will not be accepted)
 - b. *If financial*, a letter from the employer is **ALSO** required (signed) stating company policy concerning pay while serving as a juror.

Once correspondence is received, processed, and reviewed, you may check the status of your excuse request by calling the Automated Juror Phone System at the toll free number listed above. **Please allow 10 business days before beginning to check your status.** You will also need to have your nine digit number to access this information.

All summoned jurors, whether requesting an excuse or not MUST return the juror information form fully completed and signed in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope. Excuse requests and any required supporting documentation should also be sent with the form.

In **MOST** cases, excuse requests that are granted are TEMPORARY (including financial hardship) and you will be summoned again. We cannot defer to a specific date, therefore, you can be summoned again **AT ANY TIME**. Jury duty **CAN** be deferred twice, however, upon the third summons, requests are denied. This Court has trial terms every two weeks all year.

WHAT IS A TWO DAY/ONE TRIAL TWO-WEEK TERM?

You will call 1-866-498-8562 **AFTER** 4:00 on

- ✓ Friday, Monday and Tuesday each week to check on reporting status for Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday
- ✓ You could report twice
- ✓ If selected:
 - most trials start immediately
 - most trials are held Monday-Friday
 - you are excused at end of trial from further service

Juror Automated Phone System toll free 1-866-498-8562.

You will need your nine-digit participant number to access information. **If you appear for jury duty and have not been instructed to report on the message when you call, you will not be authorized to collect any juror fees or expense reimbursement.**

JUROR IDENTIFICATION

When you report, a juror badge will be issued to you. **The juror badge is to be worn at all times while in the courthouse.** You also have been assigned a 1, 2, OR 3 digit juror number. It is hand-printed on your “Official Notice”. This assigned number is used once you report and will be further explained at

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that time. It is not to be confused with your 9 digit participant number which is used when you phone our toll-free number for instruction. (See Reporting Date Instructions Next Page)

HOURS

Generally speaking, your duty hours will run from 8:30 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. Monday through Friday. **You must plan on being here a full day.** However, if selected as a trial juror, the courtroom deputy clerk or a judge will verbally inform you daily as to the time to report for jury service in his/her courtroom. You will normally be released by a jury clerk or a courtroom deputy at the close of the day. You are not to leave at any time until officially dismissed. Your lunch break will be announced by a jury clerk or a courtroom deputy.

Handicapped jurors with the proper identification, should contact the jury office at 412-208-7540 PRIOR TO THE START OF THE TWO WEEK TERM to make any necessary or special arrangements.

JUROR PAYMENT

Jurors receive \$40.00 for each day in attendance. Jurors also receive reimbursement for travel mileage at the current government rate from their residence to the courthouse (round trip). Parking fees will be reimbursed up to \$15.00 per day upon submission of a validated receipt. Jurors staying in hotels, due to a lengthy commuting distance between their residence and the courthouse (**MUST BE 60 MILES OR MORE ONE WAY TO QUALIFY**), will receive a subsistence payment of \$168.00 per day. Hotel receipts are required. Daily travel fees (mileage) will not be paid to jurors who stay overnight in a hotel. Jurors who stay with friends or relatives will receive a reduced subsistence payment of \$54.00.

Checks for jurors are prepared and mailed twice each month. You will receive a statement of all fees paid separately from your check. This statement can be used as verification of days of service and the amount of jury pay that you received. If you have any questions concerning payment or need further information for your employer, contact the jury office. The attendance fee that a juror receives (\$40.00 per day) is taxable income and must be reported to the Internal Revenue Service. Only jurors receiving \$600.00 or more will receive a 1099 form at the end of the calendar year.

The Clerk's Office is unable to arrange hotel accommodations for you. Therefore, you should personally contact a hotel of your choice for reservations. The map in this guide shows hotels, however, it is not meant to be an endorsement, as there may be other quality hotels in the area. When making a hotel reservation be certain to state that you are a federal juror to receive any lower government rate that may be available (see special insert w/summons).

Federal employees are required to report their federal status to the jury clerk on their first day of jury service.

WHILE YOU WAIT

JURY ASSEMBLY ROOM (Room 3300)

The Clerk's Office continues to strive to make your wait in the assembly room as comfortable as possible. Books, magazines, some games, television, and wireless internet access via WiFi are available to you for your use while you are waiting in the assembly area. (For WiFi user information and disclaimer, go to www.pawd.uscourts.gov - Court Technology.)

You are encouraged to bring your own reading material or some other item to occupy your time in the event there is a waiting period. At times, it can be lengthy. A kitchen/lounge area is equipped with a microwave and small refrigerator for your use while waiting in the assembly area as well. You are also free to pack a lunch and are encouraged to bring a snack in the event of a lengthy wait. **Meals ARE NOT provided and/or paid for by the Court.** We ask your cooperation in keeping the entire area clean.

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Coffee, tea, and a variety of juices is provided by the court while you wait in the assembly area on your selection day. Bottled water is NOT provided (per GSA regulations) since water is filtered at the faucet in the assembly kitchen and all corridor fountains as well. Restrooms are located in the jury assembly room and jurors are not permitted to leave the assembly room until instructed by Court personnel. Relatives or friends are not permitted to wait in the jury assembly room with the jurors.

The United States Courthouse is a smoke-free building. While waiting in the assembly area, jury personnel are not permitted to allow jurors to leave the building to smoke. You are permitted to smoke outside the building when dismissed for lunch or break by court personnel.

Should an emergency arise in the assembly room, immediately notify one of the jury clerks. If an emergency arises during your two week term, or while you are on your way to the court in the morning, please call 412-208-7540 after 8:30 A.M.

The Clerk's Office cannot be responsible for items lost or stolen while you are on jury service. The courthouse undergoes routine fire alarm drills. You are requested to remain in the assembly room should the alarm sound and wait for instruction from jury personnel. In the unlikely event of an actual fire, court personnel will come to escort you safely out of the building.

COURTROOMS

Voir dire and subsequent jury selection usually is conducted in the courtroom. No food, drink, or reading material is permitted in the courtroom and all electronic equipment **MUST** be turned off. Use of ANY electronic devices (including, but not limited to, laptops, cell phone usage, text messaging, game playing, internet surfing, etc.) in the courtroom is prohibited. You are reminded that this is a formal court proceeding and proper attire is required (business casual).

REPORTING DATE

Although your summons gives you a date to report, this date is subject to change. Be sure to follow the telephone call-in instructions included in your summons packet sent by the court. **The court is not responsible for any expenses incurred due to the failure to follow instructions concerning reporting for service.** The "Official Notice" instructs you when to begin calling the automated jury phone system on a specific time and date. You will need to have your nine digit number that appears on your summons prior to calling for instructions. The toll free number is:

1-866-498-8562

You may also check on the status of your excuse/defer request by calling the automated number above and following the prompts.

REMEMBER TO BRING YOUR SUMMONS WITH YOU WHEN YOU REPORT FOR SERVICE.

The Court trusts that your experience will be pleasant, rewarding, and memorable. Thank you.

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