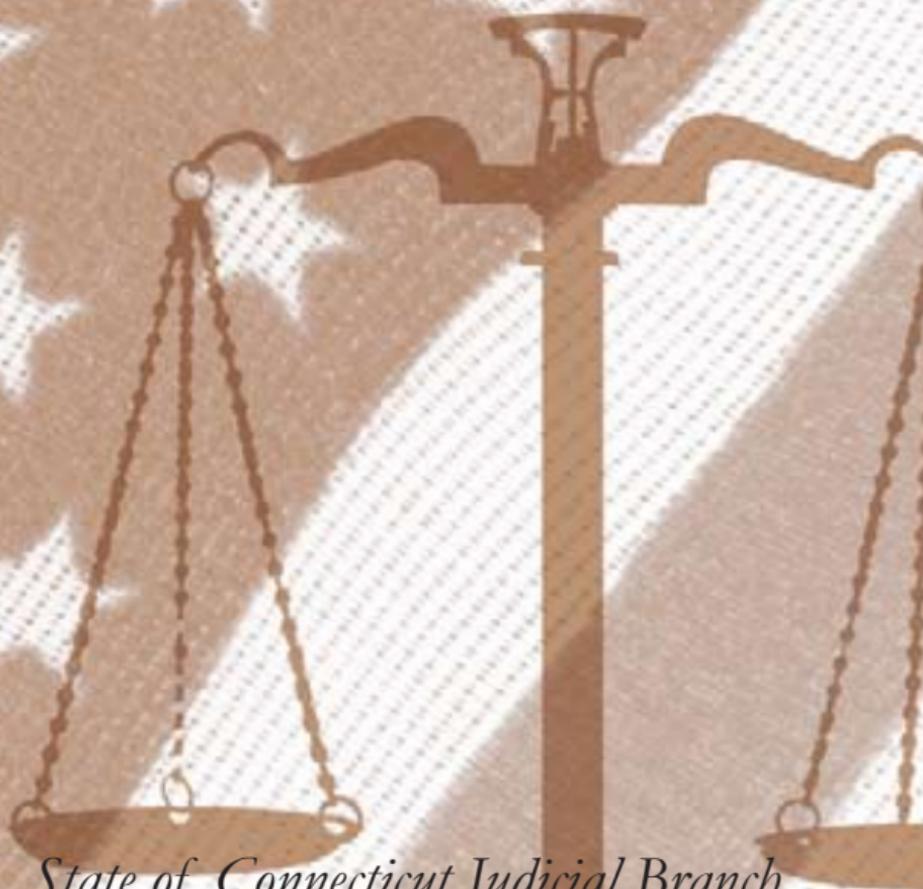




YOUR GUIDE TO  
**JURY DUTY**  
*An obligation and an honor*



*State of Connecticut Judicial Branch*  
*[www.jud.ct.gov](http://www.jud.ct.gov)*

## *Dear Prospective Juror:*

On behalf of the Connecticut Judicial Branch, it is my pleasure to welcome you to our courts for jury service.

This handbook has been provided to you to answer general questions you may have about serving as a juror in a Connecticut Superior Court. Please keep in mind that the information contained in this booklet does not take the place of instructions you may receive from a judge. If you are selected to serve on a case, please listen carefully to the judge's instructions.

Many prospective jurors who undergo the selection process, or voir dire, will not be chosen to serve on a case. This happens for a variety of reasons and is no reflection on any individual's background or perceived abilities as a juror. Whether or not you are ultimately selected to serve on a case, you are fulfilling a vital role in the judicial process by being a part of the prospective pool of jurors. A large jury pool is the best guarantee of the Judicial Branch's ability to provide impartial jurors in our courtrooms.

The Connecticut Judicial Branch has undertaken a number of efforts to make jury service more convenient and rewarding. Many of these innovations have come about as a result of suggestions for improvement from jurors themselves. If you have a suggestion or comment about your jury service, please notify the jury clerk in the district where you serve, or contact Jury Administration directly at 800-842-8175. You may also write to Jury Administration at the following address:

Superior Court Operations  
Jury Administration  
225 Spring Street  
Wethersfield, CT 06109  
Attention: Jury Administrator

We recognize that jury service interrupts other important obligations in your life and we greatly appreciate the sacrifice that jury service often entails. Please know that our jury system is possible because people like you are willing to serve. We are grateful for your participation and we will do everything we can to make your service pleasant, interesting and meaningful.

