

Frequently Asked Questions about Jury Service in Bonner County:

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What do I do now?[back to list](#)

When you receive a Jury Qualification Questionnaire for jury duty, you should immediately fill it out and return it to the Jury Commissioner, pursuant to Idaho Code (§2-208). You must answer all questions, date and sign the questionnaire, and provide a telephone number. As a juror you may be called to serve in either the District Court or the Magistrate Court in Bonner County. Trial cases may be criminal or civil proceedings.

How did I get selected?[back to list](#)

The jury selection process is a random selection of names taken from the "Master Jury List". This "List" is created from a master list, pursuant to Idaho Code (§2-206) by using information from two sources; the Bonner County list of registered voters and the State of Idaho Department of Transportation drivers' license records. From time to time, the Idaho Supreme Court may designate the use of other lists, such as: utility customers, property taxpayers, or motor vehicle registrations.

How long will I be called upon to serve?[back to list](#)

A jury panel service term in Bonner County is for one (1) month. We make every effort to notify you as to when trial dates have been set during that period to enable you to make the necessary arrangements to ensure your attendance. Occasionally, you may be required to serve with little advance notice. Once you have served a full jury panel term, you will not have to serve again for two years. Should your name be selected before two years have elapsed, you may indicate on your qualification questionnaire that you wish to be excused from jury service and your request will be granted.

I am not a resident of Bonner County or a citizen of the United States.[back to list](#)

If you are not a resident of Bonner County or a citizen of the United States you will not be qualified to serve jury service. You must complete the qualification questionnaire, answering "NO" to question #1 regarding citizenship and/or "NO" to question #2 regarding residency. If you are not a citizen, you must provide a copy of your legal documentation to support this answer (i.e. green card). If you are not a resident, you must include a change of address in the "Make Name and Address Corrections Here" section of the questionnaire located next to your name. Date, sign and return the questionnaire in the self-addressed, stamped envelope provided.

I am unable to read, write and understand the English language[back to list](#)

If English is not your primary language, you may need additional time to learn the language before you attend jury service. If you answer this question "yes" you will receive a telephone call from the Jury Commissioner to assess your situation. If deemed necessary, you will be given a temporary, two (2) year exemption in your jury service. If you have a medical condition that renders you unable to read, write or understand, you must answer question #6 on the questionnaire "yes" and provide the necessary documentation from your physician.

What if I have a felony criminal conviction?

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Pursuant to §2-209(2)(b), you are disqualified from serving jury service because of a felony criminal conviction if you are on felony probation or parole. Once you have completed your sentence and have been released from probation or parole, your voting rights are re-instated in the State of Idaho pursuant to Title 18, Chapter 3, Section 310 (2) and (4). At this time, you may be eligible for jury service if all other qualifying factors are in place. Complete the qualification questionnaire, answering "YES" to question #4 regarding felony criminal conviction. Answer part two of this question regarding your probation/parole status. Date, sign and return the questionnaire in the self-addressed, stamped envelope provided.

What if I believe I have served within the past 24 months?

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"Service" on jury duty means you have been qualified and been available for your month of service. You do not have to actually report for a jury to constitute service. You can call the Jury Office at any time to confirm your prior service. If you have served within 24 months of your prior service, you will be given a postponement until that 24 month period is completed if you answer "yes" to the second part of question #4.

What if I have a medical condition?

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Approval of a request for a permanent release from jury service for a medical condition means that you will be removed from the jury list and not illegible for jury service. Citizens should keep in mind that serving on a jury in this Country is a constitutional right in which you will not be able to participate if you request this permanent release. The Court is very reluctant to remove citizens unless the condition renders the individual incapacitated.

A Physician's Certificate for Release from Jury Service can be found on the reverse side of your jury qualification questionnaire, and is available online or from the Jury Commissioner. If you are requesting a **permanent** release from service, this certificate must be completed by a Certified Physician, pursuant to Idaho Code §2-209(1)(6). A permanent request will not be considered if it is completed by a nurse practitioner, physician's assistant, or any other non-certified physician. These medical providers can request a temporary release for you. If you have a chronic condition which makes it impossible for you to serve, have your physician complete the certificate and return it to the jury commissioner. You will not be excused until the physician's certificate has been received by the jury commissioner and approved by the Administrative Judge. Your physician should submit this certificate at no cost to you. You must also complete the qualification questionnaire and submit it with your physician's certificate.

This form should not be used for medical conditions that are temporary, such as illness, pregnancy, broken bones, etc. These issues can be dealt with through a temporary release or postponement.

I am 70 years of age or older

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Pursuant to Idaho Code §2-212(2), citizens who are 70 years of age or older can choose to be permanently exempt from jury service. Complete the qualification questionnaire, answering "YES" to question #7 regarding exemption. If, at any time, you wish to be reinstated as a potential juror, you may submit a request in writing to the Jury Commissioner. Date, sign and return the questionnaire in the self-addressed, stamped envelope provided.

Can I postpone my jury service?

