

Physician Jury Duty Requirements

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Ohio physicians used to be automatically exempt from jury service. However, this exemption was removed from Ohio law in 1998 and physicians now may be summoned for jury service. The purpose of this article is to briefly explain how juries are assembled, what physicians should do when they are summoned for jury service, and under what circumstances physicians may be excused from serving on a jury. It should be noted that there are different types of courts in Ohio and each may have its own procedures for assembling a jury. For ease of explanation, this article will refer to how juries are usually assembled by Courts of Common Pleas.

Names of potential jurors are randomly selected from a county's list of registered voters. To be eligible, one must be 18 or over, a citizen of the United States, a resident of the jurisdiction, able to speak English, and unblemished by a felony conviction. Those persons selected will receive a summons, which explains how the recipient must respond and the consequences for failing to respond. Failure to respond may subject the recipient to a contempt of court hearing.

Jurors are generally not allowed to be excused, except for the following reasons:

1. they are absent from the county and will not return in time to serve,
2. the interests of the public or the juror will be materially injured by the juror's attendance,
3. the juror is physically unable to serve,
4. the juror's spouse or close relative is dangerously ill or has recently died, or
5. the juror is a cloistered member of a religious organization, or when the juror's business requires his or her absence. In this situation, a juror may also be temporarily excused for up to three days at a time.

County Jury Commissions may tend to excuse physicians from jury service more readily due to the nature of their business. In order to obtain specific information regarding jury service, contact your county's Jury Commission.