Very Truly Yours,



Chase T. Rogers, Chief Justice  
Connecticut Supreme Court

# JURY DUTY AND YOU

## HOW WAS I SELECTED TO BE A JUROR?

Each year, a Master File list of potential jurors is created by combining names obtained from four lists. These lists are 1) the list of licensed motor vehicle operators from the Department of Motor Vehicles, 2) the list of electors from each town's Registrar of Voters, 3) the list of taxpayers from the Department of Revenue Services and 4) the list of individuals who received unemployment compensation from the Department of Labor. Names from the four lists are combined to eliminate duplicate names. From the remaining names, individuals are randomly selected for the Master File from which jurors will be chosen.

As jurors are needed, they are mailed summonses, confirmation forms and confidential juror questionnaires. The confirmation forms are to be returned to the Jury Administrator and used to confirm or disqualify prospective jurors.

This handbook has been mailed to you because you are scheduled to appear for jury duty and have not been disqualified by the Jury Administrator.

## WHEN AND WHERE MUST I REPORT FOR JUROR SERVICE?

Your appearance date and time, along with the court name, address and other information, are printed on your reminder notice, which was enclosed with this booklet. Disabled and deaf and hearing impaired assistance information is available by contacting Jury Administration at 1-800-842-8175. Our hours of operation are Monday through Friday, from 8:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M.

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You should arrive promptly at the time indicated on the reminder notice and be prepared to remain at the courthouse until 5:00 P.M. Children are not allowed to accompany you when you report for jury duty. Childcare is not available at the courthouse.

If you requested a postponement when you returned your juror confirmation form, you have been mailed a special postponement notice with the appropriate appearance date.

## **I RECEIVED A REMINDER NOTICE. WHAT DOES IT MEAN?**

A reminder notice contains special instructions regarding your service. It will advise you to call your assigned court location any time after 5:30 P.M. on a specified date to receive last-minute instructions as to whether or not you will have to appear. The pre-recorded message is available all night and on weekends. *Call the court only on the date and after the time indicated on the reminder notice.*

If the recorded message advises you not to appear for jury service, you will have completed your jury obligation *only for the remainder of the court year*. If you are instructed to appear, you must do so. If, for any reason, you are unable to make telephone contact with the court as instructed or have any questions concerning the message, assume that your presence is required and that you must appear for juror service.



You may also obtain cancellation information on-line from the Judicial Branch website at [www.jud2.ct.gov/jury/](http://www.jud2.ct.gov/jury/). This information is available after 5:30 P.M. the day before you are scheduled to appear.

## HOW LONG MUST I SERVE AS A JUROR?

You will be required to appear for jury service for at least one day. If you have not been selected for trial or questioned by the judges and attorneys by the end of the day, you will have completed your juror service unless otherwise ordered by the court.

If you have been selected for a *jury panel*, but have not been questioned by the judge and attorneys by the end of the day, you will be required to return the next day for this phase of your service.

If you are selected for a trial, you must serve as a juror until the end of the trial on the dates specified by the judge.

You are required to appear for jury service only once within four court years. (A court year runs from September 1st to August 31st.) If you have completed jury service within three years of your appearance date, you may request to be disqualified based upon your previous service.

## WHOM SHOULD I NOTIFY IF I AM UNABLE TO APPEAR FOR JUROR SERVICE?

You are expected to be present at the courthouse on the date and time printed on the summons, unless otherwise indicated by a special notice.

If an emergency arises and you are unable to appear on your assigned date, inform the Office of the Jury Administrator of your situation by calling the Statewide Juror Information Number, 1-800-842-8175 (Mon. through Fri., 8:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M.).

If necessary, you will be assigned a new date for juror service.

## HOW DO I GET TO THE COURTHOUSE?

Directions, maps, and areas for parking at each courthouse are included on the reminder notice. Court directions are also available on the Judicial Branch website at: [www.jud.ct.gov/faq/Parking/](http://www.jud.ct.gov/faq/Parking/).

## SHOULD I BRING LUNCH?

You may bring your own lunch. Refrigeration is available at the courthouse.

Jurors who prefer to eat out will find that restaurants are located near most courthouses.

A complete listing of amenities available at each courthouse is available by visiting the Judicial Branch website at: [www.jud.ct.gov/faq/accom/](http://www.jud.ct.gov/faq/accom/). If you do not have access to the Internet, please contact Jury Administration at 1-800-842-8175 and speak with a customer service representative.

