

Superior Court of the State of Washington for the County of Mason

AMBER L. FINLAY, Judge
Department No. 1
MONTY D. COBB, Judge
Department No. 2
DANIEL L. GOODELL, Judge
Department No. 3



Commissioner:
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Jury Trials Resuming in Mason County Superior Court, Mason County District Court and Shelton Municipal Court Next Month

Mason County Superior Court, Mason County District Court and Shelton Municipal Court will resume jury trials in July after pausing them in March in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Extensive new safety precautions have been implemented to protect juror safety and public health as trials resume.

Jury summons have gone out, with the first potential trials planned for the week of July 6, 2020.

"The suspension of jury trials was needed to protect the health of court users and court staff, and it gave us the opportunity to redesign our jury processes with the input of public health officials," said Judge Daniel Goodell of the Superior Court. "Now it is critical that we re-start jury trials, which are key to the fair administration of justice."

"The Supreme Court has made clear, in its most recent administrative order, that the time has come to resume conducting jury trials," said Judge George Steele of the District Court.

New jury protocols include:

1. All people entering the courthouse are required to wear a mask/face covering. Jurors are encouraged to wear their own masks/face coverings. Masks will be made available for jurors who do not have their own.
2. Jurors who are sick should stay home and call the coordinator at (360) 427-9670 ext. 537.
3. Jurors will be in areas that will have enough space to distance themselves from other people in the room by at least 6 feet per the CDC guidelines.
4. Jurors will not be asked to touch any surfaces, documents, or objects that have previously been touched by another person without being sanitized.
5. Only a very limited number of jurors are summoned to appear at any time, so the overall number of people inside the courthouse and courtroom will be restricted.
6. The courtroom and the courthouse will be sanitized several times a day.
7. Hand sanitizer stations have been installed throughout the courthouse.
8. Jurors will be able to sanitize or wash their hands as often as they feel necessary.
9. Jurors will be encouraged to share any concerns with the bailiff.
10. Due to space limitations in the courtrooms, there may be alternate locations for the public to view the proceedings.

The Courts recognize that some individuals who have received jury summons may be especially vulnerable to COVID-19 exposure and have allowed for requests to delay or excuse jury service during this time. The process for making such a request is included in the jury summons.

Jury duty is important because it safeguards one of the most crucial rights of the American legal system. Without citizens willing to serve in this crucial role, our justice system will not work and the Courts encourage all who are summoned to properly respond.