

RULE 5 - JURY SERVICE

- 5.1** Jury Service is a duty of all qualified citizens and shall not be denied or limited, in any way, on the basis of race, national origin, gender, age, religious belief, income, occupation, disability, or any other factor that discriminates against a cognizable group within the jurisdiction of this Court.
- 5.2** The names of potential Jurors shall be drawn from a Jury source list compiled from the poll list of registered voters obtained from the Board of Elections and may be obtained from the Ohio BMV list of Belmont County residents who hold a driver's license. The Jury source list shall be representative and shall be as inclusive of the adult population of Belmont County as is feasible. This Court shall review the Jury source list annually. Should the Court determine, upon review, that the Jury source list is not sufficiently representative and inclusive of the adult population of Belmont County, the Court shall direct appropriate corrective action.
- 5.3** Except as otherwise provided, selection of prospective Jurors from the Jury source list, summoning them for service, assigning them to panels, and calling them for voir dire shall be conducted in a random manner, either manual or automatic, so that every person listed has an equal probability of selection. The method utilized shall be documented by the Clerk of Courts. However, departure from random selection shall be appropriate under the following circumstances:
- (A) To exclude persons ineligible for service in accordance with Rule 5.4;
 - (B) To excuse or defer prospective Jurors in accordance with Rule 5.6;
 - (C) To remove prospective Jurors for cause or, or if challenged peremptorily, in accordance with Rules 5.8 and 5.9;
 - (D) To provide all prospective Jurors with an opportunity to be called for Jury Service and to be assigned to a panel in accordance with Rule 5.13.

5.4 All persons on the Jury source list shall be eligible for service except:

- (A) Persons under the age of 18 years;
- (B) Persons who are not U.S. citizens;
- (C) Persons who are not residents of Belmont County;
- (D) Persons who are not fluent in the English language; and
- (E) Convicted felons who have not had their civil rights restored.

5.5 Persons summoned for petit Jury service shall remain on a panel until:

- (A) Their services are no longer deemed necessary by the Court;
- (B) The term of Court has ended;
- (C) Said Juror has been summoned and has reported for service two (2) times without serving;
- (D) Said Juror has served at least two (2) consecutive Trial days in one (1) Trial; or
- (E) Said Juror has served a total of two (2) or more Trial days regardless of the number of Trials.

5.6 All Persons on the Jury source list shall be exempt, excused or deferred from Jury Service, in the discretion of the Court or the Jury Commissioners or their authorized representative. Request for exemption, excuse, or deferral of service shall be made in writing. **See Appendix A to Local Rule 5.** Exemptions from Jury Service are as follows:

- (A) Over the age of 75, or physically unable to serve, and has made a request to be exempted;
- (B) Death of a spouse or near relative or serious personal or

family illness supported by a physician's certificate of inability to serve;

- (C) The Juror is necessarily absent from the County and will not return in time to serve;
- (C) Cloistered members of a religious organization;
- (E) The Juror previously has been called as a Juror for Trial in a Court of Record in the County within the same Jury year;
- (F) The interest of the public or of the Juror will be materially injured by the Juror's attendance.

Persons on the Jury source list may be temporarily excused for a specified Trial or deferred a specific period of time by the Court, Juror Commissioners and/or their authorized representative, as follows:

- (A) The Juror will be necessarily absent from the County on a temporary basis and will not return in time to serve (must be verified by the Court);
- (B) The Juror is a full time student at a bona fide educational institution and has requested to be excused;
- (C) The Juror will be on vacation during the period of their respective Jury service.

5.7 Voir dire examination shall be limited to matters relevant to determining whether to remove a Juror for cause and to determine the Juror's fairness and impartiality. Juror questionnaires may be submitted by the attorneys and may be ordered by the court on an individual case basis.

5.8 Upon Motion or **Sua Sponte**, if the Court determines during the Jury Selection process that a prospective Juror is unable or unwilling to hear the matter fairly and impartially, the Court shall excuse that person for cause.

- 5.9 The exercise of peremptory challenges shall be governed by the law of the State of Ohio.
- 5.10 During the voir dire examination, counsel shall not argue their case in any manner; nor shall they engage in efforts to indoctrinate the Jurors; nor shall they ask questions concerning anticipated instructions or theories of law, except for general questioning on the validity and philosophy of the burden of proof and presumption of innocence; Jurors shall not be asked what kind of Verdict they would return under any circumstances. Questions that may be put to the panel of the prospective Jurors as a whole must be asked in that fashion.
- 5.11 The responsibility for administering the Jury System shall be vested in a Court Administrator acting under the supervision of the Administrative Judge and in conjunction with the Jury Commissioners. Pursuant to the above authorization, the Court Administrator shall issue the notice summoning prospective Jurors, Juror Questionnaires, and written requests for exemption, excuse or deferral, which documents shall be in a form approved by the Court and delivered by ordinary mail with readily understandable explanations for completion of the forms, return of the forms, and the consequences for failure to do so. Said explanation shall clearly advise each prospective Juror of their right to request an **in-camera hearing** to determine whether their legitimate private interests warrant non-disclosure of their written responses in their Questionnaires. Any person summoned for Jury service who fails to appear without exemption, excuse, or deferral shall be summoned to show cause as to why that person should not be held in contempt.
- 5.12 The Court shall collect and analyze information regarding the performance of the Jury System on an annual basis, but not later than December of each calendar year, in order to evaluate:
- (A) Whether the Jury source list is representative and inclusive;
 - (B) The effectiveness of the qualification and summoning procedures;
 - (C) The responsiveness of individual citizens to Jury duty summons;

- (D) The efficient use of Jurors;
- (E) The cost effectiveness of the Jury Management System.

