

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT OF THE COURT

When you first arrive at many Vermont courthouses, you will have to pass through a metal detector or undergo security screening. This is a routine procedure; no one is permitted to bring a weapon of any sort into a courthouse. Weapons are defined to include firearms, knives of any sort and personal protection sprays.

A court officer or staff person will direct you to the proper place within the courthouse. You will be asked to check in by signing a jury roster or having the barcode on your summons scanned. Be sure to bring your summons to court with you.

Although the court will make every effort to avoid delays, you will, at times, be kept waiting. Jurors are encouraged to bring reading materials or other items with them to the courthouse for these periods.

On your first day, the presiding judge and the court clerk will explain your duties as a juror and give you additional information concerning the jury service experience, what you'll need to know about local policies and procedures and what will be expected of you. This is the time for you to ask questions about jury service or the operation of the court.

Jury selection process for individual trials may then begin immediately or the jurors may be asked to wait once again. While the jurors wait, the judge is usually reviewing cases with attorneys to determine which will go to trial. Very often, cases settle only at the last minute. Some cases do not settle until the jurors are in the courthouse; thus, the jurors are helping to resolve disputes simply by being there. The judges and court personnel understand the inconvenience and annoyance caused by long waiting periods. They try to keep this to a minimum.

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 normal day for the jury begins at 9:00 AM and ends by 5:00 PM.