What you need to know if you've been summoned for jury duty in Nova Scotia

Serving on a jury is an important responsibility. Being a juror is one of the most direct ways that you can take part in the justice system.

This information sheet contains some of the frequently asked questions about being summoned for jury duty.

What is a jury?

A jury consists of 12 people (criminal) or 7 people (civil) who are selected to hear the evidence in a trial and then render a verdict. The role of the jury is to make all necessary findings of fact on the evidence heard, and to then apply the law as instructed by the judge in reaching a verdict. Only the Supreme Court conducts jury trials.

Who can be a juror?

In Nova Scotia, anyone can be a juror if they are a **Canadian citizen** and **18 years or** "older I B@GG""""

- You have been convicted of a crime and been sentenced to two or more years in prison;
- > You have attended or are attending a law school;
- You work in the administration of justice (for example, a police officer or an employee of the provincial or federal Departments of Justice)
- You are a Member of the House of Commons, the Senate, the House of Assembly or the Lieutenant Governor
- You are an officer or non-commissioned member of the reserve Armed Forces on active service or an officer and non-commissioned member of the regular Armed Forces and special Armed Forces.

Why was I picked?

Your name was selected at random from names taken from the Health Registration List. We are provided with your name and address ONLY. Being summoned means that you have to report for jury selection - it does not mean that you will necessarily sit on a jury.

I have the Jury Summons - now what do I do?

- First, read everything in the package carefully. It is important that you understand what you need to do and when.
- Second, fill out the Juror Information Form, detach and send it in. This form by itself means you will be in attendance.
- Third, make a note of the date and time you have to attend court.
- Finally, keep the Jury Information Line to call about jury information in a safe place.

ALWAYS call that number before you travel to the court.

I don't know anything about law or about sitting on a jury!

That's fine. If you are chosen to sit on a jury, the Judge will give you information about what will happen next and what you need to know.

Do I have to serve?

Remember that serving on a jury is an important responsibility. It is your chance to be involved in the justice system. You can be excused from jury duty only if you have a good reason.

To ask be excused/deferred from jury duty, you must fill out the "Application to be Excused/Deferred From Jury Duty." This form is included in the package of documents you received. The Jury Coordinator can excuse you from jury duty if serving on a jury will cause you hardship, or if you are ill. If you are asking to be excused because you are ill, you must also send in a Medical Certificate filled out by your doctor, unless you are age 70 years or older. This form is also included in your package.

If serving on a jury is inconvenient now, but you could serve in the near future, the Jury Coordinator may defer you to the next jury session. This means that you will have to serve in the next month or so.

If the Jury Coordinator does not excuse you or defer you to a later date, he or she will forward your application to a judge to review. The judge may excuse you on the basis of hardship, illness or inconvenience.

The Jury Coordinator will contact you by telephone to let you know if your application has been approved or denied.

If you are not excused from jury duty, you must attend court.

What happens if I do not fill out the forms and return them or if I do not show up for jury duty without being excused?

Remember, jury duty is responsibility that must be taken seriously. If you do not send in the Juror Information Form, or if you do not show up for jury duty without being excused, you may be arrested and fined up to \$1000.

Does my employer have to give me time off to appear for jury duty?

Yes. You are entitled to unpaid leave to attend for jury duty. Some employers pay their employees regular wages while attending court for jury duty, so you should check with your employer.

What are "jury fees"?

If selected to sit on a jury, you will be paid \$40.00 per day and 20¢ a kilometer from your home to the courthouse and back for each day that you sit on a jury. If not selected to sit on a jury, but traveled more than 100 kilometers from your home to the courthouse in response to a jury summons, you will be paid 20¢ a kilometer from your home to the courthouse and back.

I am receiving Employment Insurance benefits. How will attending for jury duty affect my benefits?

Attending court for jury duty will not affect your benefits.

I still have questions - who can I ask for more information?

Call the Jury Coordinator for your court. His or her name and phone number is on the Juror Summons.