

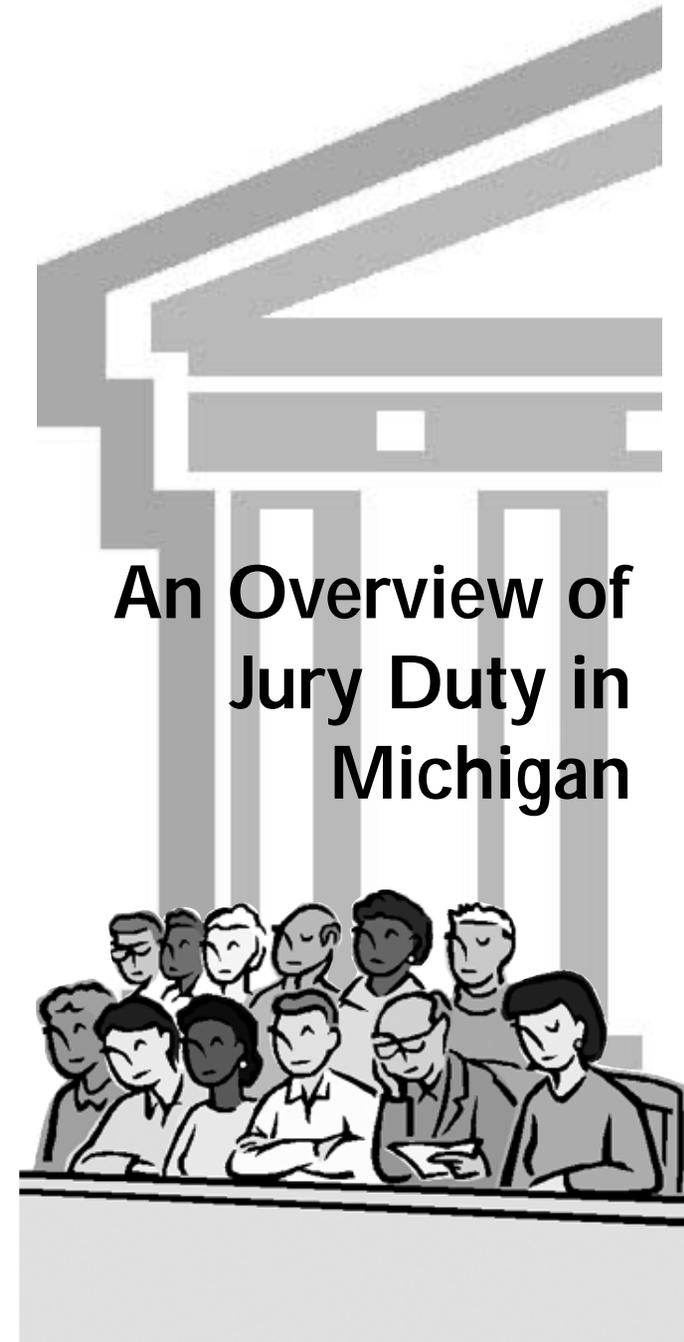
About

Deliberations (or Deciding a Verdict)

After the evidence has been presented by each party the jury is sent to a jury room to decide the verdict. Inside the jury room the jury members will select a foreperson whose job it is to collect ballots and to announce the verdict when asked to do so by the judge. All jurors are individually independent and equal. **No one juror has more “weight” or power than any other juror.**

In reaching a decision, jurors must remember to:

-  keep an open mind.
-  determine the facts of the case by sharing information and points of view.
-  apply “jury instructions” appropriately.
-  decide on a verdict that is based on the evidence presented inside the courtroom.



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Michigan Supreme Court
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Why

We have a jury system

The Constitution provides the right to a jury trial.

Participation in jury trials provides citizens with an opportunity to:

- incorporate community values into dispute resolution.
- guard against abuse of power by legislatures, businesses, and government agencies.
- avoid arbitrary or unfair actions by individual judges.
- protect the rights of all citizens.

Why

Jurors are selected

Jurors are important and necessary participants in our justice system. Jurors view the evidence and hear the testimony presented by the opposing parties. They deliberate to determine what the facts are, then apply the law to those facts to reach an appropriate verdict. Jurors also may play a role in motivating the parties to “settle” a case, reach a plea agreement, or otherwise resolve their dispute. Although each party may believe that his or her case is strong, the uncertainty of a jury verdict often convinces litigants to resolve their dispute prior to trial. This is a frustrating, though unavoidable, element of jury service.

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How

Jurors are selected

Step One:

Once a year the Secretary of State will compile a list of citizens who may be eligible to serve on a jury from a list that identifies citizens who possess a driver’s license or State of Michigan identification card.

Step Two:

Identified citizens are mailed a Juror Qualification Questionnaire. After the questionnaire is completed, returned, and evaluated, a “qualified” citizen may be called to serve on a jury.

What

To expect if you are selected

As an active participant in the justice system, a citizen who serves as a juror can expect to:

- be treated with dignity and respect.
- have court facilities and procedures identified and explained, as needed throughout the assigned jury duty service period.
- have questions answered by the appropriate court staff member as allowed by law.
- be informed of and comply with rules and guidelines that are designed to ensure the integrity of our legal process.

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When

You are inside a courtroom

Once a trial by jury begins, “qualified” citizens are convened inside the courtroom. A juror may be excused if the judge determines there is a valid reason that the juror should not serve in the case. In addition, each lawyer has a right to excuse a certain number of jurors without giving a reason for doing so. This jury selection process is called *voir dire*.

There are special rules and considerations that attorneys apply and make when conducting *voir dire*. The fact that a citizen is excused from jury service does NOT reflect on the citizen’s fitness to serve. A citizen who is excused from jury duty on one trial may very well be selected to serve on another.

The judge is the final voice of authority for courtroom procedures.

Jurors are expected to pay close attention to and strictly follow all instructions given by the judge.



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