

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT JUROR SERVICE IN NEW JERSEY

Table of Contents

Jury Service in General	2
1. Why Is It Important That I Serve As a Juror?.....	2
2. What Lists Are Used As the Source For Jurors?.....	2
3. How Are Prospective Jurors Selected to Be Summoned?	2
4. Why Do I Seem to Get Summoned Frequently but Others Don't?	2
5. What Should I Do If I Lost My Juror Questionnaire/Summons?	3
6. How Should I Respond If I Receive a Questionnaire/Summons Addressed to a Person Who Is Deceased?	3
7. How Should I Respond If I Am Summoned as a Juror But No Longer Reside in NJ?	3
The Jury System	3
8. What Are the Different Types of Juror Service For Which I Might Be Summoned By the New Jersey Judiciary?	3
9. Does Recent Service As a Federal Juror Affect My Scheduled Service In the NJ Superior Court?	4
10. Does Recent Service In Another State Excuse Me From Serving In New Jersey?	4
Juror Qualification / Disqualification	4
11. What Are the Qualifications to Serve As a Juror?	4
Permissible Excuses	5
12. What Are the Reasons For Which I Can Request to Be Excused From Service?.....	5
Failing to Report	7
13. What Are the Penalties For Failing to Return My Qualification Questionnaire or Not Reporting For Service?	7
Rescheduling Your Summons Date	7
14. Rescheduling Your Summons Date	7
Juror Call-off Process	7
15. What Is the Juror Call-Off System?.....	7
Compensation/Employment	8
16. How Are Jurors Compensated For Their Service?	8
17. Can I Get Verification For My Employer Of the Dates That I Served?	8
18. How Quickly Can I Expect to Receive Payment For Juror Service?.....	8
19. Is My Employer Required to Pay Me For Days I Served As a Juror?	8
20. Is There Protection For My Employment While I Serve As a Juror?.....	9
21. Do I Remain Eligible For Unemployment Benefits During My Service As a Petit Juror, Grand Juror, or State Grand Juror?.....	9
Coming to the Courthouse to Serve	9
22. Is There a Dress Code For Jurors Reporting?	9
23. Where Can I Locate Public Transportation Information and/or Driving Directions?.....	9
24. Will I Be Screened For Weapons When Entering the Courthouse?	9

Frequently Asked Questions about Juror Service in New Jersey

WARNING: Please note that the New Jersey Judiciary Jury Management Office does not contact jurors to request personal or financial information by telephone or e-mail.

Jury Service in General

1. Why Is It Important That I Serve As a Juror?

Jurors are an essential part of our justice system. The right to trial by jury in the United States dates from Colonial times and is rooted in English history. It is guaranteed by the Sixth and Seventh Amendments to the Constitution of the United States of America and Article One of New Jersey's State Constitution. People have a right to have matters determined by a jury of their peers. Participating in our judicial system is not only an honor, but is also one of our civic duties. Although juror service may be inconvenient, citizens must participate in the jury process in order for it to work. Cases that go to trial need to be resolved by citizens who hear the evidence, determine the facts and render a verdict. It is impossible to get a fair cross-section of the community to participate in the jury system if people do not report for jury service. If you ever found yourself or a loved one involved in a civil or criminal trial, it's likely that you would want a jury of fellow citizens who will be fair and impartial.

2. What Lists Are Used As the Source For Jurors?

The Judiciary is required by statute to create a single list for juror selection that combines names of registered voters, licensed drivers, filers of N.J. personal income tax returns, and applicants for homestead rebates. The Judiciary vigorously reviews the names to ensure that each person has only one listing in the source file. Citizens can assist that process by using their legal name when filing relevant forms and checking to ensure that all information, including address and identifiers, is accurate.

3. How Are Prospective Jurors Selected to Be Summoned?

Juror selection is a random process. Prospective jurors are selected by computer in no particular order. Because each eligible record has the same chance of being selected at any time, some jurors are summoned more frequently. In accordance with the statutory excuse grounds and in order to broaden service among those on the list, a juror's name is made ineligible for selection for three years after service.

