



RHODE ISLAND SUPERIOR COURT

Jury Trial Protocols Under COVID-19 Guidelines

"We are committed to the health and safety of all jurors, court personnel, litigants, and court users."

Alice Bridget Gibney, Presiding Justice

September 30, 2020

RHODE ISLAND SUPERIOR COURT JURY TRIAL PROTOCOLS UNDER COVID-19 GUIDELINES

PRE-COVID PROCESS	JURY TRIAL PROCESS Effective September 2020	NOTES
<p>Summonses:</p> <p>Three weeks in advance, summonses are issued.</p> <p>Every Monday, 200 jurors are scheduled to report.</p> <p>Every Wednesday, 150 jurors are scheduled to report.</p>	<p>Summonses:</p> <p>Summonses will be issued three weeks in advance for one trial date certain upon authorization of the Presiding Justice.</p> <p>A Criminal Jury Trial will require a jury pool of 60-70 jurors; a Civil Jury Trial will require a pool of 40-50 unless otherwise adjusted per request of the sitting judge. The Office of the Jury Commissioner will communicate via letter, along with the juror summons as well as by notice on the juror webpage, the measures taken by the Court to ensure the health and safety of jurors in accordance with CDC and Rhode Island Department of Health guidelines. The letter will also address the juror’s responsibility to notify the Court of any Covid-related concerns.</p> <p>A call-in number will be implemented where prospective jurors will report to the Jury Commissioner if they are unavailable due to having Covid-19 symptoms or are required to quarantine.</p>	<p><i>The number of summonses issued will be increased in anticipation of a reduction in those available to serve.</i></p> <p><i>The Jury Commissioner will allow for greater flexibility (excusal) for dismissals for jurors with underlying health issues, childcare issues, or other immediate concerns.</i></p> <p><i>Facemasks for jurors will be a requirement, as it is for all court users and staff. Jurors are free to wear their own masks, but masks will be provided by the Court. Gloves will also be provided but will not be required except when using equipment in the juror lounge. Hand sanitizer will be readily available in all areas used by jurors.</i></p>
<p>Transportation:</p> <p>A shuttle from a Providence location to the South Main Street entrance of the Licht Judicial Complex runs from 7:30AM to 8:45AM each morning. The shuttle holds 25 jurors.</p> <p>Jurors also drive themselves and/or take public transportation.</p>	<p>Transportation:</p> <p>Shuttles will still be made available to jurors from the same Providence location but with a maximum of 13 jurors per shuttle run. Two shuttles will be used during the juror selection process to deal with the higher volume of jurors on those days.</p> <p>Pickups will continue to run from 7:30AM to 8:45AM. When jurors are released, (if not selected) the shuttle will be called by the Office of the Jury Commissioner when a small group of jurors is available to depart.</p>	<p><i>For social distancing purposes, only 13 jurors may ride the shuttle on any given run.</i></p> <p><i>Jurors will continue to be free to drive to the courthouse or take public transportation.</i></p>

