

JURY SERVICE

Jury Selection in Ohio

- Jurors are selected by random drawing from lists of registered voters or licensed drivers living in the county or city served by a particular court (may include United States district courts, the common pleas court of each county, municipal courts, and in some cases, juvenile courts).

Juror Requirements

To serve on an Ohio jury, an individual must:

- live in the geographical area served by the particular court;
- be at least 18 years old;
- not have lost the right to jury service by being convicted of certain types of crime (or must have had those rights restored).

Juror Compensation

- Jurors are paid for each day they serve.
- Some courts provide free parking.

Petit Juries and Grand Juries

- Petit jurors are selected to hear and decide a particular case:
 - a criminal case requires 12 jurors;
 - a civil case requires 8 jurors.
- Grand jurors hear evidence about alleged crimes, usually felonies. They:
 - only decide if a person should be *indicted* and tried for committing a crime;
 - do not decide guilt or innocence.

Length of Jury Service

- Usually jurors are *on call* during a one- to three-week period.
- Sometimes they have more than one trial, sometimes none.
- Most jury trials do not last more than two or three days, but a complex trial may last several weeks.
- Jurors may be *sequestered* (separated from others while a trial is going on), generally in a hotel paid for by the court (usually only for high-profile or capital murder cases)

Appearing for Jury Service

Potential jurors:

- Take an oath or affirm they will answer truthfully and fully questions asked by the judge and the attorneys during jury selection.
- Answer questions to uncover reasons why a prospective juror may find it hard to be fair and impartial in the case, such as relationship to someone involved in the case, any past experience or bias, or any health or employment problems that might impact the ability to sit as a juror.
- May be excused without a reason (*peremptory challenge*) or for good reasons (*challenges for cause*).

Juror Rules

Jurors selected for a case must:

- promise to "well and truly" try the case, wait to decide until they hear all the evidence, and follow the judge's instructions about law and procedures;
- pay attention and try to determine the credibility of each witness;
- not discuss the case until evidence has been presented, closing arguments made and judge's instructions given;
- not independently investigate matters involved in the lawsuit or discuss the case with anyone outside the courtroom until after the jury has reached a verdict.

How Jurors Decide Cases

- Jurors listen to evidence and closing arguments, and the judge's instructions about the laws applying to the case, and then decide cases based on the law as it is.
- Jurors go to a deliberation room to try to reach a verdict. They elect a foreperson to keep discussions orderly, make sure issues are fully and fairly discussed, and that every juror has a chance to participate. Jurors may send the judge their written questions.
- Once the jurors agree on a verdict, they sign the verdict form and notify the bailiff. The verdict is read in open court and the judge dismisses the jurors.

Type of Case Determines Number of Jurors Who Must Agree on a Verdict

- In a *civil* case (usually a dispute between two or more persons or companies about money, property, etc.), six jurors (three-fourths of the eight jurors) must agree on a verdict.
- In a *criminal* case (in which a defendant is charged with a crime – a violation of law that includes a penalty), 12 jurors must determine if the accused person is guilty or not guilty, and the verdict must be unanimous.