

Jury Service Audition Copy

Welcome. This video series is about what to do when you have been summoned for jury service in a Maryland state court. We all have a role to play in ensuring a fair system of justice. When you report for jury duty, you help ensure that members of your community have a right to be tried by a jury of their peers. In this video:

- You will learn what a jury trial is
- What to do when you receive a jury summons
- And the paperwork you need to complete

Let's get started. The first question: What is a jury trial?

A trial by jury is one of the foundations of our system of justice. It is one of the reasons the U.S. system is one of the finest in the world. Participating on a jury is a responsibility of being a citizen. It is also an opportunity to serve your community. You do not need any special training, skills, or legal knowledge to be a juror. All that is required is:

- That you keep an open mind
- Pay attention during the trial
- And evaluate the questions asked of the jury based on the law and evidence presented.

You may be asked to serve on a jury for either a civil or a criminal case. Civil cases usually involve disputes between people or organizations. In a civil case, the jury will usually be asked to determine whether the defendant is responsible for financial damages and the amount to be paid. In a criminal case, the State's Attorney has accused the defendant of committing one or more criminal acts in violation of the law. The State must prove, beyond a reasonable doubt, that the defendant committed the crimes charged.

Civil and criminal cases have different numbers of jurors. In civil cases, the jury consists of 6 jurors. In criminal cases the jury consists of 12 jurors. Alternate jurors may be selected in both case types. This ensures that the trial can continue if one of the jurors is unable to finish their service. Jurors are selected from the pool of individuals called that day for jury service. Jury pools – the folks who receive a summons -- are drawn from two lists in Maryland:

- The statewide voter registration list
- And the list of individuals with driver's licenses or identification cards provided by the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration.
- If you are on either of those lists, you may be called to serve.

Watch Part II of this series for more information about jury service. Thanks for watching. I hope this information has been helpful.