

Jury Service Handbook



United States District Court
Eastern District of Tennessee
Chattanooga Division

Website: www.tned.uscourts.gov

Email: chattanooga_jury@tned.uscourts.gov

(Rev. 3/2019)

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Welcome to Jury Service In the United States District Court

This booklet contains some of the information that will be covered in your jury orientation on the first day you report for service. Please keep it for reference.

“Unless you are willing to participate in a democracy by serving, you cannot ensure the life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness...”

- Liberty Boggs, former U.S. Representative from Louisiana

Jury service is not only a duty of citizenship, it is a privilege. Based upon responses to exit questionnaires from previous jurors, we have learned that most jurors find jury service to be interesting and worthwhile. We hope you will also.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION TO REMEMBER

Jury Clerk: *Ashley Williams*

e-mail: chattanooga_jury@tned.uscourts.gov

Phones:

Office: 423-386-3511

Jury Information Line: 1-800-877-0551

To check your status and/or next reporting date:

1. Call the toll-free Jury Information Line at **1-800-877-0551**.
2. Enter your **nine-digit participant number** as listed on the summons form.
3. A recording will inform you of your status **and/or** your next report date.

Address:

**Office of the Clerk, United States District Court
Joel W. Solomon Federal Building
900 Georgia Avenue
Chattanooga, TN 37402**

eJuror may be accessed through our website at www.tned.uscourts.gov

COMPLETING FORMS ONLINE USING *eJuror*

You can use the Court's online *eJuror* program to complete your juror information card and juror questionnaire form electronically. It's fast, easy and secure!

To complete your forms online go to the Court's website at www.tned.uscourts.gov, click on "Jury Information" and then select the *eJuror* link on the left-hand menu. To log on you'll need the 9-digit participant number located to the right of your name and address on your jury summons.

TO: If your name and permanent address are not correct, please make corrections here.

Participant #
325106325

John Doe
123 East Street
Knoxville, TN 37901

The image shows a sample jury summons card. At the top left, there is a black arrow pointing right towards the text "TO: If your name and permanent address are not correct, please make corrections here." Below this text is a standard 1D barcode. To the right of the barcode is the text "Participant # 325106325". Below the participant number, three black arrows point upwards towards the digits "106" of the number. Below the participant number and arrows is the name and address: "John Doe", "123 East Street", "Knoxville, TN 37901". At the bottom of the card, there is a long barcode consisting of vertical bars of varying heights.

Follow the prompts to answer each question. Once your information is submitted online there is no need to mail in your paper forms.

A request for excuse must still be submitted in writing. (See page 5 for more information).

TERM OF SERVICE

The term of actual courtroom service is limited to thirty days over a period of approximately six months (unless of course, a trial lasts for more than thirty days). Realistically, you will serve only five to ten days.

DATE TO REPORT FOR SERVICE

After the original summons is issued, the Clerk's Office will **NOTIFY YOU BY MAIL** of the date you are to report. You will receive this notification approximately one week in advance of when you are to report.

JURY INFORMATION LINE

After being notified of your report date, you may check your status at any time by calling the Jury Information Line at 1-800-877-0551. It is updated every Friday after 2:00 p.m. and is available 24 hours a day — 7 days a week. **YOU SHOULD ALWAYS** call after 5:00 p.m. on the last business day before the specified reporting date. The recorded message will inform you whether there has been any change in your reporting date or time.

Remember, if you do not call the jury information line and report unnecessarily as a result, you will not be paid for your attendance for that day, it will not count as one of your days of attendance, and we cannot verify your attendance to your employer.

The Jury Information Line is a **RECORDED MESSAGE ONLY**. If you need to speak with someone, please call 423-386-3560, Monday - Friday, 8:00 am - 4:00 pm.

