

SELECTION OF THE TRIAL JURY

Jury selection begins when all jurors, the judge and the parties are once again in the courtroom. A member of the staff will call the names of the jurors present in a random order. When your name is called you will be directed to take a seat in the jury box. After the jurors have been seated, the judge will tell you about the particular case for which you have been selected. The judge and the attorneys will then begin a process called "voir dire", which is simply an effort to get to know a little more about you and your beliefs.

There are no right or wrong answers. Answer as honestly and fully as you can. If you are asked a question that makes you uncomfortable, or that you do not want to answer in public, let the judge know. Your answer can be made in the privacy of the judge's office and will be treated confidentially. During this questioning, the attorneys may ask that certain panel members not serve on the jury in that particular case. This may be for a stated reason called a "challenge for cause," or for no stated reason, called a "peremptory challenge." There is no limit on the number of challenges for cause; there can be no more than six peremptory challenges by each party.

There are usually 14 jurors chosen for each trial, two of whom are alternates. Alternates hear all the evidence presented during the trial but do not take part in reaching the verdict.

Jurors excused from serving in a particular trial should not be offended. Those excused from one trial may be asked to serve on the next.

Court officers will be assigned to assist jurors during the trial and jury selection to protect the jury from outside influences. Any questions that may arise during the trial should be addressed to a court officer who will take it to the judge.

The jurors will be given an oath in which they swear to impartially hear and try the case on the evidence that will be presented. This oath should be taken very seriously. (To view Jury Oaths go to Jury FAQ's.)