

What to do with a jury summons

Easy · 10 min to read; 15 min to respond · Free; jurors are paid

Real summonses come by mail. Find the court, your report date and the response deadline, then answer by that deadline (online through eJuror for federal courts). If the date is a real hardship, ask the court for a deferral right away. Ignoring a federal summons can mean a fine up to \$1,000, up to three days in jail or community service. A call or email demanding personal info or a "fine" for missing jury duty is a scam.

YOU'LL NEED

- ☐ The summons
- ☐ Your juror number from the summons, if responding online
- ☐ Your work and school calendar

WHAT TO KNOW

- 1 **Read the whole summons.** It says which court, when to report and how to respond. State courts handle 98% of all cases, so your summons is likely from a state court. Rules, pay and deadlines differ from the federal ones below, so follow what your summons says.
- 2 **Check whether it's federal.** For a federal summons, go to the website of the district court that selected you and complete the Juror Qualification Questionnaire online through eJuror.
- 3 **Know the federal qualifications: U.S. citizen, at least 18, living mainly in the district for a year, able to read, write, understand and speak English adequately, and no pending felony charge or felony conviction (unless civil rights were restored).**
- 4 **Have a conflict?** Courts can grant temporary deferrals or excuses for "undue hardship or extreme inconvenience." Contact the court that summoned you; each of the 94 federal district courts has its own policies, and decisions can't be appealed.
- 5 **Tell your employer right away and give them a copy.** Federal law forbids firing, intimidating or coercing a permanent employee because of federal jury service.
- 6 **Plan your money.** Federal jurors get \$50 a day (up to \$60 after 10 days on a trial jury if the judge orders it), plus reasonable travel costs and, in some courts, parking. Your employer doesn't have to keep paying you, so ask about the company's policy.

Watch out Scammers call, email and message people threatening fines or jail for missing jury duty and pressure them for confidential information. Federal courts don't ask for sensitive information by phone or email, and most court contact comes by U.S. mail. Don't share anything; contact the clerk of the U.S. District Court in your area (find it with the Federal Court Finder) and report the scam to the FTC.

DAD NOTE Answer it on time. Ignoring it makes a small thing a big one.

Full lesson: aptkeys.com/legal/jury-duty/what-to-do-with-a-jury-summons/

Checked October 2, 2026. Sources: U.S. Courts; Legal Information Institute, Cornell Law School; National Center for State Courts.