

## **A JUROR'S GUIDE TO JURY SERVICE IN THE CHIPPEWA COUNTY CIRCUIT COURTS**

**Nathan Liedl**  
**Clerk of Circuit Court**  
**711 North Bridge Street.**  
**Chippewa Falls, WI 54729**

**Phone** 715.726.7758, Option 7  
**Jury Message Line** 715.726.7785  
**Fax** 715.726.7786  
**Hours:** Monday–Thursday 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.  
Friday 7:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

**WELCOME!** You've been chosen for jury service in Chippewa County Circuit Court. The right to a trial by jury is the cornerstone of our country's justice system. As a juror, you have a vital role to play in this state's court system!

Have questions? This brochure's purpose is to answer some of the most common questions asked.

### **So I'm summoned to jury duty...what's next?**

The summons gives you information on what days to report, how to call or check online the night before to make sure the case is still scheduled, and parking. A brief orientation on what will happen in court will be given on your first day.

### **Why me?**

Trial by jury is a cherished constitutional right. Every resident of an area served by a circuit court who is at least 18 years old, a U.S. Citizen and able to understand English is qualified to serve as a juror.

No person who is qualified and able to serve may be excluded on the basis of sex, race, color, sexual orientation, disability, religion, national origin, marital status, family status, income, age, ancestry or physical condition.

A person selected for jury service must be selected at random from a master listing using the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's list of people with motor vehicle licenses or ID cards and must live in the area served by our circuit court.

All qualified individuals must be given an equal chance to be considered for jury duty and have an obligation to serve as jurors when summoned.

### **Do I have to serve?**

Yes - in most instances. The law requires all qualified state citizens be available to serve as jurors.

Not all persons summoned actually serve as a juror. A person may not be selected as a result of a process known as "voir dire" (vwa deer) whereby the Judge and the parties in the case ask questions to determine a potential juror's qualifications or degree of impartiality to serve on a particular trial.

The court may excuse a person from jury service if the court determines the person cannot fulfill the responsibilities of a juror. If the court determines jury service would entail undue hardship, extreme inconvenience, serious obstruction or delay of justice, the court may defer service to a later date. The court may require a person document the basis for any excuse or deferral.

### **How long do I have to serve?**

In Chippewa County, you must be available for jury service for two weeks once in a 4-year period. No person can be required to serve/attend court as a juror for more than 5 days unless more days are needed to complete a specific trial.

### **Do I get paid?**

Yes. Every juror summoned is paid an amount set by the county board (not less than \$16/day, by state statute) for each day of attendance. They may also pay jurors by the half-day. Chippewa County pays \$25.00/day and \$12.50/half-day. A mileage rate is also paid for each mile traveled going to and from the court by the most usual route (\$0.51/mile). You should receive a check 4-5 weeks after service.

### **What about my job?**

Jury service is a civic duty. State law protects your job. Your employer cannot fire you, demote you, threaten or intimidate you because of jury service.

### **What should I wear?**

There is no prescribed dress code so dress comfortably, but avoid extremes in dress; for instance, ragged cutoff jeans/T-shirts or clothing with inappropriate or offensive writing on them.

### **Will I be waiting long?**

Resolving legal disputes can be complex and unpredictable work. Often, cases are settled at the very last minute. When the jury is ready to hear the case, the parties often work out a last minute compromise rather than gamble on what the jury will decide. This may seem very inconvenient to you, but such settlements usually save time for all trial participants – and save the taxpayers' money.

**What if I have a disability?**

If you have a disability, which will require an accommodation by the court, please contact the Clerk of Circuit Court office as soon as possible.

**Can I go home at night?**

Most trials last only one day. When a trial does last longer, the Judge usually adjourns so that you can return home each day at a reasonable hour. Rarely are you required to stay overnight.

**ON BEING A GOOD JUROR...**

What are my duties as a juror?

Now that you may actually have the opportunity to serve on a jury you may be wondering just how to act and what exactly is expected of you as a juror.

You are in a position of responsibility. You are expected to conduct yourself in a way that no one may question your impartiality and integrity as a juror.

The court has developed ten basic, yet very important rules for jurors to follow. They are intended to help maintain order, fairness and impartiality in court proceedings.

*You are the foundation of our judicial system.* Your most important qualifications are fairness and impartiality. Follow these ten rules and you should do just fine.

**#1 Listen carefully and observe.**

Weigh the credibility of witnesses and evaluate exhibits. You must base your decision on all the evidence presented to you.

**#2 Keep an open mind.**

Do not form hasty opinions or conclusions. Wait until all the evidence is presented and closing arguments are made.

**#3 Control your emotions.**

You may be confronted with exhibits or testimony that makes you uncomfortable. Be prepared. You should not give any visual or audible indication that you have been affected.

**#4 Do not discuss the case.**

During the trial, you should not talk about the case to anyone, including other jurors. Such discussions could cause you to form conclusions before all the evidence has been presented.

**#5 Do not read, view or listen to media accounts.**

Newspaper, radio or television reports might present a biased or unbalanced view of the case. You must make your decision based on the evidence presented in court.

**#6 Do not talk with anyone related to the case.**

You should not talk to attorney's, parties, witnesses, or anyone connected to the case. This might be perceived as an attempt to influence your verdict.

**#7 Do not investigate the case on your own.**

Since the only evidence you can consider is that presented in court, you are not allowed to make an independent investigation or to inspect the places involved in the case on your own.

**#8 Report problems to the court.**

If you become aware of anything that causes you concern, whether inside or outside the courtroom, the court should be made aware of it. Report your concern to the bailiff or court clerk outside of the hearing of other jurors. Do not discuss the matter with other jurors.

**#9 Report emergencies to the court.**

If an emergency or illness affects your jury service during a trial, inform the bailiff or court clerk.

**#10 Be on time for court.**

Since each juror must hear all the evidence, tardiness causes delay and wastes everyone's time.

**The Wisconsin Jury Handbook and Orientation Video may be viewed on-line at:**

<https://www.wicourts.gov/services/juror/handbooks.htm>