## HOW DO I FIND OUT IF MY JUROR SERVICE HAS BEEN CANCELED OR DELAYED BECAUSE OF SEVERE WEATHER?

Listen for an announcement on the radio station noted on the reminder notice. You may call your assigned court location at the number listed on the reminder notice for more information on court cancellation. Unless you are told otherwise by the court or hear an announcement on the radio, you must appear at court ready for juror service.

## WHAT HAPPENS IF THERE IS AN EMERGENCY WHILE I AM SERVING ON JURY DUTY?

In an emergency, the judge can excuse you at any time during the trial. If you are excused, your place on the jury will be filled by an alternate juror.

If your family must contact you in an emergency, they should call the courthouse and explain the situation. The judge will be notified and will decide if you should be excused.

## ARE THERE ANY ITEMS I SHOULD NOT BRING TO COURT?

Jurors may not bring disruptive or potentially dangerous items into the courthouse. A disruptive item includes, but is not limited to, the following: a radio, boom box, portable television, compact disc player/

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recorder, or cassette player/recorder. Potentially dangerous items include, but are not limited to, pocket knives and sharp objects such as tools or knitting needles. If you have any questions regarding what to bring, contact Jury Administration at 1-800-842-8175.

### WHAT ABOUT CELL PHONES?

Cell phones are allowed but may be used to make phone calls only and may not be used during jury orientation, during jury deliberations, or in any court room. If you have any questions, please, contact Jury Administration at 1-800-842-8175.

### WILL I BE PAID FOR MY JUROR SERVICE?

All jurors who are employed full-time as defined by state law will be paid their regular wages by their employer for the first five days of juror service or any part thereof unless your employer is excused by the court from its obligation to pay you. It is important to notify your employer immediately of the current reimbursement policy.

All jurors, with the exception of jurors employed full-time who either work for themselves or others, will be reimbursed by the state for necessary out-of-pocket expenses incurred during the first five days of juror service or part thereof. Reimbursable expenses are:

- Mileage - 20 cents/mile roundtrip.
- Parking - Actual fee paid excluding any fines.
- Child Care - Actual cost paid for care of children living in same household.
- Family Care - Actual cost paid for care of family member (e.g. spouse, parent) living in the same household requiring constant supervision.

Daily reimbursement cannot be less than \$20 nor more than \$50. Receipts are required for individual expenses exceeding \$25.

Food is not a reimbursable expense.

Detailed reimbursement guidelines will be available to you at the court.

Payments are made on a weekly basis.  
(Allow three weeks for processing.)



## WHAT HAPPENS IF I SERVE MORE THAN FIVE DAYS?

Each juror who serves more than five days will be paid by the state for the sixth day and each day thereafter at the rate of \$50 per day. Such jurors shall not be entitled to any additional reimbursement.

### **Juror Certificate of Service and Employer's Waiver of Payment Form**

At the end of your juror service you will receive a juror service certificate with a copy for your employer. The certificate will state the dates of your service as a juror and the declaration of the duty of your employer to compensate you. This certificate should be submitted promptly to your employer.

You will also receive a waiver application to be given to your employer if the employer is seeking to be excused from the responsibility of paying you. Your employer should file the waiver application within 15 days of its receipt at the court location where you served on jury duty.

If your employer is excused from its obligation to pay you, the court will award you the amount of your regular wages up to \$50 per day.

# SELECTING A JURY FOR TRIAL

## WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN I GET TO COURT?

When you first arrive at court, you will become part of a *jury pool*, consisting of the group of all jurors who are summoned to court on a particular day. Court personnel will record the attendance of the jurors and collect the confidential juror questionnaires.

The jury pool will be given a brief orientation. You will be given a chance to discuss any urgent problems with court personnel at this time.

## WILL I AUTOMATICALLY BE PUT ON A CASE?

No. You may be selected for a jury panel, which is a group of people from the jury pool. The panel will be taken to a courtroom, where the attorneys will briefly describe the case and identify by name the parties involved. If a juror has any knowledge of the case or the parties involved, he or she must tell the judge at this time.

Each juror in the jury panel may then be questioned individually by the judge and the lawyers, in a process known as *voir dire* (pronounced vwar deer).

## WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF VOIR DIRE?

The *voir dire* process reveals any prejudices or biases jurors may have about a case. Please remember that the attorneys are trying to determine, through your answers to these questions, whether you can be fair and impartial. They may ask if you or members of your family are related to the parties or attorneys in the case, or whether you have formed an opinion about the case (perhaps from newspaper or television reports).

It is of great importance that you answer all questions honestly and accurately.

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## WHAT OCCURS DURING THE VOIR DIRE?

Attorneys may challenge any prospective juror for *cause*. If the judge is of the opinion that the juror cannot render a fair and impartial verdict, the juror will be excused from further service on the case.

Attorneys can also exercise a limited number of *peremptory challenges*, by which they may object to a juror without stating a reason.

If you are challenged and excused, you will return to the assembly room and wait for another panel to be called. If you are not picked for a jury panel by the end of the day and you are not ordered to return, your jury duty is completed.

## HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL BE ON THE JURY?

The first six (or twelve, in certain serious cases) jurors to go unchallenged will constitute the jury for the case. Two or more additional jurors may be chosen for the trial as alternates.

## WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A CIVIL CASE AND A CRIMINAL CASE?

A civil case usually involves a dispute between two or more parties in which one is seeking to enforce private or personal rights. In a civil matter, the complaint is brought by a *plaintiff* against a *defendant*.

A criminal case is one brought by the State of Connecticut against an individual accused of committing some criminal offense. The charge against the defendant in a criminal case is usually prosecuted by a State's Attorney. In a criminal case, the State is called the *prosecution* and the party against whom the charge is made is called the *defendant*.

# STEPS IN A JURY TRIAL

## A. JURY SELECTION

1. Voir Dire oath
2. The Voir Dire, or questioning by counsel
3. Challenges
4. Completion of jury selection
  - a. civil trials and most criminal trials – 6 jurors, 2 alternates
  - b. certain offenses – 12 jurors, 2 alternates
5. Empanelling of jury – oath is administered

## B. THE TRIAL – CIVIL OR CRIMINAL CASES

1. Opening statements – generally brief, made by counsel for each side
2. Evidence is presented
  - a. testimony – direct examination, cross examination
  - b. exhibits
3. Closing arguments

## C. JUDGE'S CHARGE (INSTRUCTIONS) TO THE JURY

1. Explains the relevant points of law
2. Reviews the procedures in reaching the verdict

## D. JURY DELIBERATION

1. Presided over by a Jury Foreman, who is elected by members of the jury
2. Jurors discuss freely, listen with open minds

## E. THE VERDICT

1. Must be unanimous in civil and criminal cases
2. Written in civil cases; oral in criminal matters
3. Presented to the court by Jury Foreman

# THE TRIAL

The trial will proceed according to an established pattern. The judge will preside over the entire trial, maintaining order and controlling the conduct of all those involved.

Your role as a juror will be to determine the facts or truth after hearing the testimony of each side. You will then apply the relevant law, as explained by the judge, to arrive at your verdict.

As the trial begins, the jury is sworn in and the judge asks the attorneys for opening statements. Each attorney may make an opening statement which outlines the case and what the party intends to prove.

When attorneys question witnesses they have called to the stand, it is called *direct examination*. When the opposing attorney questions that witness, it is called *cross-examination*.

Sometimes a question may be worded in such a way that it suggests the answer the attorney seeks. This is called a *leading question*. Leading questions are not allowed during direct examination; they are allowed, however, during cross-examination.

During the court proceedings, the attorneys may make *objections* to questions or evidence offered by the other side. The judge will *sustain* the objection if the judge feels the question is improper or the evidence is inadmissible. Otherwise, the objection will be *overruled*.

*Conferences* between the counsel and judge to discuss privately a technical issue are a common courtroom procedure. The attorneys may approach the bench or, in some cases, the judge will excuse the jury from the room. The jury is excluded from these conferences to avoid the possibility of confusion or wrongful influence.

When all the evidence has been presented, each attorney will summarize the proceedings with *closing arguments*. Closing arguments, like opening arguments, should not be considered as evidence.



*There are many other explicit and complicated rules about what can and cannot be considered as evidence, but these basic guidelines should help you:*

**What CAN be considered evidence:**

- physical exhibits, i.e. photographs, bullets, scars;
- answers by witnesses to questions asked by attorneys and judges;
- written sworn testimony of a witness unable to appear;
- locations which have been authorized for viewing by the jury as a group.

