

Jury Service

Ratonga Rōpū Whakawā

A summary for people selected
for jury service



MINISTRY OF
JUSTICE
Tāhū o te Ture

You have been randomly selected for jury service

This pamphlet tells you the key things about jury service and what you need to do.

You can find more information on our website:
justice.govt.nz/courts/jury-service/

Thank you

Thank you for being one of the thousands of New Zealanders who help make our justice system work each year. As a juror, you are making a difference in your community.

What do I need to do first?

Fill out the response form that came with your jury summons and send it back to the court in the self-addressed envelope. The form lets court staff know you are coming to jury service, so they can prepare for the trial.

Can I do jury service?

You can usually serve on a jury if you are:

- currently enrolled to vote in New Zealand
- live inside a jury district (within 45 kilometres of the court).

Some people cannot serve on a jury. See the response form for more information about who can serve.

What if I can't do it?

You must go to jury service unless the court defers your service or excuses you. If you do not attend, you can be fined up to \$1000.

WHAT IF I CAN'T ATTEND?

There are many reasons you can't attend jury service on the date you are required to. If you can attend jury service at a later date, you can apply to put off (defer) your service. You must have a good reason to put off jury service. See the response form for more information on deferring your jury service.

WHAT IF I CAN'T DO JURY SERVICE AT ALL?

The court can excuse you from serving if you have a valid reason not to attend. The law only lets the court excuse you for certain reasons – these are listed in the response form.

CAN MY EMPLOYER STOP ME DOING JURY SERVICE?

No, your employer must give you time away from work to attend jury service. If your absence from work causes difficulty, your employer can give you a letter to support your application to be excused or have your service deferred. Your employer cannot write directly to the court.

How was I chosen for jury service?

A computer program selects names at random from the electoral roll. Some people can get picked a number of times, while some people may never get picked at all.

DOES BEING CHOSEN FOR JURY SERVICE MEAN I WILL BE A JUROR?

Being chosen for jury service does not necessarily mean you will actually sit on a jury. Once you arrive at court, the jury is randomly selected from everyone who has been summoned.

How long will I be needed?

Jury service is usually for one week. You will need to attend at the time stated in your summons. It can take up to three hours for a jury to be picked. If you are not picked to sit on a jury, you will be free to leave the court for the rest of the day. You may need to attend again throughout the week if other trials are scheduled. You will be given more information about this when you are at court.

Your jury summons will state if a trial is scheduled to last longer than one week. If a trial takes longer than expected, the court will let you know as soon as possible. You will be needed at court until the trial ends.

What does a jury do?

As a member of a jury, you and 11 other people, randomly selected from the community, must listen to all the evidence given in a court case. At the end of the case, you must look at the facts and decide whether the person accused is guilty or not guilty. Being a juror is an important responsibility. Justice depends on people like you to serve in our courts.

What skills do I need to be on a jury?

You don't need to be a legal expert to be on a jury. The judge will help you with any legal information. People on juries come from all parts of society. Your experience and the decisions you've made in your life so far are all the preparation you need.

While being a juror can seem challenging, most people also find it interesting and rewarding.

DO I NEED TO UNDERSTAND AND SPEAK ENGLISH WELL?

All court proceedings are in English. You need to be able to understand English. If you can take part in a group conversation in English, you probably understand English well enough to be on a jury.

If you think you may have trouble understanding the trial, speak to court staff.

Will I get paid for jury service?

You will be paid a small fee for coming to court, even if you are not picked to sit on a jury. How much you are paid will depend on how long you are at court.

Juror fees	First five days you attend court	Sixth and subsequent days you attend court
Your payment for each half-day is	\$31	\$40
If you are at court between 6pm and 9pm , your payment for the whole day is	\$89	\$114
If you are at court after 9pm , your payment for the whole day is	\$127	\$163

In exceptional circumstances, you can apply for an increased payment by contacting the registrar of the court where you will serve.

CAN I CLAIM FOR ADDITIONAL EXPENSES?

You will be repaid for your travelling, parking and childcare costs. You can claim up to \$80 a day for childcare provided by a commercial childcare company. Talk to the court before jury service if your child or children need more costly childcare.

WILL MY EMPLOYER PAY ME WHILE I'M AWAY FROM WORK?

Your employer does not have to pay you for your time on jury service. You will be paid a small fee by the court (see above). Some employers make up the difference between the fee and your normal income. Check your employment agreement to see if your employer does this, or ask your employer directly.

If you attend jury service but are not picked to sit on a jury that day, you should return to work if you have enough time to do so.

How should I get ready for jury service?

Make arrangements for your family and speak to your employer as soon as you receive your summons.

Be on time. Check your summons for the date and time you are required to attend.

Being a juror involves some waiting, so you may like to bring a snack (please don't bring cutlery like a knife or fork as these will be confiscated by court security), and something to read or do while you wait.

Wear tidy clothing.

RESEARCHING TRIALS

Please do not try to do any research about trials that you may be a juror on. As a juror, you need to be neutral. You will be given all the information you need to make a decision during the trial.

Parking

The court does not provide car parking for jurors. If you are driving, think about where you will park your car. Your car may need to be in a parking space for the whole day.

What can I expect at court?

When you arrive at court you should report to the juror waiting room. There you will find friendly, welcoming staff. They are there to help you.

Even if you are not picked as a juror, by coming to court you have played your part in the justice system and completed your jury service.

We understand that you might worry about your safety. We take all necessary steps to make you feel safe. If you have worries or feel pressure from anyone at any time, please tell court staff straight away.

If you or your employer have questions:

- call the court on 0800 COURTS (0800 268 787)
- visit justice.govt.nz/courts/jury-service/
- email juryservice@justice.govt.nz

