**Jury Service Information**

**Juror Information Line:**

The Juror Information Line (320 983 8313/320 983 8291) is updated as required at 5:00pm and gives instructions to jurors for the following day. Weekend messages are made on Friday evening at 5:000pm and run all weekend. Jurors who are **not** required to report for service at the Mille Lacs Courthouse should go about their normal day's activities.

**Courtroom Decorum:**

Casual or comfortable dress is acceptable. Jurors are not allowed to wear hats, smoke, drink beverages, chew gum or use other tobacco products in the courtroom. All books, newspapers or handcraft items must be left in the Jury Assembly Room when jurors are involved in courtroom activities. Jurors should take valuable items such as purses with them in the courtroom.  Please note that items such as letter openers, scissors, pen knives and knitting needles are not allowed in the courthouse.

 **Juror Emergency:**

If an illness or family emergency prevents attendance at the courthouse, please inform court personnel by calling 320 983 8313/320 983 8291 at 8:00am. The same phone number may be given to family members or daycare providers in case an emergency arises during the day.

**Juror Hours:**

Normal hours for jurors hearing testimony in court cases are 8:30am to 4:30pm. There is usually a one hour break for lunch. Jurors brought in to begin a new case will be required to stay at the courthouse throughout the day or until a jury has been selected for the case scheduled. Court personnel will inform jurors as to when they may leave the courthouse.

**Child Care Reimbursement:**

Jurors who are **not employed** outside the home may be reimbursed for childcare expenses incurred as a result of jury services. Jurors who are **employed** outside the home are **not** entitled to childcare reimbursement unless the expense, as a result of jury service, is greater than normally would be incurred. Payment will be made only for the amount over and above your normal day care expenditure. All requests for payment must be submitted within ten days after you complete jury service. Receipts for the actual expense must accompany the claim. Reimbursement claim forms can be picked up in the jury coordinator's office.

**Juror Notes:**

Note pads and pens will be provided to jurors for the purpose of taking notes during trials.

**Juror Sequestration:**

In any criminal case involving a jury, there is always the possibility that the jury could be sequestered (that is housed at a motel for a duration of the jury deliberation process). Sequestration is rare. However, in the event that a jury is sequestered, the following information may be helpful:

* Jurors will **not** be allowed to call their homes, but court personnel will take messages from jurors and call their families.
* If it is anticipated that jurors may be sequestered, court personnel will request that jurors bring overnight bags with them to the Jury Assembly Room.
* If jurors are sequestered unexpectedly, court personnel will provide essential items such as razors, deodorant, shampoo, toothbrushes and toothpaste.

**Juror Parking:**

The County provides free parking at the courthouse.

**Smoking:**

This is a no smoking building and no smoking is allowed in the jury rooms during breaks or deliberation.

**Weather/Snow Emergency:**

In the event of inclement weather, such as a severe snowstorm, please call the Juror Information Line, **320 983 8313/320 983 8291**, for a message regarding closing of the Mille Lacs County Courthouse or a special message for Mille Lacs County Jurors.

**Where To Report:**

Jurors on new jury panels should report to the Jury Assembly Room located on the third floor of the courthouse. For a specific reporting time call the Juror Information Line. Court personnel will escort jurors to the courtroom where a jury will be selected. The selection process includes being questioned by the attorneys in the case as well as the presiding judge. If a juror is not selected to serve on the case, he or she will return to the Jury Assembly Room to await further instructions or be released.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

**What time do I report each day?**

Report times depend upon when a trial is expected to actually begin.  The earliest time you should ever need to report is 8:00 am.  If you are selected as a trial juror, you generally report at 8:30 a.m. to begin trial at 9:00 am.  The recorded message will always keep you apprised of what time you need to report and/or when to call again.

**How long will I be there?**

The hours of Court are generally 9 - 4:30.  If you are not selected on a trial, you may be released early.  If you are selected, you will usually be here until 4:30.  If you are deliberating on a case, you may be here later in the evening.

**Where can I park?**

The County provides free parking at the Courthouse.

**Do I have to come in every day?**

It is possible that you may not even have to physically report.  You are on call for a period of three months.  We only bring jurors in if a case is actually going to proceed to jury trial.  We only call in as many jurors as needed per case.  If you are called in for questioning on a case, that would be the time to explain any hardships to the judge.  Judges are the only one who can excuse jurors from serving.