A summoned juror is mailed a letter style summons which contains the juror's summons information and which identifies the internet site at which the juror can complete his or her qualification questionnaire online. Jurors who are requesting to be excused from juror service cannot respond online but must respond by mail and provide supporting documentation with their completed qualification questionnaire. The printed questionnaire will be mailed several weeks after the initial summons as part of a summons that also contains the necessary reporting information. **Jurors can respond online after the initial five day period set forth in the initial summons.** That time period is intended to motivate a response before the follow-up summons with the printed questionnaire is mailed. **Jurors cannot respond online immediately prior to the summons date.**

4. Why Do I Seem to Get Summoned Frequently but Others Don't?

Because each eligible record in the source file has the same chance of being selected at any time, some jurors are summoned more frequently. If you believe that you have been summoned within the past three years in the same county and want to be excused on that basis, please note that information on your qualification questionnaire when you return it to the Jury Management Office. If possible, please provide the date you served and, if different, your name at the time you served. Your prior service will be reviewed.

5. What Should I Do If I Lost My Juror Questionnaire/Summons?

If you misplace your juror questionnaire/summons, you should immediately contact the Jury Manager in your county. A list of Jury Managers, with e-mail addresses and phone numbers, is included on the Judiciary's internet site at <http://www.njcourts.gov/jurors/jurydir.html>. Click on the Jury Manager link located in the middle of the page.

6. How Should I Respond If I Receive a Questionnaire/Summons Addressed to a Person Who Is Deceased?

It sometimes happens that a juror summons is issued in the name of a person who is now deceased. The Judiciary regrets any such instances but they can occur due to the nature of the records that are required to be included for juror service selection and to the timing of the receipt and processing of those records. The Judiciary works to limit the number of such incidents, including by obtaining records from local offices of vital statistics.

If you receive a juror questionnaire/summons addressed to a person who is deceased, we would appreciate it if you would return the questionnaire, noting (in the area intended for change of name or address) that the person to whom it is addressed is deceased. Also please provide (at that same location on the form) the date of death and your relationship to the deceased. Then please provide your name and sign the questionnaire on the signature line marked by the X in the white box on the bottom panel of the yellow questionnaire. That line provides for the signature of the "prospective juror or the person completing form."

That action will allow the Judiciary to make the record ineligible for selection and to retain the response for record-keeping purposes. The Judiciary appreciates your assistance in responding in this way.

7. How Should I Respond If I Am Summoned as a Juror But No Longer Reside in NJ?

Some persons who no longer reside in New Jersey may receive a juror summons. If you no longer reside in NJ but are summoned as a juror, it is important that you respond by completing and submitting the juror qualification questionnaire. It asks about county residency in question #1 and provides space to note your current address, as verification that you no longer reside in New Jersey. You can respond online at www.njcourts.com/juror - but please be aware that security features will require that you enter the name of summoning county, your name, and your 9 digit juror ID when accessing the online system. That number is printed near the barcode and begins with 100, 101, or 102. It is important that you respond in this way because it will allow the Jury Management Office to update your jury system record and will provide a formal response to the summons, which will prevent later enforcement efforts if there is no response to the summons (since N.J statutes require a response).

The Judiciary is required, for jury selection purposes, to merge lists of registered voters, licensed drivers, NJ personal income tax filers, and applicants for homestead rebates every year for each county. Non-residents can be summoned when changes are delayed during list processing or record holders have not updated their records. You should also contact the agencies noted above in order to ensure that your records have been updated.

The Judiciary appreciates your assistance in responding in this way.

The Jury System

8. What Are the Different Types of Juror Service For Which I Might Be Summoned By the New Jersey Judiciary?

You may be summoned for one of three types of jury service. You may be summoned to serve as a Petit Juror, a Grand Juror, or a State Grand Juror.

- **Petit Jury** service includes criminal and civil trials. Petit jurors who sit on a criminal trial decide guilt or innocence in a criminal matter. Petit jurors who sit on a civil trial decide liability or damages.
- **Grand jurors** determine whether there is sufficient evidence to move forward with criminal charges against a defendant.
- **State Grand Jury** and county grand jury operate similarly but the State Grand Jury has statewide jurisdiction and representation and meets in Trenton rather than one of the county seats.

