

## Justice of the Peace #4 - General Jury Information

The Texas Judicial System has three levels of trial court – district, county, and justice or municipal and two appellate courts. The justice of the peace falls into the justice court. This court has the most uniform court in the state.

Each county is required to have a justice of the peace, and generally there is one for each precinct. The precincts are based on population. These precincts can be changed through redistricting by the commissioners court.

The justice court has jurisdiction over civil, small claims, and eviction suits up to \$10,000 exclusive of interest. Because the justice court is not a court of record, any appeal to county court is trial de novo, or a new trial.

### Jury Information

Once you receive your Jury Summons Card, you **MUST** fill it out and bring it with you.

You must report to JP#4 on the date and time on the card. You **must call** the day before your scheduled service to determine if you need to appear.

Deferment of jury duty – If you received a jury summons and have a conflict, under certain circumstances you may be eligible to reschedule your jury duty. Deferments are subject to the needs of the court. The Judge is the only one that may release you from jury duty. To request a deferment you must contact our office by calling 830-372-8916.

If there is any incorrect information on your summons, please note what information needs to be corrected.

Temporary exemptions or disqualifications: Please refer to your summons card and select the General Qualification that you **do not** meet or the exemption you wish to claim. Make sure you have the top of the card filled out as well and that you provide a working phone number where we can contact you if we have any questions.

Complete the form and sign it, then mail it back to the court that summoned you. If you are requesting the permanent exemption based on medical reasons (either physical or mental) you must have your doctor verify your permanent inability to be on a jury, on his/her own office letterhead and send it in with your form.

## **Juror Instructions**

The instructions below will give information to people called for jury service. Please read all the instructions. If you received a summons in the mail:

1. Fill out the questionnaire. If you have any questions regarding the questionnaire, call the jury information number for assistance.
2. You may file for an exemption with a written affidavit. The exemptions listed are the only ones for which an individual can be excused. *Business reasons are not a reason for excuse.* If a medical exemption is desired, a written excuse from a doctor must accompany the affidavit.
3. Return attached business reply card within five (5) days.

## **JUROR'S RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Right to Reemployment:**

A private employer may not terminate the employment of a permanent employee because the employee serves as a juror. An employee whose employment is terminated in violation of this section is entitled to return to the same employment that the employee held when summoned for jury service, as soon as practical after release from jury service, gives the employer actual notice that the employee intends to return. (Civil Practice and Remedies Code, Section 122.001)

### **Failure to Answer Summons and Penalties:**

A person who fails to comply with this summons is subject to contempt action punishable by a fine of not less than \$100.00 not more than \$1,000 (Government code, Section 62.0141). Additionally, a person shall be fined not less than \$10 not more than \$100 if the person (1) fails to attend court in obedience to the notice without reasonable excuse; or (2) files a false claim of exemption from jury service (Government Code, Section 62.111).

### **Proper Clothing Required:**

All persons entering the courtroom should be dressed in clothing reasonably befitting the dignity and solemnity of the court proceedings.

### **Example of Disqualified:**

You do not need to appear in person if you are exempt or not qualified for jury service. To claim an exemption or report your disqualification you must complete the form on the back of the jury card, sign it and mail or personally bring it immediately to the address printed to the left of this summons.