REQUESTING EXCUSE

If you have a reason which you feel qualifies you to be excused from jury service, your request for excuse must be in writing. Please state your request as briefly as possible. **A request from your employer will not be considered.**

To request to have your jury service permanently excused or temporarily delayed, **please do ONE of the following:**

EMAIL your request to: [chattanooga jury@tned.uscourts.gov](mailto:chattanooga_jury@tned.uscourts.gov)

OR

MAIL your written request in the enclosed postage-paid envelope along with your other forms.

We will contact you to inform you of the judge's decision. **If the judge denies your request, you will be required to report when notified.** Please make your request in advance. You will not be paid for your attendance if you wait until you report to request an excuse.

SCHEDULING DAYS OFF FROM JURY SERVICE

We make every effort to work around personal commitments, but **YOU MUST NOTIFY THE COURT 14 DAYS IN ADVANCE OF ANY DATE YOU WILL BE UNABLE TO SERVE.**

We are more than happy to work your jury service around your personal schedule, but there is only one way to be sure we don't call you for jury service when you have other commitments. **YOU** have to let us know ahead of time when you have commitments. This is **your** responsibility.

Telephone: 423-386-3511

Email: chattanooga_jury@tned.uscourts.gov

When you are called to report, that means we are expecting you to be here. PLEASE DO NOT WAIT until you get your notification to report to let us know you're not available.

In the event of a last-minute emergency, please call the Clerk's Office at (423) 752-5200.

PAYMENT FOR SERVICE

Attendance Fee: **\$50.00 per day**

Parking Reimbursement: **\$10.00 per day**

Mileage Reimbursement: Mileage is reimbursed for your round-trip mileage from your home to the federal courthouse. This rate changes from time to time. You will be advised of the rate that is in effect during your term of service.

You will be paid for each day of attendance whether or not you are selected to sit on the jury. **The Court cannot pay you if you fail to call the Jury Information Line and report when you are not supposed to.**

If you are employed, you are entitled by law to receive your regular pay from your employer, minus the \$50.00 attendance fee. If you need further information regarding this provision, please request it from the jury clerk when you report for service.

If you are an employee of the United States government, you are not paid an attendance fee, but you will still be reimbursed for mileage.

If your employer needs verification of your attendance for payroll records, please see the jury clerk or courtroom deputy for an attendance slip.

Juror paychecks are prepared approximately every two weeks and mailed directly to your home address. If your address changes during your term of Service, please advise the jury clerk. If you have a question regarding your juror payment, you should contact the jury clerk.

The IRS requires that the \$50.00 attendance fee be included on your tax return (not the mileage) as income. The court does not issue an IRS Form 1099, unless a juror is paid \$600.00 or more in attendance fees in one calendar year.

ATTIRE FOR COURT

Wear comfortable, neat clothing “Sunday dress” is not required. **A sweater or light jacket may come in handy as the courtrooms are usually cold.**

DO NOT WEAR shorts or tank tops, T-shirts, sweat suits or jogging suits, or clothing that is not in keeping with the dignity of the court.