Please also be aware that you may be summoned to serve as a federal petit juror or grand juror in U.S. District Court. Such service is independent of N.J. Superior Court jury service. Federal courthouses are located in Newark, Trenton, and Camden.

9. Does Recent Service As a Federal Juror Affect My Scheduled Service In the NJ Superior Court?

The three year excuse does not apply to federal jury service. Recent service as a federal juror does not automatically relieve you from your petit jury civic obligation but you should include that information on your juror qualification questionnaire and provide verification of your federal jury service. It may lead to your service being rescheduled.

10. Does Recent Service In Another State Excuse Me From Serving In New Jersey?

Recent service in another state does not excuse you from serving in New Jersey. Please be aware that it will take some period of time for your name to be added to the four lists that provide names for random selection as jurors. You may also request a postponement [for up to a year] of your scheduled service.

Juror Qualification / Disqualification

11. What Are the Qualifications to Serve As a Juror?

In order to serve as a juror in N.J. you must meet the following six qualifications set forth in N.J. statutes (*N.J.S.A. 2B:20-1*). The first six questions on the juror qualification questionnaire ask about these criteria. You must be truthful in responding to these important questions:

- **NJ Resident** -You must reside in the summoning county at the time and during the period of your juror service. If you moved, you must list the new address on the form and enclose proof of your new residence.
- **US Citizenship** -You must be a citizen of the United States. Temporary or permanent legal residents of the United States are not eligible to serve.
- **Physical/Mental Condition** -You must be physically and mentally able to perform the functions of a juror, noting that the Judiciary will provide accommodations consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you suffer from a medical condition that is unlikely to change within a year, and this condition prevents you from serving jury duty, you must submit a doctor's note indicating that you are unable to perform jury duty. Please fill out the questionnaire, sign it, attach the doctor's note and return it to us as soon as possible. The doctor's note must be written on your doctor's letterhead and signed by your doctor. Requests written by jurors to be excused for medical conditions without verification from a doctor will be denied.
- **Indictable Offense** - You must not have been convicted of an indictable offense. Note that only individuals who have been convicted or pled guilty to an indictable offense are disqualified from jury duty. Please indicate any criminal record in response to question #4, noting the criminal charge, the year and the state involved. The Jury Management Office will verify that the information you provide is accurate.

- Examples of persons who would be disqualified are anyone who was convicted of, or pled guilty to, a crime in Federal Court or Superior Court; or anyone currently on PTI (Pre-trial Intervention Program.)
 - Examples of persons who would qualify to serve jury duty are anyone whose only convictions are in Municipal Court (most traffic violations fall into this category, as do most shoplifting charges;) or anyone who has been accused of a crime but has not yet been convicted or has yet to enter a guilty plea.
 - Also, traffic offenses, juvenile and DWI related offenses that occurred in New Jersey are not grounds for disqualification.
 - You are not disqualified with respect to criminal record if you successfully completed a Pre-Trial Intervention program (PTI) for an offense and have not been convicted or pled guilty to another disqualifying offense.
- **Age** - You must be at least 18 years of age on the date that you are scheduled to serve jury duty. However, if you are 75 years of age or older, you may be excused from jury duty at your request, in accordance with statutory grounds for excuse from juror service without requiring documentation of a medical condition or other grounds for excuse.
 - **Language** - You are required to be able to read and understand English. Many people who do not speak English as their first language fear that they will not be able to understand what is going on in a courtroom. However, the English spoken during a trial is not much different than the English people speak at home, at work and among friends. If you speak English at work, you will most likely qualify to be a juror. However, if you feel that your knowledge of the English language is not sufficient to perform the duties of a juror, you must provide that information on your qualification questionnaire and return it to the Jury Management Office. We will make a decision based on the information you provide to us.