- 5.13** The Court shall utilize the service of Jurors in such a manner as to achieve optimum use and minimum inconvenience. To that end, the Court shall determine the minimum number of prospective Jurors necessary to accommodate Trial activity. Until a prospective Juror has been selected by the Court to participate in a Trial activity, the information contained in the Juror Questionnaires shall not be subject to release to the public, since the presumption of openness does not apply until the minimum number of Jurors needed to accommodate the prospective Trial has been Ordered by the Court.
- 5.14** The Court shall provide an adequate and suitable environment for Jurors. Clear directions for the time, place, and manner of checking in and information on parking shall be given to prospective Jurors in advance. The Jury deliberation room shall include space, furnishings and facilities conducive to reaching a fair verdict. The safety and security of the deliberation room shall be insured. To the extent feasible, Jury facilities and procedures shall minimize contact between the Jurors, parties, witnesses, counsel and the public.
- 5.15** Persons called for Jury duty shall receive a reasonable fee for their services and expenses in accord with R.C. §2313.34 and appropriate resolution of the Board of County Commissioners of Belmont County, Ohio. Such fee shall be promptly paid.
- 5.16** In accord with R.C. §2313.18, employers shall be prohibited from discharging, laying off, denying advancement opportunities to or otherwise penalizing the employees who miss work because of Jury service. Whoever violates R.C. §2313.18 and/or any provision of this Local Rule shall be punished as and for Contempt of Court pursuant to Chapter 2705 of the Revised Code.
- 5.17** The Court shall be responsible for providing instructions that are readily understood by individuals unfamiliar with the law and the legal system to prospective Jurors appearing pursuant to summons. The Trial Judge shall:

- (A) Provide preliminary instructions to all prospective Jurors;
- (B) Provide instructions at the commencement of voir dire and/or immediately following the empanelling of the Jury to explain the Jurors' role, the Trial procedure, the nature of evidence and its evaluation, the issues to be addressed and basic legal principles; and
- (C) Provide instructions, prior to deliberations, on the law, procedures that the Jury must follow in deliberating, and the method for reporting the results of deliberation.

At the conclusion of the Trial, after the Jury has completed its service, the Trial Judge shall:

- (A) Advise the Jurors that they no longer have a duty of confidentiality;
- (B) Advise the Jurors as to their rights with respect to inquiries from counsel, the press, or others;
- (C) Advise the Jurors as to whether they are discharged from service or whether they will be required to report at another time;
- (D) Advise the Jurors that their service is appreciated;
- (E) Not express approval or disapproval of the result of the Jury's deliberation; and
- (F) Dismiss the Jury.

5.18 All communication between the Trial judge and the Jurors, from the time prospective Jurors report to the courtroom until the Jury is dismissed, shall be either in writing or on the record. The parties shall be advised of such communications and shall be given an opportunity to be heard.

5.19 A Jury shall be sequestered only for good cause. Good cause includes insulating members of a Jury from improper information or influence. In a capital case, the Jury shall be sequestered during deliberations of both the guilt phase and the penalty phase of the Trial. The Trial Judge shall have discretion to sequester a Jury on motion or **sua sponte** and shall have the responsibility to set and manage the conditions of sequestration in order to achieve the purpose and to minimize the inconvenience and discomfort of Jurors. Court personnel shall be given training as to escorting and assisting Jurors during sequestration.

APPENDIX A
LOCAL RULE 5
IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
PROBATE/JUVENILE DIVISION
BELMONT COUNTY, OHIO

REQUEST FOR EXCUSE OR DEFERRAL

The Juror is **INELIGIBLE** for service because: (Please Circle)

- (1) Under the age of 18 years;
- (2) Not a U.S. citizen;
- (3) Not a resident of Belmont County;
- (4) Not fluent in English;
- (5) A convicted felon, and my social security number is _____;
- (6) Deceased, please state date of death:_____.

I wish to be **EXCUSED** from service and do not want to serve because I: (Please Circle)

- (1) am at least **75** years old; though I may serve, I choose not to serve;
- (2) Medical-have attached a **physician's certificate** to document a serious personal or family illness that renders me unable to serve;
- (3) am a **cloistered** member of a religious order (**does not include clergy of all religions**);
- (4) would suffer serious financial hardship if required to serve and have **attached an explanation** (**absence from employment is not valid excuse under the law**);
- (5) I have been seated on a Jury Panel in the last year. Date seated:_____
- (6) Extended absence from County during term _____ (**must be verified by Court**).

I request **DEFERRAL** for a specific period of time_____ because: (Please Circle)

- (1) I will be out of the country;
- (2) I am a student;
- (3) I will be on vacation (deferral not to exceed two (2) weeks);
- (4) I am serving in the Military.

**STATE OF OHIO
COUNTY OF BELMONT**

I do hereby solemnly swear or affirm that the answers to the foregoing questions are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief and that I understand my right to request a hearing to determine my legitimate privacy interest to warrant the non-disclosure of my responses to the public.

DATED: _____

Signature of Prospective Juror
-OR- Representative