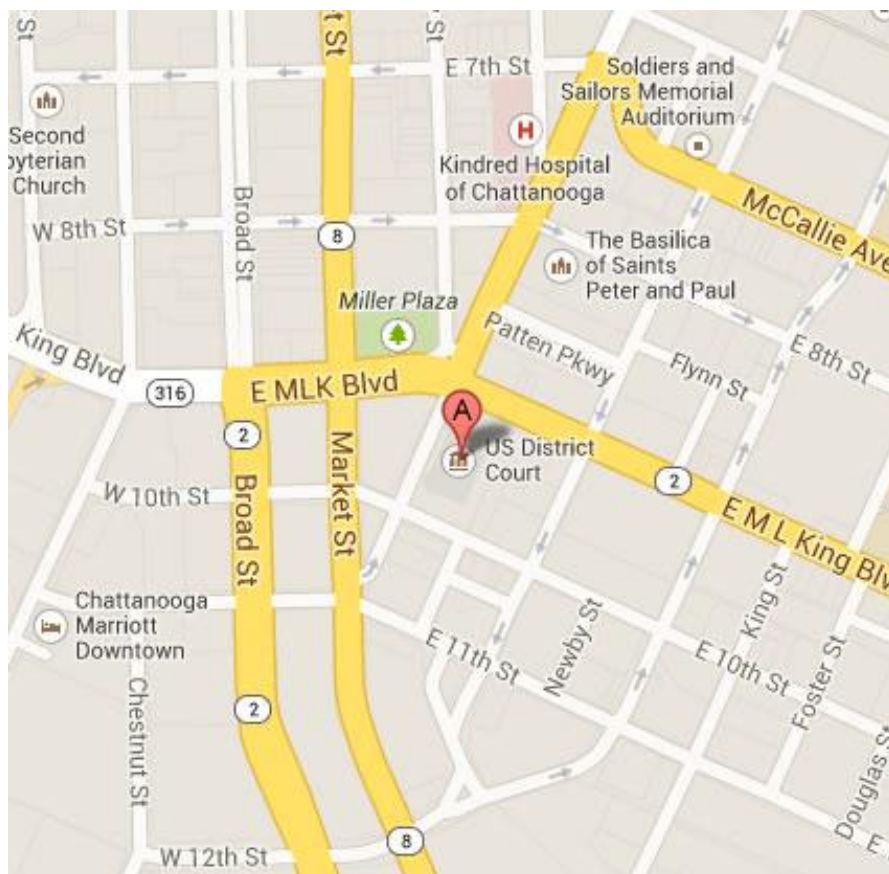
REPORTING LOCATION

The main entrance to the Joel W. Solomon Federal Building faces Georgia Avenue.

On your **FIRST DAY OF JURY SERVICE** report to the **JURY ASSEMBLY ROOM** on the 2nd floor for jury orientation. **IF YOU ARE SITTING ON A JURY** (that is, while the trial is going on) report to the **JURY ASSEMBLY ROOM**.

DO NOT go in the courtroom or wait in the hall and **DO NOT** have any personal conversations with attorneys, parties, or witnesses.

MAP OF DOWNTOWN CHATTANOOGA



DRIVING DIRECTIONS AND PARKING

If arriving from **I-75, I-24, or Hwy 27**: Follow the signs for **HWY. 27 AND DOWNTOWN CHATTANOOGA**. Take **EXIT 1-A, M. L. KING BLVD**. Go **4 BLOCKS EAST** on **M.L. King Blvd.**, past the Sheraton Read House Hotel (on the left) and the Krystal Bldg. (on the right). The U. S. Courthouse and Federal Bldg. will be on the right at the corner of **M.L. King Blvd** and **Georgia Ave**.

DO NOT GO TO THE CITY & COUNTY COURTS BUILDING U.S. DISTRICT COURT IS IN THE FEDERAL BUILDING

The Federal Building does not have a parking lot. There are, however, several lots within just a few blocks. Parking lots are marked with a **P** on the map below.



WARNING: DO NOT PARK AT A PARKING METER!

If you park at a parking meter, you will get a parking ticket which will be your responsibility to pay.

LUNCH

The U.S. Marshal Service does not allow food through the security gate on the morning of jury selection, unless there is a health reason. However, if you are seated as a juror, you may bring your lunch or buy your lunch at a surrounding area restaurant and bring it back to the jury room. The court offers access to a refrigerator, coffee, hot tea, bottled water, snacks, and a microwave to seated jurors. The court does not provide lunches.

NEARBY RESTAURANTS:

- *Mindy B's Deli*, 826 Georgia Ave. (next door in the Volunteer Bldg.)
- *Subway*, 850 Market St. (across the street in Miller Plaza)
- *Jimmy John's Gourmet Sandwiches*, 973 Market St (in the EPB Building)

SECURITY

It is a security requirement that **every** person entering a U.S. Courthouse must present photo identification—a driver’s license or other government issued photo identification. Please make certain to have photo identification with you whenever entering a U.S. Courthouse.

The security gate in the first floor lobby is there for everyone’s safety including that of the jurors. Anytime you enter the building, you will be required to go through the security gate (including after lunch). Remember, this is for everyone’s safety.

