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Tekst 11

Jury Duty Information

Jurors perform a vital role in the American system of justice. The protection of our rights and liberties is largely achieved through the teamwork of judge and jury who, working together in a common effort, put into practice the principles of our great heritage of freedom. The judge determines the law to be applied in the case while the jury decides the facts. Thus, in a very important way, jurors become a part of the court itself.

Notification of Jury Duty

Persons are notified of jury duty by mail when they receive an official summons to appear for a term of court. Jurors are not recalled after service for one term of court. The summons mailing contains a map to the courthouse, information regarding parking, accommodations if an overnight stay is necessary, as well as the procedure to request a hardship excuse. In most cases there will be a questionnaire which must be completed and returned to the court within three days.

Types and Terms of Service

Petit Jurors are summoned to serve on civil and criminal jury trials held in the District Court. A civil jury consists of six to twelve members. Criminal trials require twelve jurors with a minimum of one alternate. All juries are drawn on the first day you report. If you are not selected, your jury service will be over that day. If selected, a juror serves an average of three to five days during a term of court.

Grand Jurors convene monthly for one to three days during the 12-18 month term of service. The sessions are held in secrecy to determine whether there is sufficient evidence to warrant a true bill of indictment. This is the initial stage of a criminal proceeding. The U.S. Attorney currently has five grand juries; two meet in Columbia, and one each meets in Florence, Charleston and Greenville.

Compensation

The daily attendance fee is \$40.00 payable to all jurors including U.S. Postal Service employees. Full time federal government employees do not receive an attendance fee. Round trip mileage is paid at the rate indicated on the summons. A subsistence fee is paid if an overnight stay is required. The amount of the subsistence fee varies depending on location and season. Parking garage fees, if incurred, will also be reimbursed.

A check for attendance, mileage and subsistence, if any, will be mailed to your home

address approximately three weeks after jury selection.
A separate check will be issued if your service is required for a trial.

Absentees

Jurors who fail to report as directed can be ordered to appear before the court to show cause for his/her failure to comply with the summons. Any person who fails to appear pursuant to such order or who fails to show good cause for noncompliance with the summons may be fined not more than \$1,000, imprisoned not more than three days, ordered to perform community service, or any combination thereof.

Jury Areas

The District of South Carolina is divided into three large jury areas which may require travel to a courthouse some distance from one's home. Since all jurors are selected randomly by computer, a person may be summoned to a courthouse which is not the closest Federal Courthouse to his/her home.

Employment Rights

Federal jurors are protected against discharge or coercion by employers as a result of being called for jury duty. District courts have jurisdiction of these civil actions. A mechanism is provided for the appointment and compensation of counsel for jurors claiming violation by their employers and whose claims are found to have probable merit. The court will provide a certificate of service showing attendance for jurors whose employers require them.

Reporting

Jurors are provided with a toll-free number, 1-866-865-8152, and dialing instructions to access the status of a request for a hardship excuse or postponement as well as reporting information the day before jury selection and throughout their term of service. The recorded message gives changes regarding jury selection and disposition of civil and criminal cases prior to the trial if jury service is no longer needed.

Dress Code

Jury service is a serious civil responsibility. Appropriate dress is required. T-shirts, tank-tops, halter tops, shorts and flip flops are not appropriate.

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