Permissible Excuses

12. What Are the Reasons For Which I Can Request to Be Excused From Service?

The N.J. statutes set forth, in *N.J.S.A. 2B:20-10*, grounds for which a person can request to be excused from juror service. Each of these grounds is listed on the uniform juror questionnaire/summons. In most instances, you will be required to submit supporting documentation for the Jury Management Office to determine whether to grant your excuse from jury service. If you are requesting to be excused from juror service, you cannot respond online but must complete your juror qualification questionnaire on the printed form (see #4) and provide necessary documentation with your completed questionnaire. Many jurors who request to be excused instead have their service rescheduled to a more convenient time which accommodates the juror's circumstances. You may request to be excused from jury service if:

- **You have a medical inability to serve as a juror.**
If you suffer from a medical condition that is unlikely to change within a year, and this condition prevents you from serving jury duty, you must submit a doctor's note indicating that you are unable to perform jury service. The doctor's note must be written on your doctor's letterhead and signed by your doctor. Requests written by jurors to be excused for medical conditions without verification from a doctor will be denied.
- **You are an active member of a volunteer fire department, fire patrol, first aid or rescue squad.**
If you are a volunteer firefighter or volunteer member of a first aid or rescue squad and want to be excused on that basis, you must provide verification that you are an active member. A letter from your supervisor or a photocopy of your identification card with that group may be sufficient documentation.
- **You are 75 years of age or older.**
There is not an upper age limit to serve as a juror. You must be at least 18 years of age to serve. However, if you are 75 years of age or older, you may be excused from jury duty at your request. No medical excuse is required. In order to be excused, you must complete the Juror Qualification Form and

check the box on the juror summons that reads: PLEASE EXCUSE DUE TO AGE 75 OR OLDER. Please write your age in the space provided and return the form to the Jury Management Office.

- **You care for a minor child, or a sick, aged, or infirm dependent, and have no alternative care available without suffering severe financial hardship.**

When requesting to be excused for any of these circumstances, keep in mind that the Jury Management Office will grant you time to arrange for alternative care. Please be aware that the Judiciary will reschedule juror service for mothers who are breast-feeding, or, if the juror elects to serve during that time, will provide a suitable private location for their use during the day. In order to be excused from jury service due to any of these circumstances, you must submit the proper documentation that indicates your role in the individual's daily care.

- **You provide highly specialized technical health care services for which replacement cannot reasonably be obtained.**

In order to be excused under this ground, you must provide verification of your expertise and the inability to obtain a replacement. Please note that physicians are not excused from jury service under this ground.

- **You are a health care worker directly involved in the care of a mentally or physically handicapped person, and your continued presence is essential to the regular and personal treatment of that person.**

To be excused for this reason, you must provide documentation that verifies your occupation.

- **You have already served as a juror in the same county within the last three years.**

If you have served in the county to which you are being summoned within the last three years and would like to be excused, you must provide a letter of attendance as proof of your previous service or write on the qualification form the approximate date you served and if different, your name at that time. Please note that if you served federal jury duty, jury duty in another state or in another New Jersey county within the last three years, you are not entitled to be excused. The statute requires that your prior service must have occurred in the summoning county, but you should still provide that information on your qualification questionnaire.

- **You are full-time teacher of a grammar/high school during the school year for which a replacement cannot be reasonably obtained.**

Full-time teachers are not excused from jury duty on that basis alone. If you receive a summons directing you to report when you must teach class and a replacement cannot be obtained, please request a postponement by indicating on the qualification form a date in which you can serve. The Jury Management Office will grant you a new date of service and will make every effort to accommodate your specific request.

- **You believe that you will suffer severe financial hardship.**

In order to be excused for financial reasons, you must show that serving as a juror will cause a severe financial hardship that will compromise your ability to support yourself or/and your dependents. In order to prove this, you must submit supporting documentation with your completed questionnaire. These documents will be reviewed by the Jury Management Office to verify that serving jury duty will cause a significant loss in income that will prevent you from supporting yourself and your family. In addition, jurors who are involved in the jury selection process may speak with the trial judge regarding their financial hardships at the time of voir dire based on the anticipated length of the trial. Depending on your individual circumstances, the trial judge may excuse you from serving on a particular trial.

- **You are on active duty as a member of the United States military.**

In order to be excused from juror service, you must be on active duty on the summons date and the military service must be in the United States military, which includes members of the National Guard who are assigned to active duty. You should provide information relating to your current assignment, such as a copy of your orders, a letter from your commanding officer, or a copy of your ID card indicating an active duty assignment.