The following items are not permitted in the courthouse:

- Electronic devices (including cell phones, laptop computers, pagers, e-books) on the first day. Jurors who have been seated and have submitted a complete *Use of Electronic Devices by Jurors Agreement* may bring electronic devices after the first day (more information below).
- Cameras and recording devices.
- Knives (including pocket knives).
- Mace/pepper spray.
- Scissors.
- Other items that may pose a threat.

CELL PHONES AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES

If you are summoned to appear for jury selection, you may not bring any electronic device into the courthouse on the first day. Unless otherwise instructed by the judge, only individuals who are selected to sit on a jury and who have signed and submitted the “Use of Electronic Devices” Agreement will be allowed to bring a cell phone or electronic device into the courthouse. Electronic devices may only be accessed during breaks and must be turned off and stored in the designated receptacles when not in use. Jurors are expected to be courteous of fellow jurors and court staff by keeping conversation volumes low when in use.

YOU CANNOT:

- Bring the electronic device in the courtroom.
- Use the electronic device to capture photographs, record audio or video, or broadcast audio or video recordings in the courthouse.
- Use the electronic device to receive or send electronic communications about the case.
- Use the electronic device to gather outside information about the case.

Inappropriate use of the electronic device will result in appropriate action, which may include confiscation of the device and revocation of the juror’s use privilege. Inappropriate use of electronic devices to research or communicate about the case may also result in serious consequences such as a mistrial.

RESEARCHING OR COMMUNICATING ABOUT CASE IS PROHIBITED

It is essential that jurors' decisions be based solely on the information received in the courtroom. Please remember these rules:

Do not talk to anyone or let anyone talk to you about the case.

This includes your family and friends. You must not discuss any aspect of the case with anyone until the trial is concluded. Also, do not discuss the case with the other jurors until your deliberations begin.

Do not receive or send electronic communications about the case.

This includes texting, emailing, blogging, posting information on social network websites, or using any other electronic communications to discuss, or even mention, the case.

Avoid outside information from the internet or other sources.

This means that during the trial you must not conduct any independent research about the case, the matters in the case, and the individuals or corporations involved in the case. Do not try to find out information from any source outside the confines of the courtroom. This includes consulting dictionaries or reference materials, searching the internet, websites, blogs, or using any other electronic tools to obtain information about the case. You must also avoid news reports—broadcast, print, or internet relating to the case or issues in the case.

LAWS GOVERNING JURY SERVICE

Any person summoned for jury service in U. S. District Court (federal court) is required to report as directed unless excused by the Court. Reasons for excuse are set forth in the Jury Plan for the Random Selection of Grand and Petit Jurors, a copy of which is available for inspection in the clerk's office of the U. S. District Court. The grounds for excuse are limited as jury service is an acknowledged duty of citizenship, and our form of government requires individuals to serve as jurors when called.

A person summoned for jury service who fails to appear as directed can be ordered by the Court to appear and show cause for failure to comply with the summons. A person who fails to show good cause to the Court for non-compliance with a summons may be fined not more than \$1,000, imprisoned not more than three days, ordered to perform community service, or any combination thereof.

By statute and order of this Court, an employer may not discharge, threaten to discharge, intimidate, or coerce any permanent employee because of the employee's jury service, or the attendance or scheduled attendance in connection with jury service. If you believe your employer has engaged in such prohibited conduct, you should inform the judge or a member of the clerk's office immediately.

An employer violating this requirement is subject to:

- (1) liability for damages to the employee,
- (2) an injunction from further such violations and to provide appropriate relief, including the reinstatement of such employee, and
- (3) a civil penalty of not more than \$5,000 for each violation as to each employee,
- (4) and may be ordered to perform community service.

District courts have been given jurisdiction over civil actions brought for the protection of jurors' employment rights, and a mechanism has been provided for the appointment of counsel for jurors claiming violations by their employers and whose claims are found to have possible merit.