

MICHIGAN SUPREME COURT



Office of Public Information

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

State Supreme Court Recognizes Michigan Citizens for Jury Service during July Juror Appreciation Month, Encourages Others to Serve Throughout the Year

Who gets called? What's required? Are there exemptions? Can jurors talk about the case?

LANSING, MI, July 1, 2013 – The Michigan Supreme Court has designated July as “Juror Appreciation Month” to acknowledge citizens who serve as jurors during the month and to encourage others to answer the call to jury service throughout the year.

The Court noted in a resolution signed by all the justices that “One of the most significant actions a court system can take is to show appreciation for the jury system and for the tens of thousands of citizens who annually give their time and talents to serve on juries.”

Some facts about jury service:

Who gets called? U.S. citizens at least 18 years old who are residents of the court district to which they are summoned. The jury pool for each court comes from a list of licensed drivers and state ID card holders in the court’s district. Those who have been convicted of felony crimes are not eligible for jury service.

What’s required? Jurors must “be able to communicate in the English language” and “be physically and mentally able to carry out the functions of a juror.” If you are seated on a jury, keep an open mind and hear all the evidence, closing arguments, and instructions before deliberating.

Are there exemptions? People over 70 may request an age exemption from jury service. And while you can be called for duty more than once, you cannot be called for duty in a jury panel more than once every twelve months.

What does it pay? Under Michigan law, jurors receive not less than \$25 per day and \$12.50 per half day for the first day of service. For each day after that, jurors receive not less than \$40 per day and \$20 per half day. Jurors also receive mileage for their trips to and from court. If you report for duty but do not get on a jury, you are paid for either the half day or the full depending on how long you were at the court.

What if I don’t show up? You can be held in contempt of court, fined, or even jailed.

What about work? By law, an employer cannot fire, or discipline or threaten such action, against an employee who is summoned for jury duty or chosen to serve on a jury, even for a long trial. Nor can employers force a worker to go beyond normal hours to make up for time spent on jury service. An employer who takes these actions could be guilty of a misdemeanor held in contempt of court.

What's an acceptable reason to be excused from jury service? That's up to the court, but there are a number of grounds for excusing a person from jury service or postponing the service. "Hardship" is one, and that could include lack of transportation, excessive travel, extreme financial burden, undue risk to physical property, and being over 70. "Hardship" also includes situations where your absence from your normal routine would affect another's care or pose a risk to public health or safety. A request for a medical related exemption requires a letter from a doctor. A full-time student who believes that jury service will conflict with his or her classes must submit a copy of the class schedule.

If I serve on a jury, can I talk about the case afterwards? Once the judge discharges you from service, you may discuss the case with others, although you don't have to discuss it. Attorneys in the case often find it helpful to talk to the jurors afterwards. In a high-profile case, the media will also want to talk to jurors.

More information about Juror Appreciation Month, including an audio public service announcement, is online at <http://courts.mi.gov/courts/michigansupremecourt/publicinfooffice/publicoutreach/pages/juror-appreciation-month.aspx>.

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