RHODE ISLAND SUPERIOR COURT JURY TRIAL PROTOCOLS UNDER COVID-19 GUIDELINES

PRE-COVID PROCESS	JURY TRIAL PROCESS Effective September 2020	NOTES
<p>Early afternoon shuttles are under contract for the hours of 12:00PM to 1:00PM and end of day shuttles run from 2:30PM until 5:15PM.</p>	<p>Jurors will be dropped off and picked up at the Benefit Street entrance to the Licht Judicial Complex except for jurors who are unable to take stairs.</p>	<p><i>Dropping jurors off at the 5th floor entrance at Benefit Street will eliminate the need for jurors to use elevators.</i></p>
<p>Reporting to Licht Judicial Complex:</p> <p>Jurors report to the jury lounge on the fourth floor from the first and fifth floor entrances in the Licht Judicial Complex.</p> <p>Jurors check-in at the window on the 4th Floor, show photo ID, turn in summons, receive a badge and book, and walk into the jury lounge.</p> <p>At 9:00AM, jurors report to Courtroom 11 to watch the juror video.</p> <p>After viewing the juror video, a Judge welcomes the jurors and qualifies them.</p> <p>Jurors report back to the jury lounge at approximately 10:00AM and State employees selected for jury service are required to sign juror fee waiver forms at that time.</p>	<p>Reporting to Licht Judicial Complex:</p> <p>As there continue to be restrictions on the number of individuals allowed to gather in an inside venue, the manner of arrival and the processing of jurors will be modified as follows: Jurors will bypass reporting to the jury lounge and report directly to an assigned courtroom (11 or 12) on the 5th floor. Color-coded signage will direct jurors with last names beginning A-L to Courtroom 11 and those with last names M-Z to Courtroom 12.</p> <p>Color-coded signage will also indicate the route jurors will need to follow to the courtrooms. Jurors arriving at the first floor entrance: Although stairs are recommended, elevators are available but limited to two riders.</p> <p>At each of the two courtrooms staffed by Jury Commissioner Office personnel, jurors will be required to show a photo ID, turn in their summons, and receive a badge and a juror book. Seats in the courtrooms will be appropriately and clearly marked to ensure that jurors are properly distanced from each other during the qualification and selection process. State employees serving as jurors will be required to sign the waiver of juror fee at sign-in.</p> <p>Jury Commissioner staff will assist jurors with entering and seating in the courtroom. Staff will also manage the exiting of jurors to ensure social distancing at the break and close of day. For increased air</p>	<p><i>On arrival day for summonsed jurors, staff from the Office of the Jury Commissioner will be placed at the entrances to the courthouse to assist with arriving jurors.</i></p> <p><i>An appropriate number of sheriffs will be required for the two courtrooms during sign-in and jury selection.</i></p> <p><i>A cleaning schedule of Courtrooms 11 and 12 and bathrooms on the 5th and 4th floors will be finalized in conjunction with the Facilities Department.</i></p>

RHODE ISLAND SUPERIOR COURT JURY TRIAL PROTOCOLS UNDER COVID-19 GUIDELINES

PRE-COVID PROCESS	JURY TRIAL PROCESS Effective September 2020	NOTES
	<p>circulation, some of the windows in the courtroom will be open. Jurors should plan accordingly.</p> <p>Jury Commissioner’s staff will play the jury duty video for jurors in both courtrooms simultaneously.</p> <p>Jurors in Courtroom 11 will be qualified by the judge and the jurors in Courtroom 12 will simultaneously be qualified by the same judge via video streaming from Courtroom 11. Jurors with questions or concerns in Courtroom 12 will be escorted by the sheriff to Courtroom 11 where the judge is sitting. J-Tech will provide video capabilities for overflow jurors in Courtroom 12 to both view and participate in the proceedings and to allow the judge to view the overflow in the gallery in Courtroom 12.</p>	
<p>Courtroom Jury Selection:</p> <p>Hours 8:30AM – 4:00PM</p> <p>Jurors in the lounge line up in the hallway and a sheriff brings them to the courtroom.</p> <p>All jurors sit in the gallery.</p> <p>The sheriff is given the juror badges, juror lists, and juror barrel to bring into the courtroom.</p>	<p>Courtroom Jury Selection:</p> <p>Hours of operation will be reduced to 9:00AM to 1:00PM.</p> <p>Jurors will remain in Courtrooms 11 and 12 for jury selection. During voir dire, the selected juror will be standing at a microphone in the front of Courtroom 11. A chair will be available if necessary. After voir dire of each juror, a facilities staff person will be available to wipe down the podium and chair.</p> <p>Sidebars will be conducted in a nearby courtroom to allow for distancing. Due to volume of courtroom attendees at this phase, family members and the media will not have access to the courtroom during jury selection. Audio access to the proceedings will be available to the media and general public via YouTube audio.</p>	<p><i>Hours during the qualification, selection, and trial will be reduced to 9:00AM to 1:00PM with a break at the midpoint. This will eliminate the need for having large numbers of jurors utilizing the juror lounge or having to address lunch needs, etc.</i></p> <p><i>Courtroom 11 has been selected for jury trials under Covid restrictions as it is the largest courtroom in the Licht Judicial Complex. This will allow for greater distancing of the parties, jurors, and court personnel.</i></p>

