



Superior Court of California County of Fresno



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Changes to Jury Service

Jury trials are a critical part of the justice system; so much so that the right to a trial by jury is a part of our constitution. Preserving that right is paramount and dependent on the willingness of our jurors to serve. We understand that these are challenging times and that our jurors may have a number of concerns about reporting to jury duty during the COVID-19 pandemic. The health and safety of our jurors and staff are important to us, so we have implemented a number of changes.

Our COVID-safe practices and new technology include:

- Appropriate social distance between people in courtrooms, jury assembly rooms, and elsewhere throughout the buildings.
- Seating in jury assembly rooms decreased to 25% of capacity.
- Smaller panels reporting to the courtrooms.
- Reduction in amount of reporting jurors. Jurors only instructed to report when needed – no walk in appearances.
- Temperature checks and screening of jurors to ensure someone with symptoms does not enter the building.
- Requiring everyone entering the building to wear a mask/facial covering.
- Enhanced cleaning and disinfecting of all areas within the building.
- New Jury Duty Summons Portal – allowing jurors to conduct their jury business online, including registering their eligibility to serve, requesting excuses, disqualifications or postponements, and uploading medical notes and other documents, thereby reducing the foot traffic and the need for physical appearances at the Court. The new online system also allows jurors to get responses and service reminders via text or email.
- Postcard summons – eliminating the need for handwritten/mailed responses, reducing the physical handling of mail by jurors and staff, and reducing waste.
- Hands-free Express Check-In Kiosks in jury assembly rooms.

Jurors should only report when specifically instructed to do so. Walk-in jurors are not currently permitted, due to limited capacity. Reporting instructions are updated daily and can be obtained by jurors by going online to the Court's website or calling the automated system after 5:00 p.m., beginning the evening before their service week begins. Instructions may vary daily, so it is important that the jurors read/listen to the full message and follow the instructions given, which may be to check back the next morning or afternoon for further instructions. Any jurors not needed during their service week will be excused.

Protecting the health and well-being of our jurors, staff and public is our highest priority. The Court will continue to take precautionary measures to mitigate the spread of the virus and to keep our court visitors and employees safe.

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