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There are a few special circumstances which may allow you to request a postponement from one jury panel to another. Some examples include seasonal employment, a nursing mother, a temporary medical condition or you serve as a full-time caregiver. If you are requesting a postponement you must submit the "Request for Postponement" form found on the reverse side of your jury qualification questionnaire. Be sure to include in your request a day-time phone number where you can be reached.

What if I need a day off?

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Arrangements can be made to be excused from jury duty for short periods of time. Qualifying events would include a medical appointment, a special family event, including a pre-planned vacation or a pressing employment situation that will cause you to be out of the area. Indicate the dates you are unavailable on the "Request for Postponement" on the reverse side of the qualification questionnaire. You may also contact the jury commissioner by telephone. You must include your name, panel and reporting number and day time phone number.

My boss can't do without me...

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Almost everyone called for jury service is employed, and it would not be appropriate to have only unemployed or retired citizens as jurors; this would hardly comprise a jury of one's peers. The jury commissioner will try to work with all prospective jurors to reduce potential inconvenience or accommodate special circumstances. Keep in mind that you will usually have advance notification of the dates on which jury trials have been set and that the majority of trials only last a day or two.

Will I get paid for serving on a jury?

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Those selected for jury duty receive \$5 for a half day of service and \$10 for a full day, plus the federally approved mileage rate in effect at the time for the round trip from the juror's residence to the courthouse. Jurors should expect to receive their compensation within 3 weeks from the completion of their service. Some places of employment pay regular wages while an individual is serving on jury duty. This is NOT a requirement, however, and the decision to pay wages is entirely up to the business. If an employer does pay wages during absence due to jury duty, they will normally require that you give them your jury check upon receipt. Jurors should check with their employer to see what their policy is. Confirmation of jury service for days served is available from the jury commissioner upon request. Employers often expect that jurors return to work in the event of early release from jury service on any given day. Make sure you check your employer's policies, as verification cannot be provided except for time actually spent at the courthouse.

How will I know when I am supposed to report for jury service?

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This information is included in the "Order to Appear for Jury Service" mailed to you with your qualification questionnaire when your name was selected for potential service on a jury panel. The "Order to Appear for Jury Service" contains important reporting information, including when to call the jury message recording. You should call this number or check the website after 6:00 pm the Friday before the first day of your month of service, and every Friday thereafter. You must have your **Panel Number** and **Reporting Number** ready before you call. These numbers can be found in the upper right corner of your "Order to Appear for Jury Service". Listen to the entire recorded message, or read all of the information posted on the website, as

information and instructions concerning your specific jury panel and reporting number, including your reporting time, will be included. Frequently, jurors will be instructed to call the message recording or check the website the night before trial to confirm the trial status.

Where do I report for jury service?

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The majority of jury trials are held at the Bonner County Courthouse in Sandpoint located on the corner of South First Avenue (Business Loop Highway 95 North) and Lake Street . There will be a sign posted on the front door and/or on the reader boards inside the courthouse directing your panel to the particular courtroom they have been assigned to for trial.

What should I expect when I appear for jury service?

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On your trial date, there will be a brief orientation program which will be followed by jury selection. On average, the jury selection process takes from two to three hours. On occasion there may be circumstances in which a trial has been cancelled after the jury has reported. Should this occur prospective jurors will be excused as quickly as possible. Recognizing the inconvenience, the court makes every attempt to avoid having jurors appear when not needed. Following the selection process, prospective jurors not selected to sit on the trial are excused and are free to leave or stay to observe; all trials are open to the public. The Judge and/or jury commissioner will instruct you regarding your future reporting responsibilities.

Typically jurors are excused for the lunch hour. You should expect to provide your own lunch. A refrigerator and microwave are provided in each jury room. Meals are provided if a jury is deliberating through lunch or dinner. Every attempt is made to excuse jurors by 5:00 pm though there are situations that may require a jury to stay later, particularly if you are in deliberations.

What should I wear?

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While there is no formal dress code requiring suits, ties, dresses, etc. you are encouraged to dress in a conservative, non-distracting manner. You might want to bring a sweater with you.

What if I am a smoker?

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All courthouse facilities are non-smoking. However, during break times the bailiffs will accompany any jurors - smokers or not - outside to enjoy a breath of fresh air, if requested. This time may be used for smoking so long as the smoker maintains a 20 foot radius between them and the door to the courthouse as well as away from the non-smokers.

What If I am summoned for Grand Jury service?

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Grand Juries are occasionally used in Bonner County. Jurors summoned for Grand Jury Service can potentially serve for a six month period. You will not serve every day during this period; you will be assigned to report on various days throughout the six month time frame by the Prosecutor.

How do I get out of jury service?

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Idaho Code §2-211 provides "No exemptions for any qualified prospective juror may be granted." You are a qualified juror if you are 18 years of age or older, a citizen of the United States, a resident of Bonner County, and you are able to read, speak and understand the English language. However, if you have a felony record and are still on probation or parole you will be disqualified. If you are age 70 or older you may request to be permanently excused by making the appropriate notation on the jury qualification questionnaire.