**RHODE ISLAND SUPERIOR COURT
JURY TRIAL PROTOCOLS UNDER COVID-19 GUIDELINES**

PRE-COVID PROCESS	JURY TRIAL PROCESS Effective September 2020	NOTES
<p>During breaks in the proceedings, the jurors are sent back to the jury lounge. Jurors have access to the microwave, refrigerator, and vending machines.</p> <p>After the jury is selected, the remaining jurors return to the jury lounge to be excused.</p> <p>Each juror turns in his/her badge and is issued a work voucher.</p> <p>After the jury is selected, the remaining jurors return to the jury lounge to be excused.</p> <p>Each juror turns in his/her badge and is issued a work voucher.</p>	<p>Plexiglass will be used to divide witness and judge, witness and attorney, witness and jurors, and opposing counsel.</p> <p>Facilities has been consulted regarding air flow and temperatures in the courtroom. A deep cleaning will take place in the courtroom at the end of each day of the trial as well as in the jury lounge when utilized.</p> <p>The jury lists, barrel and juror cards will be in Courtroom 11.</p> <p>After the jury is selected, the remaining jurors will be excused from the courtroom and limited to departure in small groups. Jurors will be required to turn in their badges and work vouchers will be mailed to the jurors instead of being issued to them directly.</p> <p>Badges will be used once and discarded by the Office of Jury Commissioner staff.</p>	<p><i>Ensure cleanliness of bathroom facilities to be used by jurors. All courthouse restroom facilities have been addressed for proper distancing and safety since the onset of Covid-19.</i></p>
<p>Courtroom Jury Trial:</p> <p>8:30AM – 4:00PM</p> <p>In a criminal jury trial, twelve jurors and two alternates are selected.</p>	<p>Courtroom Jury Trial:</p> <p>Reduced hours 9:00AM – 1:00PM</p> <p>As Covid issues may impact a juror’s availability to continue to serve (i.e., a need to quarantine, Covid-type symptoms), two to three alternates will be selected at the discretion of the judge who is presiding. Juror box seats have been retrofitted with plexiglass to provide a safe and functional viewing space.</p>	<p><i>Hours have been reduced to 9:00AM to 1:00PM for the trial phase.</i></p>

RHODE ISLAND SUPERIOR COURT JURY TRIAL PROTOCOLS UNDER COVID-19 GUIDELINES

PRE-COVID PROCESS	JURY TRIAL PROCESS Effective September 2020	NOTES
<p>In a civil jury trial, six jurors and two alternates are selected.</p> <p>During breaks in the proceedings, jurors return to the juror lounge, 4th floor.</p> <p>Jurors have access to microwave, refrigerator, and vending machines.</p>	<p>Jurors will sit in the same seat for every day of the trial. Plexiglass will be cleaned after the close of business each day. Masks will need to be worn by jurors at all times.</p> <p>A limited number of family members will be allowed access to the courtroom as determined by the trial judge. A limited number of media members will be given in-court access during the trial phase. Members of the media must comply with the media guidelines set forth in Supreme Court Executive Order 2020-12.</p> <p>The juror lounge is large enough to allow for proper social distancing. Gloves will be provided to jurors who wish to use equipment and/or vending machines during break periods.</p> <p>Jury Commissioner staff members will monitor distancing and juror needs.</p>	<p><i>The juror lounge is comprised of three separate rooms. There is ample space for the distancing of the jurors.</i></p> <p><i>All three rooms and restrooms will be cleaned at the end of each day.</i></p>
<p>Deliberations:</p> <p>Each courtroom has its own deliberation room.</p> <p>Sheriffs are assigned to sit at the bottom of the stairs to the room during deliberations.</p>	<p>Deliberations:</p> <p>With anticipated restrictions, the jurors hearing a trial in Courtroom 11 will conduct deliberations in a courtroom, which is in close proximity to Courtroom 11. Jury Commissioner Office staff will set up juror chairs at the front of the courtroom selected for deliberation purposes around counsel table making sure that jurors are properly distanced.</p> <p>Doors to the “deliberation Courtroom” will remain closed as jurors will need to speak loudly as they will be properly distanced during the deliberation period.</p>	

**RHODE ISLAND SUPERIOR COURT
JURY TRIAL PROTOCOLS UNDER COVID-19 GUIDELINES**

PRE-COVID PROCESS	JURY TRIAL PROCESS Effective September 2020	NOTES
<p>When the trial has concluded, the Judge addresses the jurors in the deliberation room and then they are excused and sent to the jury lounge.</p> <p>In the jury lounge, each juror turns in his/her badge and is given a work voucher and evaluation form.</p> <p>Jurors are then excused from service.</p>	<p>The assigned sheriff will sit outside of the closed courtroom door when deliberations are taking place.</p> <p>When a trial has concluded, the Judge will be able to speak to the jurors in the courtroom where the deliberations took place. Jurors will be excused and sent to the jury lounge to return their badges and receive their work vouchers and evaluation forms.</p> <p>Jurors are then excused from service.</p>	