

Washington County
COVID-19 Jury Plan

Jury Trial resumption
Phase V – April 26, 2021

Planning and Scheduling of Jury Trials in Phase V

- Civil and Criminal trials may be scheduled to begin the same day, and all will be assigned to the same Judge.
- New jury trials may begin any day of the week.
- Large Multi day Criminal jury trials will be scheduled Monday – Friday.
- Multiple Jury trials may be scheduled to begin the same day, but only 1 new Jury Trial will begin per day. All other jury trials scheduled will be continued and rescheduled if needed.
- All Jury trials will begin in Courtroom 1 since this will hold the most people socially distanced.
- If there is a multiple day trial, day 2+ could possibly be moved to another courtroom, typically courtroom 4, to allow for a new jury trial to begin in Courtroom 1.
- Depending on the number of jurors needed, jurors may need to be split into multiple courtrooms and multiple voir dire will be held. Depending on the case, this may increase the number of days for the jury trial.
- If more than 60 jurors are needed, the first 60 jurors will report for service in the morning and the remaining jurors will report in the afternoon for voir dire on the first day of service. All jurors selected for the jury panel will be directed by the judge when to return for the beginning of the trial.

Jury Service

- Jurors will be directed to report based on the juror website and call in information; this is especially important if there is a morning and afternoon session for voir dire.
- Jurors will report directly to their assigned courtroom
 - The docket boards should display the courtroom assignments for the jurors.
 - The Juror recording and website should list the courtroom assignments for the jurors.
- Work Certifications will be distributed to jurors by the Clerk, possibly as they enter the courtroom.
- The orientation video will be shown in each courtroom by the Clerk's office.
- During Orientation, jurors will be reminded to ensure their contact information is up to date for contact tracing purposes
- During Orientation, jurors will be asked to notify the Jury Clerk if they test positive for Covid-19 within 14 days of service.
- If the court is notified that a juror has tested positive for Covid-19 during a Jury trial, the local health department will be contacted for guidance
- For Jury Trials that only require the use of one Courtroom:
 - All jurors will report to Courtroom 1 and will be directed to sit in the gallery (the 4 seats in the Jury box will only be used if necessary).
 - Additional seating may be added as necessary to fit additional jurors, while still following social distancing guidelines.

- Any additional seating should not be moved, as it will be previously measured out.
- For Jury Trials that require more than one courtroom:
 - The jurors will be split between courtrooms, beginning with Courtroom 1.
 - A bailiff or clerk will be assigned to each courtroom with Jurors.
 - If multiple courtrooms are used to seat jurors, multiple voir dire will take place.
 - Voir dire will begin in courtroom 1. If a jury panel has not been completely selected from Courtroom 1, the Judge, staff and all parties will begin voir dire in Courtroom 4. This process will repeat if there is an afternoon session and the jury panel has not been fully selected.
 - Once the Jury Pool has been selected from all the voir dire sessions, all jurors not selected will be excused.
 - This may change in the future and the remaining jurors may be used to select a panel for another hearing scheduled for the same week.

Trials

- It is suggested that all selected jurors, sit in the socially distanced seats, but in one area of the courtroom, ex. Courtroom 1, near the window, so as not to be near other parties, witnesses, victims, etc. for the case.
- In Courtroom 4, the selected jury panel should all sit in the gallery.
- Once a selected juror is seated for the actual hearing, if possible, that should remain their seat for the duration of the trial.
- Seat cushions are available for the selected jury panel.
- Gloves and face shields are available for any juror that requests (face masks must still be worn).
- The chairs for the attorneys and parties will be placed on the other side of the trial table, with their backs to the Judge.
- The attorneys and parties will present to the back of the courtroom where the jurors are seated.
- It is recommended that if any paper evidence is to be passed out to jurors that a copy be made for each juror, prior to the hearing by the attorney, to avoid multiple people handling the paper. Please do not spray sanitizer on the documents.
- Anyone handing jurors evidence should wear gloves before handing the evidence to the jurors.
- Jurors may wear gloves when handling evidence but are not required to. Gloves are available in all courtrooms.
- Courtroom 2 will typically be the “Bench Conference” room. Judge Dwyer’s office may also be available for short Bench Conferences.
- Jurors may use the bathroom in the Jury Room but must follow hand washing and social distancing guidelines.
- Jurors should not get water from the water coolers. Individual water bottles will be available for the jurors.
- Witnesses and other parties may need to wait in the hallway if the courtroom becomes too crowded for social distancing guidelines to be followed.
 - An audio live stream option will be available for each Judge.
 - If live stream is requested, a Zoom session will be set up and connected to the Audio Live Stream.
 - The Audio live stream link will be supplied by the Judge’s chambers by request.

- Sanitation of witness stands between witnesses will take place. A duster with cleaner sprayed on it may be used on the gallery benches if necessary.

Deliberation

- The courtroom will be the Jury Deliberation room.
- All attorneys, clerks, court reporter, etc. must remove all documents from the courtroom during deliberation and any time the jurors are left alone in the courtroom.
- All computers will be locked by staff when leaving the courtroom
- During deliberation jurors should not to use the bench or staff work area. The trial tables can be used to place evidence on.
- A bailiff will be outside the door during jury deliberation to ensure that no one speaks to the jury.
- Upon return to the courtroom after Jury Deliberation, the bench, trial tables and work area for the Court Reporter and Clerk, and any technology used for displaying evidence should be disinfected.
- The backup system of Courtsmart will be turned off for the entire trial so that nothing is recorded during breaks or deliberation that should not be recorded.

Overtime/Meals

- If Jurors need to be fed, individually packaged food must be ordered, with individually packaged utensils.
- Jurors may remove their masks while eating but must promptly put their masks back on after they are done eating.

This plan may be amended and revised at any time as conditions dictate.