

## **Trial by Jury**

The Constitution of the United States and the State of Georgia guarantee every citizen the right to a trial by jury. A trial is a legal forum for resolving individual disputes or establishing whether an accused person is legally guilty of an offense. In either situation, the jury acts as a fact-finding body for the court in assessing information and evidence. A judge presides over the court and addresses all the legal issues during the trial. A judge will also instruct the jury on how to apply the law to the facts of the case. While the court recognizes that jury service interrupts your personal and business lives, this experience is also a unique privilege we enjoy as citizens. It is your opportunity to participate in the American justice system and gain a better understanding of how it works through firsthand experience. No one may be automatically exempt, so everyone shares the benefits and burdens of jury service. The court thanks you for your service, and we hope your time with us is interesting and rewarding.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### ***Why must I serve on jury duty?***

The Georgia State Judiciary Law states that all eligible citizens shall have both the opportunity and obligation to serve. It is important that jurors promptly report as required. Absences may delay or even jeopardize trials.

### ***How are people chosen to be called for jury service?***

Every two years the Georgia State court system obtains the names of state residents who are included on certain lists--registered voters, property owners and any other source the Jury Commissioners deem constitutional. Jurors are then selected at random from these lists and are summoned to appear for jury service.

### ***Are jurors compensated?***

Jurors receive \$25.00 per day for the days they are physically here. A juror may waive the per diem allowance and donate their jury

money to our juror fee donation program. The money goes to the improvement project of your choice: Cobb Animal Shelter, Cobb Trees, Focus on Forever, Parks & Recreation (development of ball fields), Public Library System, or Senior Services. It is tax deductible and you will receive a certificate showing the amount you donated.

### ***What about verification of jury service?***

In order to verify that your jury duty service was performed, jurors will receive a certificate in the mail.

### ***Is it possible to report for jury service but not sit on a jury?***

Yes. In many cases parties seek to settle their differences to avoid the expense and time demanded by a trial. The courts cannot be certain until the scheduled trial date which cases will actually require a trial and a jury.

***What can jurors do to make their service more enjoyable?***

Jurors very often have to wait while important pretrial activities take place before they are assigned to a particular jury. Reporting jurors are therefore encouraged to bring along reading material, laptop computers, and/or work to do during breaks. However, once the jury selection or trial begins, reading materials are not permitted unless authorized by the trial judge.

***Who Else is in the Courtroom?***

Plaintiff- In a civil case, the plaintiff is the party who initiates the lawsuit.

Defendant- In a civil matter, the defendant is the party being sued. In a criminal case, the defendant is a person who has been charged with a crime.

Attorneys or Counsel- In certain cases including criminal cases, attorneys representing the plaintiff, the defendant, or the government are referred to as counsel.

Court Reporter- The court reporter records every word that is spoken, and this record

will be converted into an official transcript of the trial.

Court Clerk- The clerk maintains the court files and preserves the evidence presented during the trial. The clerk may also administer the oath to jurors and witnesses.

Bailiff- The bailiff keeps order, maintains the security of the court, and assists the judge and the jury as needed.

Witnesses- Witnesses provide testimony, under oath, as to what they have seen, heard, and otherwise observed about the case.

Interpreter- Interpreters, under oath, provide language interpretation for the court on behalf of non-English speaking or hearing impaired parties or witnesses.

Please bring your jury summons with you each day that you are required to appear for jury service.

Juror voice mail: (770) 528-1804

Juror email: [supctjuror@cobbcounty.org](mailto:supctjuror@cobbcounty.org)

# **Juror's Handbook**

## **Cobb County Superior Court**



30 Waddell Street  
Marietta, GA 30090-4692

**Deborah M. Matthews**  
**Jury Administrator**