Please be aware that the email address and telephone number for the Judiciary's Jury Management Office in each county is available at <http://www.njcourts.gov/jurors/jurydir.html>.

Thank you for your service.

NOTE: Police officers and prosecutors are disqualified from serving as grand jurors but they may serve as petit jurors.

Failing to Report

13. What Are the Penalties For Failing to Return My Qualification Questionnaire or Not Reporting For Service?

Jurors who fail to respond or appear for jury duty, without a reasonable excuse, may be punished for contempt of court pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 2B: 20-14b* and subject to a fine of up to \$500.00 or imprisonment.

Rescheduling Your Summons Date

14. Rescheduling Your Summons Date

The Jury Management Offices mail summonses a minimum of five weeks in advance of the reporting date in order to provide sufficient notice for jurors to make all necessary arrangements. If you have a conflict with the days for which you have been summoned, you may request to be postponed. Requests must come directly from the juror. Employers or others may not call or write on your behalf to request a postponement. You should make your request on your qualification questionnaire that you return within ten days of receipt. If some later occurrence affects your ability to serve on the summons date you should notify the Jury Management Office as soon as possible in order to allow for timely processing.

- **Petit Jurors** - Please indicate on your questionnaire dates to which you would like your service to be rescheduled. When deciding on your new reporting date, please keep in mind that jurors are not summoned on State holidays, the week of Thanksgiving, or generally on Fridays in most counties and during the last two weeks of the year.
- **Grand Jurors** -The term of grand jury service is generally one day each week for a specified number of weeks. Depending on the nature of the request, service may be rescheduled to a future date.
- **State Grand Jury** - You will receive written notification and instructions regarding reporting to Trenton for service as a State grand juror. The instructions will also indicate the procedures for requesting an excuse.

Juror Call-off Process

15. What Is the Juror Call-Off System?

NOTE: Juror Call-off is a notification process used only for Petit Jurors, not Grand or State Grand Jurors, that provides notification to jurors the night before their reporting date on whether they will need to report to the courthouse. It is done in order to provide greater convenience to jurors and also to reduce costs and relies on Jury Managers' daily assessment of juror needs for the following day -- based on the most current information available from trial judges and Judiciary division managers.

The juror call-off system is for Petit jurors only. To determine if you are required to report as summoned, you must call the Jury Management Office or go to <http://www.njcourts.gov/jurors/juryreporting.html> after 5:00 the evening before you are summoned to report for service. The message will refer to your juror numbers (located on the JUROR badge portion of your summons) and will provide reporting instructions. If you are unable to access the message, you must report as indicated on your summons.

The Judiciary now also provides an additional service to jurors by allowing summoned jurors, when completing their juror qualification questionnaire online to request text or email messages regarding their juror service. Those jurors who opt in for this service will receive a reminder message about four days prior to their summons date as well as messages that will provide the call off information discussed above. During inclement weather situations, all jurors, including those who will opt in for text or email messages, should still check the court closing website, <http://www.njcourts.gov/courts/closings.html>, prior to reporting to the courthouse.

Compensation/Employment

16. How Are Jurors Compensated For Their Service?

Jurors' daily fee is set by statute at \$5 per day for grand jurors and for petit jurors (*N.J.S.A. 22A:1-1.1*). In addition to that daily fee, the statute requires that petit jurors receive an additional \$35 per day starting on their fourth consecutive day of service and each day thereafter. Where available, parking is provided. Other amenities for jurors are noted on each county's internet juror call-off site, which can be accessed at: <http://www.njcourts.gov/jurors/juryreporting.html>. Information on parking is printed on the juror questionnaire/summons and is also available on line.

17. Can I Get Verification For My Employer Of the Dates That I Served?

The Jury Management Office can provide written verification for you and/or your employer that will show each date that you served as a juror. If you do not receive that document while at the courthouse during your juror service, you may request it later but please note that the request needs to come from you or from your employer on company letterhead. The verification document will be mailed to the juror's address. Please note that you will only get verification for the dates which you actually reported for service.

