

I'VE BEEN CALLED TO SERVE ON A JURY...NOW WHAT?

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You are excited to go on your vacation. You are planning, preparing and packing. You pick up the mail and BOOM! There is the dreaded jury service notice. It requires you to serve on a jury panel during the exact time when you are about to go on vacation! What do you do?

Where Do They Get My Name From Anyway?

The law allows the Jury Commissioner to get your name from many sources, those include: DMV, company customer lists, phone list and utility company lists.

Do I Really Have to Respond?

Yes. A lot of people think they can get away with simply not respond. That's a gamble. If you are caught they can: force you to show up, fine you or hold you in contempt of court and put you in jail.

What Are the Exceptions of Jury Service?

The law sets some very clear exceptions. You do not have to go to Jury service if you: are not a US citizen, are under 18, are not a CA resident, are a resident of a county different than the one where you are being called to service, are serving on another jury panel, are under a conservatorship, and if you do not have sufficient English

knowledge to allow you to understand what is going on.

What Are Invalid Excuses?

Trying to use your occupation or financial situation as an excuse will not work. The exception to this is if it causes undue hardship to you or the public.

What If I'm a Student or Have a Vacation?

If you are a student you can ask the judge to release you based on the undue hardship of having to miss school. Most likely the judge will move the jury duty service to a time when you are on vacation.

If you have a scheduled vacation, do not hesitate immediately call the court to have the date rescheduled. This alone will not relieve you of your duty for that year, but the Court will move your time of service until after your vacation.

What If I'm Really Sick or Have a Sick Person At Home?

This is a valid excuse as you can claim that this causes an undue hardship on yourself. For example, if you suffer from a muscle condition that causes severe pain in sitting for long periods of time, you can claim hardship. But if you are making a claim like this, be sure to bring along a very detailed doctor note.

What are the Possible Penalties?

Like explained above, you can be forced to appear, be fined, be jailed or both be fined and jailed. If you are fined the amount payable for the first offense is \$250; \$750 for the second offense; and \$1,500 for any offense after. You can only be fined 1 time per cycle. That may not seem like much, but consider that you get \$250 one year then \$750 the second year and \$1,500 for two other years, it can total \$4,000.

If you pay the fine, that does not relieve you of your jury duty for that year.

Will I be Reimbursed by the Court?

Yes. The Court pays you \$15.00 a day and .34cents per mile, one way.

What Happens During Jury Selection?

You will be called into a general room. From there you will either be dismissed (after a period of waiting) or you will be called up to sit in front of the judge. Don't worry, you usually will not sit alone. You will be in a courtroom and there will be people waiting in the jury seats, outside and in the courtroom as well.

First, the judge may give you a little background about the case and then question you. Then the attorneys may have questions for you. In some cases you may be asked to fill out a questionnaire.

A lot of people have different tactics that they use to be disqualified by the attorneys. Either way, being honest is probably the best policy since you never know what the attorneys are looking out for.

** The information provide in this article is for informational purposes only and is not intended to serve as legal advice. If you have an inquiry related to small claims court or on any legal matter, it is advised that you seek the assistance of an attorney.*