**What if I have moved out of the County?**

You are not eligible to serve as a juror in Mille Lacs County if you have moved out of the county but we need this information in writing.  We ask that you complete the jury questionnaire and include your new address.  Once we receive this information, we will confirm by letter that you are disqualified.

**I am over 70 years old and want to be excused, do I still have to fill in the entire form?**

Even though we encourage you to, this information is for statistics and is not required.

**Do I have to provide a doctor's statement to be excused?**

You are required to submit a doctor's statement to be excused.  If your condition is of a temporary nature, you will be granted an automatic postponement upon request.

**How much do I get paid?**

Jury compensation is set by the Minnesota Supreme Court.  At this time, it is $10.00 for each day of service and $.27 per mile round trip mileage from your home.  Under set guidelines, daycare reimbursement is available to parents.  Instructions & forms will be provided upon reporting.

**Is there daycare compensation?**

Yes, the Minnesota Supreme Court has appropriated funding for that purpose.  It is available for a parent who normally does not need daycare because they are home with their child(ren).  We reimburse up to $40 per day for non-licensed and up to $50 per day for licensed.

 **Do I have to dress up for jury service?**

Jurors are expected to be neat in appearance.  Slacks are acceptable for women.  Men are not required to wear coats or ties.  Jeans are allowed as long as they are neat and clean. Shorts are not acceptable.

**I am self employed and I am not getting paid.  Do I still have to serve?**

The fact that you are self-employed will not excuse you from jury service

**Is my employer obligated to let me go if I am summoned as a juror?**

Yes, your employer is legally obligated to allow you off work when you are required to serve as a juror.

**Is my employer obligated to pay my wages while I am on jury service?**

Your employer is not legally obligated to pay your wages. You should contact your employer to find out what their policy is.  Unfortunately, loss of wages does not exempt you from service.

**What if this time poses a hardship for me?**

Mille Lacs County offers a one-time postponement to any person summoned for jury duty.  The request needs to be in writing on the designated lines on the jury questionnaire.  Unless there are extraordinary circumstances, the new date of service should be within 90 days of the original date.

**I am a seasonal worker.  Can I serve during my down time?**

We attempt to work with you to the best of our ability.  However, to assure that the jury panels are both inclusive & representative of Mille Lacs County, seasonal workers will be postponed as any other hardship cases (see above).

**I am a student and I am in class during the time that I am summoned for jury service.  What should I do?**

If you are a student, we will postpone your report date to a date during a school break.  Write a note on the designated lines on the jury questionnaire with the specific time you are available.

**I am a student and do not live in Mille Lacs County during the school year.  Does that disqualify me from service?**

If a prospective juror has changed their driver license or voting registration to another county, they are disqualified from serving in Mille Lacs County.   If this is a temporary move, they are not disqualified.

**Can I bring a cell phone with me?**

Cell phones are not allowed in the courtrooms or jury assembly room. Please leave them in your vehicle. A phone is available at the courthouse if you need to make emergency calls.

 **Can I bring in my personal computer to do some work on?**

No, there is no wireless internet access in the Courthouse.

 **Will I immediately be assigned to a courtroom upon reporting?**

That is our intention, however, not always the case.  Initially, you will be sitting in a jury assembly room while waiting for a courtroom assignment.  You are encouraged to bring reading materials, etc., for any unforeseen wait times.

 **Is there an emergency telephone number to leave with my family?**

 Yes, the number for the Jury Administration Office is 320 983 8313.  A message will be relayed to you as soon as possible by our staff.

 **Can I go out to lunch when I am on jury service?**

 You may bring your own lunch - we have a refrigerator and microwave available for your use.  Or, you may go out of the building to eat.  There are also vending machines available.

 **What happens if someone does not report for jury service?**

 Under Minnesota Law, if a person does not report for jury service, they can be charged with a misdemeanor offense, which is punishable by up to a $1,000.00 fine and/or 90 days in the county jail.  All jurors who fail to report for jury duty will be pursued and legal action taken.

**Can I still serve if I am hard of hearing?**

Yes, we have a sound system in the jury assembly room and in all of the courtrooms.  Some of the courtrooms have audio headphones.  If you are hearing impaired, please contact us upon receipt of the summons, and we will schedule a signor if you wish to serve.