**What CANNOT be considered evidence:**

- what an attorney *claims* to have proven in his or her arguments;
- testimony that has been stricken from the record by the judge;
- anything heard or seen about the parties or the case outside the courtroom;
- locations viewed privately by a juror.



## ARRIVING AT A VERDICT

The judge will conclude the proceedings by giving the *charge to the jury*. The judge will state the points of law that relate to the issues in the case and explain the procedures in reaching a verdict. The jurors must decide the case in accordance with the judge's interpretation of the law.

Following the judge's charge, the jury will retire to a private room for *deliberation*. They will first elect a *foreman* to preside over the deliberations and present the verdict to the court. The jurors will then discuss and evaluate the evidence. All jurors should have the opportunity to express ideas and opinions on the case.

If jurors need a clarification of the judge's charge or any matters of law, the foreman may send written inquiries to the judge.

At the conclusion of the deliberation, the jury must reach a unanimous *verdict*. If they cannot agree unanimously, the judge should be notified of the situation.

# JUROR'S CONDUCT

Certain rules and procedures have been established to help you to be fair and impartial in judging your peers and to seek only the truth in the case on which you serve. Your observance of these rules is vital to the integrity of the judicial process.

1. Arrive promptly for each session of court. If you are going to be late, please call the clerk's office.
2. Listen carefully to all questions and answers during the trial.
3. You must not discuss the case with your family, friends, other jurors, or any witness, attorney, or party involved in the case. You must not discuss the case even with your fellow jurors until you have heard all of the evidence, the attorneys' arguments, and the charge. Doing so could lead you to form an opinion on the case before all the evidence is in. You should notify the judge if anyone persists in talking to you about the case after you have explained that you are not allowed to do so.
4. Do not read, listen to, or view newspaper, radio, or television accounts of the trial. Again, this could affect your objectivity.
5. Do not take notes in the courtroom unless the judge tells you that you may do so.
6. Do not view other trials being conducted in the courthouse.
7. Do not attempt to do your own research on the law.

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# JUROR'S CONDUCT

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8. Wear your juror identification badge in full view whenever you are in the courthouse. This badge will identify you to lawyers, judges, witnesses and other court personnel, and alert them not to discuss cases within your hearing range.
9. Listen calmly and carefully to opinions of others in the deliberation.
10. Use discretion in selecting your attire. Decorum is maintained in the courthouse; please dress accordingly.



# GLOSSARY

**Action:** A proceeding in court to enforce or protect a right, to prevent a wrong, or to punish a public offense. It is also called a suit, case, lawsuit, or prosecution (criminal).

**Answer:** The written response of the defendant to the plaintiff's complaint and demands, denying in part or in whole the allegations made by the plaintiff in the complaint. This formal written statement is filed in court before trial.

**Challenge (for cause):** Action taken during voir dire by which attorneys, after stating valid reasons, may ask to have prospective jurors excused.

**Challenge (peremptory):** Action taken during voir dire by which attorneys may have prospective jurors excused without stating a reason. State law defines the number of peremptory challenges available.

**Charge:** In a criminal case, the specific crime the defendant is accused of committing. Accusation of a crime by a formal complaint, information or indictment.

**Charge to the jury:** The final instructions about the law given by the judge to the jury before deliberation. The charge will tell the jurors what principles of law they are to apply in reaching a decision.

**Civil Case:** A case in which one party sues another, usually for money damages, to enforce, or to redress or protect private rights. In general, all types of cases other than criminal proceedings.

**Closing Arguments:** The presentations made by the attorneys at the close of the trial in which they tell the jury what they think the evidence shows and what verdict they believe should be reached.

**Complaint:** The written statement of the party who brings suit (plaintiff) setting forth claims and demands. It is filed in court when the lawsuit commences.

**Conference:** A technical legal discussion between attorneys and the judge held out of hearing of the jury to determine points of law or the admissibility of evidence.

**Counterclaim:** A claim by a defendant in a civil action against a plaintiff.

**Criminal Case:** The prosecution of a person for a criminal offense.

**Cross-Examination:** The interrogation of one party's witness by the opposing party.

**Defendant:** In a civil case, the person against whom a lawsuit is brought (sometimes called a respondent). In a criminal case, the person who is arrested and charged with a crime.

**Deliberation:** Private discussion in the jury room, between jurors, of evidence presented in the case to determine the verdict.

**Deposition:** The sworn testimony of a witness given outside the courtroom, consisting of written questions and answers that are read in court during the trial.

