



CITY OF PUYALLUP

Municipal Court
929 E. Main Ave. Suite 120
Puyallup, WA 98372
253/841-5450

Dear Prospective Juror:

During the COVID-19 pandemic, judges across the country have been asking the same question: How can we safely provide access to justice? In March, Puyallup Municipal Court suspended many hearings, holding court only for emergent matters. Jury trials were also suspended. Over the last couple of months, we have slowly expanded our operations and in June returned to a full schedule. Many hearings can be held remotely, using the Zoom platform. Other hearings have resumed using social distancing and requiring facial coverings.

Jury trials are necessary to the open administration of justice in the state of Washington. By order of the Washington State Supreme Court, all jury trials were postponed until at least July 6. Puyallup Municipal Court made the decision to resume jury trials in August. Having received your summons, I am hopeful you will be willing to answer the call to serve. Diverse juries are a critical component of justice. I want to assure you that every reasonable precaution will be taken to enhance the health and safety of all jurors, attorneys and Court staff during jury selection and the jury trial to follow.

Chief Justice Debra Stephens convened a jury trial workgroup in May consisting of lawyers, clerks, court staff and judges. I was fortunate to be included in the workgroup. Our mission was to anticipate the problems courts may face with jury trials and identify solutions. Thus, as this Court resumes jury trials, several steps will be taken to protect you and your fellow jurors:

- Smaller groups of jurors will be brought in at one time to ensure safe and socially distant seating in the courtroom (this will also reduce foot traffic in the Courthouse);
- Each person arriving at the Courthouse will have their temperature taken via a hand-held touchless thermometer;
- Masks are required be worn in the Courthouse, with some exceptions for active trial participants. While jurors are encouraged to bring their own masks, the Court will provide a mask for those that do not have one;
- Hand sanitizer will be readily available and latex gloves offered to those who wish to wear them;
- Plexiglass has been installed around the witness box;
- Increased cleaning and sanitization will occur in our courtrooms;
- Jury deliberations will occur in a courtroom and not in a separate jury deliberation room. Our jury deliberation room is too small to allow for safe social distancing;

- Removal of shared snacks and beverages from the jury room. Bottled water will be available, and jurors will be permitted to bring their own water bottles.

Jurors deemed to be in a high-risk category for the coronavirus, who are reluctant to serve for safety reasons, or are experiencing hardship brought on by the pandemic may have their service postponed. Please follow the instructions on the summons to request a deferral. To be permanently excused you must provide a note from a medical professional.

Anyone who:

- a) has been diagnosed by a medical professional as having Coronavirus (COVID-19) anytime within the 30 days leading up to jury service;
- b) has been actively caring for a family member or loved one who has tested positive for the Coronavirus (COVID-19) within the 14 days leading up to jury service; or
- c) has in the 14 days prior to jury service been exposed to a person testing positive for the Coronavirus or will be in quarantine status on the date scheduled to report for jury service;

should also follow the instructions on the attached summons to request a deferral. You may be requested to provide documentation from your medical provider. Anyone who is experiencing symptoms of Coronavirus (COVID-19) on the date scheduled to appear should not report but should call the Court to explain your non-appearance.

Please be aware the right to a jury trial is one of the cornerstones of our democracy, and jury trials necessarily involve sacrifice from those citizens called upon to serve. This has always been true, but it is especially true during these unique and trying times. It is my personal conviction that jury service one of the highest forms of public service that any American can perform. The right to trial by jury is set forth in the Washington State constitution, has been enshrined within the Sixth Amendment to our U. S. Constitution since 1791, and it was one of the stated principles in the Declaration of Independence which fueled our struggle to become an independent nation. While I understand some of you may be unable to serve at this time, only those with extreme hardships or genuine concern should seek to be excused.

To those of you who can serve and are looking for a way to participate in the justice system in the most impactful way, we welcome you to the Puyallup Municipal Court. I hope you have found this letter helpful. I am committed to making your experience as a juror safe and thank you in advance for your service to your community.

Very sincerely yours,



Andrea L. Beall
Puyallup Municipal Court Judge