

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. The interests of the public or the juror will be materially injured by the juror's attendance;
2. The juror's spouse or close relative is dangerously ill or has recently died;
3. The juror is a cloistered member of a religious organization or requests to be excused because the juror is an active member of a recognized amish sect and sincerely believes based on the membership the juror cannot pass judgment in a judicial matter;
4. The court receives documentation from a licensed physician that the juror has a physical or mental condition that renders the juror unfit for jury service for up to two years;
5. A determination by a judge or an employee appointed by the court that jury service would cause the juror or a person under the juror's care or supervision undue or extreme physical or financial hardship. Undue or extreme physical or financial hardship is limited to circumstances in which the juror would be required to abandon a person under the juror's care or supervision due to the impossibility of finding a substitute caregiver during the participation in the jury pool or on the jury, the juror would incur costs that would have a substantial adverse impact on juror's necessary daily living expenses or on those that the juror provides for, or the juror would suffer physical hardship that would result in illness or disease; or
6. The juror is over seventy-five years of age, and requested to be excused. A juror who requests to be excused must make a request not later than the date on which the juror is scheduled to appear for jury duty.

Excuses are case specific and a juror can only be excused by the judge presiding in the case or by a representative of the judge. However, 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.