91ST DISTRICT COURT / PROBATE COURT

JURY INFORMATION:

"When you step outside and feel that air on your face, know it is the air of freedom you are feeling....."

~Judge Michael W. MacDonald

YOUR ROLE AS A JUROR

In our country, the job of determining the facts and reaching a decision rests, not on the government or any other higher authority, but with a jury, which is a small cross-section of people in the community—fellow citizens of the parties in the lawsuit.

Your part as a juror is vital. You and your fellow jurors will decide all disputed questions of fact. The Judge who presides over the trial will decide the questions of law, but you, the jury, will have to consider all the evidence and, from what you see and hear during the trial, determine what the facts of the case really are. Then, you will apply the law, as explained by the Judge, to the facts you have determined and decide the case.

In other words, you the jury, not the Judge—not the system, will decide the case. Justice depends on you.

The purpose of a trial is to do justice, by deciding a dispute between parties fairly and impartially. The value to the community of your service as a juror in that effort cannot be overstated. You can go home when your period of duty is over with a sense of an important job well done.

JURY SERVICE

If your name has been selected to serve as a juror in the 91st District or Chippewa County Probate Court your term will last three (3) months.

The right to trial by jury is a privilege every person in the United States whether a U.S. citizen or not. This cherished right is guaranteed by both the United States and Michigan Constitutions. When you are summoned to render an important service as a juror, you have the privileges of citizenship and the protection of your liberties and property through our system of government. When you are selected to serve on a jury panel, you are an important member of the judicial system of Chippewa County and the State of Michigan.

Before your period of service, you will receive notice as to specific dates the trials are scheduled for. You will have instructions as to the use of the 'jury call in' system. You will be instructed to call the jury line at 906-635-6378 the day before the scheduled trial, after 4pm. There will be a message as to whether or not your appearance is required.

If you have special circumstances that would prevent you from serving as a juror, you may provide a written request to be excused by the Chief 91st District / Chippewa County Probate Court Judge. Requests to be excused must be in writing and addressed to:

Judge Elizabeth B. Church
325 Court Street
Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783

-or email:

kbedore@chippewacountymi.gov

-or call if you have questions:

906-635-6334

Please include your name, address, and telephone number in your request.

GENERAL INFORMATION:

Links:

www.Michbar.org/publications/pdfs/yourrolejuror.pdf
(Helpful information on jury service by the State Bar.)

Revised Judicature Act of 1961 (Excerpt) Act 236 of 1961
600.1304 Selection of Jurors

300.1307a Qualification of Juror; exemption; effect of payment for jury service; 'felony' defined

600.1348 Jurors; threats. Discharge, or discipline by employer; requiring additional hours of work; misdemeanor; penalty

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FAQs:

Q: If I am over the age of 70 do I have to serve?
A: If you are 70 years of age you do not have to serve, although you may if you choose to do so. You must still complete your questionnaire and return it to the Court. Do not assume you have been excused until you receive notification from the Court.

Q: If I am a full time college student am I exempt from serving as a juror?

A: No. College students are not exempt. You will need to notify your professors of your obligation, or submit a written request to be excused by the Judge.

Q: Does the Court provide transportation or daycare?
A: No. You will need to make arrangements for both.

Q: If I am a stay at home mom am I excused from jury duty?
A: No. You may submit a written request to be excused by the Judge.

Q: I am not a U.S. citizen, why was I selected?
A: Anyone with a valid Michigan driver's license or Michigan identification card is pre-eligible for jury service. Non-citizens cannot serve and it is your responsibility to notify the Court, in writing, of your circumstance. You must provide documentation of your alien status.

Q: Will I get paid for serving as a juror?
A: Yes. Jurors are paid $12.50 for the first half day; $25 for the first full day; $20 for each additional half day; and $40 for each additional full day of service.

Q: Will I be reimbursed for ferry tickets and/or mileage and meals if necessary?
A: Yes. During roll call, the clerk will ask your mileage and if you took a ferry, at this time you will let the clerk know your information.

Q: Must my employer pay me while I serve as a juror?
A: Your employer is not required to pay you while on jury duty. However, employers are prohibited by law from fining, disciplining, or threatening an employee for serving as a juror.

Q: What if I live in another state part of the year?
A: If you are a permanent resident only part of the year, and you have been called to serve during months you are gone you must request to be excused in writing.

Q: I am legally blind. Can I still serve as a juror?
A: Absolutely! There are many trials where visual testimony is not presented. If you are not comfortable serving, you must submit a written request to the Judge to be excused.

Q: I am self-employed or have a demanding job. Do I still have to serve?
A: Yes. While the Court understands this predicament, jury duty is not optional. You may submit a written request to the Judge if you wish to be excused.

Q: What happens if I don't report?
A: You will be contacted by the Court regarding your failure to appear. The Judge may ask for a written explanation, or schedule a Show Cause hearing to explain why you did not appear as ordered. If you fail to appear for the Show Cause hearing you may be found in contempt and fined and/or jailed.

Q: I have recently moved to another state. Why do I still need to be excused?
A: Please provide the Court with documentation of your relocation.

Q: What if personal or religious beliefs prevent me from passing judgment on others?
A: You are still qualified to serve as a juror. When the Judge or attorneys ask if any juror has a particular hardship or concern, you may state your concerns at that time. You may or may not be excused at that time by the Judge or one of the attorneys.

Q: I smoke. Will I be allowed to go outside?
A: Yes, the Judge will let you know how long breaks will last and when you are expected back.

Q: I am breastfeeding my child, may I be excused?
A: Yes. Michigan law has recently been amended to allow breast feeding mothers to be excused. You must still submit a written explanation/request to the Court.

ATTIRE:

The Court asks that jurors dress 'business casual.' Jeans are acceptable, provided they are in good shape without holes. Do not wear gym clothes, shorts, pajama pants, or tank tops. Should you have a medical condition that requires otherwise, feel free to do so. Work uniforms are acceptable also.