

Tukwila Jury Service Information

Check-in Time: While check-in time is officially 8:30 am, we understand the court does not open its doors until 8:30 and that you will be subject to a security check prior to entering the court area. We take this need for additional time into consideration and also appreciate your patience.

What to Bring to Jury Duty: Jury service can entail some waiting time. You may want to bring reading material, crossword puzzles, etc.

What NOT to Bring: Before your first day of duty, please review the information about courtroom expectations. This list explains what is generally not permitted in the courtroom.

Smoking: The Tukwila Justice Center is a non-smoking building, including its offices, conference rooms, lunchrooms, restrooms, lobbies, and stairwells. Smoking is only permitted outside the building.

After you have reported for jury duty, you will be selected for a jury panel along with other jurors. A jury of six people will eventually be selected to hear the case. The judge will explain the case and introduce the participants and the lawyers. The judge and lawyers will question the jury panel members to determine if anyone has knowledge of the case, a personal interest in it, or any feelings that might make it hard to be impartial. This process is called "voir dire", a phrase meaning "to speak the truth".

Questions asked during this process may seem personal, but should be answered completely and honestly. The questions are not intended to embarrass anyone but are used to make sure that members of the jury do not have opinions or past experiences which might prevent reaching an impartial decision.

During voir dire the lawyers may ask the judge to excuse a juror from sitting on the case. This is called "challenging a juror". There are two types of challenges: a challenge for cause and a peremptory challenge.

A challenge for cause means the lawyer has a specific reason for thinking that a juror would not be able to be impartial. For example, the case may involve driving under the influence of alcohol. If a juror had been in an accident with a drunk driver and was still upset about it, the defense attorney could ask that the juror be excused for that reason. There is no limit to the number of jurors who may be excused for challenges for cause.

Peremptory challenges do not require the lawyers to state any reason for excusing a juror. Peremptory challenges are intended to allow lawyers, both prosecution and defense, to do their best to assure that the trial is fair. These are limited to three per side in most cases.

Order of Events in a Trial

After the jury is selected, the trial will generally follow this order of events:

Opening Statements

The lawyers for each side may explain the case, the evidence they will present, and the issues for the jury to decide.

Presentation of the Evidence

The evidence consists of the testimony of witnesses and the exhibits allowed by the judge. Exhibits admitted into evidence will be available to the jury for examination during deliberations. The jury will be asked to make decisions regarding disputed facts; therefore, jurors' attention at all times is critically important. Juror note taking or the use of any notes will be determined by the judge.

Rulings by the Judge

The judge may be asked to decide questions of law during the trial. Occasionally, the judge may ask jurors to leave the courtroom while the lawyers make their legal arguments. The jurors should understand that such interruptions are needed to make sure that their verdict is based upon proper evidence, as determined by the judge under the Rules of Evidence.

Instructions to the Jury

At the close of all the evidence, the judge will read the instructions to the jury, explaining the law and other considerations in the case.

Closing Arguments

After the instructions, the lawyers have the opportunity to summarize the evidence in their closing arguments and to try to persuade the jury to accept a view of the case.

Deliberation

After closing arguments, the jury is isolated to decide the verdict in the case.