

# JURY INFORMATION

## Grand Jury

The Grand Jury convenes once every two months. Docket Call, to set cases for trial, is also held every two months on the same day as Grand Jury.

Terms of Court for Colonial Heights Circuit Court:

Criminal and Civil Terms shall begin on the first Tuesday in January, March, May, July, September, and November. Grand Juries shall be set on the first day of the term at 10:00 am. Criminal cases are set by the Clerk of Court for Colonial Heights on designated days. Civil cases may be set by consent of counsel with the Clerk of Court for Colonial Heights or at docket call.

## Trial (Petit) Jury

Eligible Colonial Heights residents may be called upon to serve as a juror in either a criminal or civil case. Once selected as a trial (petit) juror, the juror is assigned a specific day. The juror will be required to be available to serve on that day.

## Frequently Asked Questions for Jury Duty

### How was I selected for jury service?

Once a year, approximately 2,000 prospective jurors are randomly selected from the Voter Registration List to receive a jury questionnaire. When these questionnaires are returned to the Clerk's Office, they are reviewed by jury commissioners (who have been appointed by the Court) to determine which citizens are qualified to serve as jurors. Those who qualify make up the master jury list for the following calendar year. Men and women over 18 years of age and from all walks of life have an equal opportunity to be called for jury service.

### Who is exempt from jury service?

Only a limited number of persons are ineligible to serve as jurors. *Code of Virginia* § 8.01-341 lists those persons who are exempt from jury service and § 8.01-341.1 lists persons who may claim an exemption from jury service.

### Am I required to report for jury duty?

Failure to respond to a summons for jury duty is a violation of law and may result in criminal sanctions. If you have questions, please contact the Clerk's Office.

### What about my job?

Your employer cannot fire, demote or otherwise penalize you for missing work while performing jury duty. Many employers continue to pay your salary while you are on jury duty. It is advisable to give your employer ample notice of your jury duty and to determine your employer's policy with regard to payment of wages/salary while serving as a juror to find out what the policy is at your job.

**Will I be reimbursed for serving on jury duty?**

You will be paid \$30 for each day you must report to the courthouse. This amount is set by statute and is considered reimbursement for your travel and other expenses.

**How long will I be on jury duty?**

Jurors summoned for jury service are called at least three days before a jury. Once you have completed your two-month service, you are ineligible under state law to serve again for a period of three years. This applies only to state circuit courts. You may still be eligible for jury service in a federal court.

**What if an unexpected emergency keeps me from coming to the courthouse?**

It is very important that all jurors report for their specific jury. Your absence may delay a trial and result in hardship on the participants or cause unnecessary costs to be borne by the litigants. If you have an emergency (sudden illness or a death in the family), immediately call the Sheriff's Office at (804) 520-9352.

**How will I know what to expect during my jury service?**

The morning that you arrive for jury duty you will be shown an orientation video that will explain your role as juror. In addition, the jury officer will take attendance and answer any questions you might have. Please be sure to bring a photo ID with you.

**Is there anything I can do to make my jury service more comfortable?**

Yes. While efforts are made to reduce delay and avoid waiting time, you may have to sit for some time before you know whether you have been chosen to actually sit on a jury. You should bring a book, a crossword puzzle, or any other activity you can do quietly while waiting.

**How should I dress?**

You should wear comfortable, but appropriate attire. Casual clothes such as t-shirts, shorts, halter-tops are not considered appropriate. Please keep in mind that the temperature in courtrooms is sometimes cool, so please dress accordingly.

**Is it possible that I might report for jury duty, but not actually sit on a jury?**

There are times when you will report for jury duty only to find that you are released early. Whenever possible, we try to avoid having any juror appear when not needed; however, if this happens, you are still entitled to payment in the amount of \$30.

**How long will I be in court?**

It is impossible to predict how long a trial will last, but the vast majority of trials are completed in one day. You will be given a lunch break and possibly a morning and/or afternoon break as well. If you find that you need a break at another time, please notify the bailiff.