



S. Thomas Anderson
Chief District Judge

Thomas M. Gould
Clerk of Court

**United States District Court
Western District of Tennessee**

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United States Courthouse
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IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO POTENTIAL JURORS

The U.S. District Court for the Western District of Tennessee believes it is critical that potential petit jurors be fully informed about the potential that they might be called upon to meet during this difficult time. We have been assured by the Court, however, that to every extent possible they will endeavor to not call for jury trials except in the most extraordinary cases or the most pressing exigent circumstances.

The District Court, on its part, believes that if and when a jury trial is convened, all feasible precautions must be taken to meet CDC guidelines so as to better ensure the safety and health of all persons necessary for the jury process. We are sending this message to you in order to share some of the precautions that we will take in the event jurors are asked to convene. We believe that this sort of information is important to convey to potential jurors if we expect an adequate number of them to serve for future sessions.

This is a summary of the policies being adopted to better protect jurors that are called to meet during the current medical crisis:

- all entrants to the courthouse will be required to adhere to all social distancing rules throughout the jury selection process. From the time you check in for orientation until you are released from the courtroom, jurors will be asked to maintain a minimum distance of six feet from each other if at all possible. The jury team will make sure seating in public areas complies with mandated guidelines for spacing as well.
- the courthouse staff adheres to strict government guidelines for maintaining and disinfecting public areas and courtrooms. These areas are regularly cleaned and sanitized to limit the potential spread of COVID-19 through contact with surfaces in all public spaces. Jury staff will also have sanitary wipes and hand sanitizer available for your use.
- we are asking but not currently mandating that jurors bring with them recommended items of personal protection, more specifically, face masks and gloves. In any event, hand sanitizer and sanitary wipes will always be available.

The Court realizes that we are each trying to cope with difficult circumstances. There is a lot of uncertainty, an understandable degree of fear and growing weariness. Notwithstanding these challenges, petit jurors provide a crucial service to the country and to the justice system as a whole because the need for civil and criminal juries does not go away just because there is a deadly pandemic moving through our midst. Even in the chaotic times we're living through, citizens are still entitled to their day in court. The ability to empanel juries is crucial to the government's ability to prosecute violations of criminal law, and to make wronged citizens whole again. We appreciate the fact that jurors are ordinary people doing extraordinary things to ensure justice.

The Court understands that some of us are high-risk individuals, that others have been exposed to possible contamination, and that a few will need to be quarantined because of their own positive testing. Others, however, will be able to serve as petit jurors, and we simply want you to know that if you are able to serve, your health and personal safety is our paramount concern. Thank you for your understanding and flexibility during this unusual time, and please let us know if you have any questions. If you do, please feel free to contact the jury administrators at 901-495-1500 or by email at ejuror@tnwd.uscourts.gov.

Thomas M. Gould, Clerk of Court
April 28, 2020