18. How Quickly Can I Expect to Receive Payment For Juror Service?

Juror payrolls are processed each Friday, except holidays. Therefore, a juror may receive more than one check if that juror served in different weeks. Checks are processed centrally in Trenton in order to reduce costs and are generally mailed within a week of the Friday processing.

Please note that juror fees are considered to be reimbursement for expenses incurred while serving, rather than income. You will not receive a Form 1099 relating to your juror fees.

19. Is My Employer Required to Pay Me For Days I Served As a Juror?

In New Jersey there is no statutory requirement that a private employer pay your salary during juror service. Whether or not your employer pays you for jury duty depends on your employment situation, including employers' policies, union contracts, and the like. The State of New Jersey will pay you the appropriate juror fee as set forth in the New Jersey statutes. The Jury Management Office is aware that many employers do not pay their employees during jury duty. If service as a juror will create a severe financial hardship, as set forth in *N.J.S.A. 2B:20-10*, you may request to be excused. But please be aware that non-payment by your employer, by itself, is not a valid reason to be excused from service. Each situation will be reviewed individually.

If you are employed full time by the State of New Jersey you will receive your usual compensation while you serve as a juror. However, in accordance with *N.J.S.A. 2B:20-16* you will not receive juror fees. This law applies to persons employed full time by any agency, independent authority, instrumentality of the State of any political subdivision of the State (such as counties or municipalities). Jurors affected by this policy should notify the Jury Management Office when they report for service. If a check is issued to you in error, you will be required to return it to the Jury Management Office.

20. Is There Protection For My Employment While I Serve As a Juror?

N.J.S.A. 2B:20.17 prohibits an employer from penalizing you because you serve as a juror. Penalties for a violation of this statute include the possibility of a criminal charge, as a disorderly persons offense, and a possible civil action for monetary damages and for reinstatement of employment.

21. Do I Remain Eligible For Unemployment Benefits During My Service As a Petit Juror, Grand Juror, or State Grand Juror?

Yes, you remain eligible for unemployment benefits. They are not affected by service as a juror because there is a statute, *N.J.S.A.* 43:21-4(c)(5), that protects a person's benefits during juror service. That statute states the following:

(5) An unemployed individual, who is otherwise eligible, shall not be deemed unavailable for work or ineligible solely by reason of the individual's attendance before a court in response to a summons for service on a jury.

If an employment interview is scheduled on a day on which you need to report for juror service, notify the Jury Management Office, in advance if possible, and your service will be rescheduled to a later date. Please be aware that verification may be required.

Coming to the Courthouse to Serve

22. Is There a Dress Code For Jurors Reporting?

Jurors reporting for service should wear clothing appropriate for an appearance in court. Shorts, t-shirts, uniforms or clothing containing statements or offensive symbols are not permitted. All hats must be removed when in a courtroom. Comfortable clothing is also advisable.

23. Where Can I Locate Public Transportation Information and/or Driving Directions?

- Public transportation information can be found by searching the internet, as well as on the [NJ Transit](#) website.
- Directions to each courthouse can be found on the Judiciary internet site <http://www.njcourts.gov/courts/directions/directions.html>.
- Directions to juror parking are also printed on the back of the questionnaire that is mailed to jurors who do not respond online to the initial summons (see FAQ #3).

24. Will I Be Screened For Weapons When Entering the Courthouse?

In order to ensure the safety of those entering NJ courthouses, all persons, including jurors, are screened when entering a NJ Superior Court courthouse. Chemical agents, pepper sprays, or anything resembling a weapon, including scissors, will not be permitted into the Courthouse - for the safety of the public. Please pay attention to additional instructions, on the questionnaire/summons and the internet, about cell phones and other electronic devices. Also, be aware that all metal objects will activate the metal detector and will need to be placed in the trays before passing through the metal detector. If the metal detector is activated as you pass through, you will be screened by an officer using a handheld metal detector. Purses and other carried items, such as briefcases and backpacks will be x-rayed. Any illegal items will be confiscated. The fewer metal items you are carrying, the faster you will pass through the screening process.