**Direct Examination:** The first interrogation or examination of a witness by the party on whose behalf he or she is called.

**Evidence:** Testimony, written materials (contracts, letters) or physical objects presented at trial to prove an alleged fact or proposition.

**Exception:** A formal objection by an attorney to an order or ruling of a judge or to the judge's charge.

**Exhibit:** A paper, document, article or picture produced during a trial, which is made a part of the evidence.

**Foreman:** The presiding member of a jury, who speaks or answers for the jury.

**Issue:** A single point or question about which the parties disagree. The judge decides any issue of law; the jury alone decides issues of fact.

**Jury Pool:** The entire group of jurors summoned to a particular location from which jury panels will be selected.

**Jury Panel:** Jurors chosen from the “pool,” from which a jury of six or twelve will be chosen.

**Marshal:** A court officer responsible for courthouse security and charged with keeping order in the courtroom.

**Motion:** A formal request by an attorney to the court for a specific action by the court.

**Objection:** The claim by an attorney that some statement, question or act is, in that attorney’s opinion, improper or illegal. The judge will either overrule or sustain the objection.

**Opening Statement:** Presentation by each side at the beginning of a trial that outlines the nature of the case and what each will attempt to show or prove.

**Overrule:** Judge’s disallowance of an objection made by an attorney in the course of a trial.





**Parties:** In civil actions, the Plaintiff(s) and the Defendant(s) in the case (also known as litigants). In criminal actions, the State of Connecticut (also known as the prosecution) and the Defendant(s).

**Plaintiff:** The party who starts a lawsuit (also known as petitioner).

**Plea (Criminal):** The defendant's response to a criminal charge (guilty, not guilty or nolo contendere).

**Pleadings:** Papers filed in court by the parties stating their claims against each other.

**Record:** The word-for-word record made by the court reporter or monitor; also, the pleadings, exhibits and orders kept by the clerk.

**Reminder Notice:** A follow-up form to the original summons package, mailed shortly before the actual reporting date, containing latest information and special instructions.

**Rest:** In a trial, when a party advises the court that he/she has concluded the presentation of evidence, as in “the plaintiff rests.”

**Sequester:** Isolation of a jury to prevent outside influence during the time of selection and trial. Used rarely.

**Settlement:** An agreement by which the disputing parties agree to resolve the issue without going to or completing a trial.

**Stipulation:** Undisputed facts or issues that have been voluntarily agreed upon by the parties or their attorneys and, therefore, need not be proved.

**Striking Testimony:** Removal from the record, by order of the judge, of certain evidence, statements or testimony. The jury is directed to totally disregard stricken testimony.

**Subpoena:** An official order to a person to attend court and give testimony or produce evidence.

**Summons:** (1) Notice to defendants that they are named in an action and are required to appear in court. (2) The document calling a juror to service.

**Sustain:** Judge’s allowance of an objection made by an attorney in the course of a trial.

**Verdict:** A judge or jury’s formal decision on the matters submitted to them in trial.

**Voir Dire:** (pronounced vwar deer) The questioning of prospective jurors by attorneys and the judge to determine their qualification and suitability to serve as jurors.

**Witness:** A person testifying under oath as to what he or she has seen, heard, or otherwise observed; the testimony is received as evidence.

## PLEASE CHECK THE FOLLOWING DETAILS:

- You have received a SUMMONS
- You have mailed the CONFIRMATION FORM or confirmed your appearance via telephone.
- You have received a REMINDER NOTICE
- You have received the JUROR'S HANDBOOK
- You have CALLED THE COURTHOUSE the evening prior to your scheduled date of appearance or you have accessed the cancellation information via the website at [www.jud2.ct.gov/jury/](http://www.jud2.ct.gov/jury/)
- You have brought a SIGNED, COMPLETED CONFIDENTIAL JUROR QUESTIONNAIRE to court
- You have discussed any urgent problems with our court personnel

STATEWIDE JUROR INFORMATION NUMBER  
1-800-842-8175  
(Mon. through Fri., 8:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M.)

You should bring a completed confidential juror questionnaire to the courthouse when you report for jury duty.



The questionnaire was mailed to you with your reminder notice. If you misplaced the questionnaire, one will be provided to you at the courthouse.

*State of Connecticut Judicial Branch*  
JURY ADMINISTRATOR  
P.O. Box 260448  
Hartford, CT 06126-0448



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