

JURY DUTY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Jury Trials

Jury trials are scheduled for the first & third Fridays of the month starting at 9:00 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.

For each jury trial, up to twenty prospective jurors are scheduled. The jurors are contacted by phone one to two weeks prior to their scheduled appearance. On the trial date, jurors are to report to the Court at 8:45 a.m. for morning trials and 1:15 for afternoon trials to sign in with the Jury Coordinator at the check in window. The jurors will be contacted by telephone and notified if the trial has been canceled.

From the twenty jurors summoned, only six will actually serve as the final jury panel. The selection process will take place prior to beginning the trial.

Jury trials are held for misdemeanor cases only.

Jury Duty

Jurors from the community are summoned to serve for a period of six months. Two panels are summoned per year. The first panel serves from January 1st through June 30th, and the second panel serves from July 1st through December 31st.

Why is jury service required?

The Sixth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution guarantees the right to a trial by jury in certain cases. Any person who is entitled to a jury trial is entitled to a jury that represents the whole community. It is important that a fair cross section of the City's population is represented on the jury panel to prevent discrimination or bias.

Who is eligible to serve as a juror?

In order to serve as a juror for the City of Sweet Home Municipal Court, a person must be a citizen of the United States, a resident of Sweet Home, and 18 years of age or older. Pursuant to applicable law, citizens 70 years of age or older are encouraged to serve, but will be excused upon request.

How long is my term of jury duty?

Jurors in the City of Sweet Home serve a six-month term. Although you are on call during those six months, jury trials typically last only one day. An average juror spends one to four days of service during the entire term.

Will I get paid for jury duty?

Yes. Jurors are paid \$10.00 for each day that they report for jury service

Will I have to come if the case is settled before the day of trial?

The Jury Coordinator will call you as soon as we are notified of a trial cancellation.

What if my employer does not want me to serve?

Oregon law provides that your employer may not discharge, threaten to discharge, intimidate, or coerce you by reason of your jury service. Any violations are to be reported to the Court.

Can I change the date that I am required to report?

If you are unable to report on the day stated on our summons, you may ask that service be deferred. This request should be made by phone or in writing within ten days of when you receive your summons. Please explain the reason for the delay, and suggest some alternate dates when you will be available for service.

Where is the Court?

Directly behind City Hall in the Annex Building.

Where are the restrooms located?

We ask that you use the restrooms located behind the lobby. There are also restrooms available next door at City Hall.

When will I get to eat lunch?

Usually a lunch break occurs around noon. Occasionally, a Judge may change the schedule for purposes of the trial. You will be free to leave City Hall during lunch.

What if I fail to appear on the day I am summoned?

The Court has the power to order that you appear in court and explain why you were unable to report for jury service. Citizens who do not appear for jury service may be punished for contempt of court.

Where do I check in?

You will check in at the window in the lobby of Sweet Home Municipal Court. Jurors wait in the courtroom after check-in, and we request that you remain there until you are otherwise excused.

May I take my cell phone or other device into the courtroom?

All cell phones and devices must be turned off in the courtroom.

What kind of case will I hear?

Sweet Home Municipal Court hears a variety of traffic violations, criminal traffic, and misdemeanor cases. A case comes to trial when the City of Sweet Home charges a person, called the defendant, with violating a law, such as driving under the influence of alcohol or theft. In criminal cases, after hearing evidence, the jury is asked to return a verdict of either guilty or not guilty.

Will I be chosen for a specific trial?

When a specific trial is about to begin, the Judge will have the Court Clerk randomly select potential jurors from the jury panel. The selected jurors will each take a seat in the jury area. The Judge will introduce the jurors to the parties and their attorneys. The Judge may then outline the issues of the case and may ask the potential jurors some general questions. Next, the parties or their attorneys may also question the potential jurors. This jury selection process is called "voir dire" which is French for "to tell the truth". Attorneys can challenge potential jurors "for cause" by giving the judge a good reason to have a juror excused. Each attorney may also use a limited number of "peremptory" challenges without giving a reason. If you are excused from serving, you should not take it personally because it is not a reflection on your competency or character. The chosen jurors will be sworn in when voir dire is completed, at which time the Judge may instruct the jury about rules to be followed during the trial.

May I investigate or research the case outside of the court?

No, you should never investigate or do research on your own and you must avoid conversations with the parties, witnesses, and attorneys to ensure a fair trial.

Are there certain rules of court that I need to follow?

- Be prompt, because tardiness can cause delays and inconvenience to the Judge, the lawyers, the parties, the witnesses, and other jurors.
- When the court session is about to begin, the Court Clerk will announce, "All rise" as the Judge enters the courtroom. All who are able should then stand up until the Judge is seated.
- A juror must sit in the same seat throughout the trial. This enables the Judge, the clerk, and the lawyers to identify the juror more easily.
- Pay careful attention to each question and answer. Notify the Judge if you cannot hear.
- You must never discuss the case with your fellow jurors until after the Judge instructs you to begin deliberations.
- You may discuss the case with non-jurors only after the jury has reached a verdict.
- Do not listen to radio or television accounts of the trial or read articles about it in the newspapers. If anyone persists in talking to you about the trial or tries to influence you as a juror, you should report that fact to the Judge immediately.

What should I expect when the jury retires for deliberation?

The first job of the jury is to choose a presiding juror who will see that every juror has an opportunity to be heard. The presiding juror will also conduct the balloting when the jury votes on a verdict.

It is important that you wait to formulate your opinion about the verdict until the deliberations begin in the jury room. To avoid arguments in the jury room, listen to everyone's opinion, make your own decision, and vote as your intellect and conscience dictate.

Do I go back into open court?

After the jury votes, the presiding juror will fill out a verdict form. All six members of the jury must sign the verdict form. The jury will then return to the courtroom where the verdict will be given to the Judge, who will announce the jury's verdict in open court. Neither the Judge nor the parties are allowed to make comments to the jurors about the verdict. The attorneys

may obtain an order from the Judge authorizing them to contact or poll a juror. The Judge will then dismiss the jurors.

Important Reminders

- Arrive for jury duty on time for check in.
- Get a good night's rest so that you can concentrate on the proceedings.
- To ensure that you will be paid, follow the sign-in procedure.

Thank you for helping the City of Sweet Home Municipal Court!