

Circuit Court Prepares to Welcome Jurors



In order to insure that constitutional rights of the accused are protected and as part of the phased reopening mandated by the State Supreme Court, the 16th Judicial Circuit Court will begin resuming limited jury trials in the near future. The Court recognizes the concerns of potential jurors, and postponements will be allowed for anyone who is in a high risk category or caring for someone in a high risk category. If you receive a summons and you fall into one of these groups, please contact the jury clerk and you will be accommodated.

Anyone who has been exposed to COVID-19, has been diagnosed with the disease, or is experiencing symptoms associated with COVID-19, will also have their service postponed. If you are experiencing COVID-19 related symptoms, have been exposed to someone who has COVID-19 within the prior 14 days, or have been diagnosed as currently having COVID-19, you should contact the jury clerk for a postponement. Under no circumstances should you arrive at the courthouse if you fall in any of these categories.

We take the safety of everyone reporting to the courthouse very seriously. Everyone will be scanned with a touchless thermometer and questioned about possible symptoms or exposure on arrival at the courthouse.

We have a remote check-in app available, and everyone reporting for jury service will be asked to check in through the app. Information about the app will be provided in the jury questionnaire, on our website, and onsite at our building. Prospective jurors will receive a text when they can enter the building. This will avoid bottlenecks and insure social distancing at our entrance.

We are limiting the number of jurors inside the building to ensure that adequate social distancing will be maintained. All surfaces are being cleaned regularly and accordance with applicable

guidelines. No one is allowed to enter the building without face masks, and face masks will be provided for any juror who needs them. Hand sanitizer, gloves, and disinfectant wipes will also be available in the jury room. The jury room and the courtrooms have been configured to ensure that 6 foot distancing will be maintained at all times.

Chief Judge James M. Biernat, Jr. stated “The Constitutional right to trial by jury is one of the most fundamental rights on which our system of justice is based. A free society like ours depends on ensuring that everyone’s rights are respected. In order to balance our legal duties with the safety of the public, we are doing everything possible to ensure the safety of all prospective jurors. I want to thank everyone for their understanding and their willingness to ensure that the rule of law is respected in these trying times.”

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