

TWENTY-FIFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF VIRGINIA

ANNE F. REED, JUDGE
STAUNTON CIRCUIT COURT
GEORGE M. COCHRAN JUDICIAL CENTER
113 EAST BEVERLEY STREET
STAUNTON, VIRGINIA 24401



STAUNTON
PHONE (540) 332-3870
FAX (540) 332-3873

COUNTIES

ALLEGHANY, AUGUSTA, BATH
BOTETOURT, CRAIG, HIGHLAND AND ROCKBRIDGE

CITIES

BUENA VISTA, COVINGTON
LEXINGTON, STAUNTON AND WAYNESBORO

Dear Prospective Juror:

You have been selected to potentially serve as a juror during the term of January 2021. This letter outlines some of the steps we have taken to try and address health and safety issues during the COVID-19 pandemic and will give you an idea of what to expect.

If selected as a potential juror, you will be contacted by someone from the Staunton City Sheriff's Office regarding jury duty. They will go over your "Self-Check" questionnaire with you, which includes questions related to high-risk individuals per the Center for Disease Control (CDC) website. You will also be asked to provide a valid email address or mobile telephone number for emergency/urgent message purposes.

Please plan on arriving at the Staunton Circuit Court at the specific time you are noticed to appear. You will **NOT** be going through the main entrance. In order to insure adequate social distancing, prospective jurors are asked to report to the side handicapped accessible entrance off of New St. There will be a check-in station there and you will be screened for security. Prospective jurors are being given staggered arrival times to reduce the number of people awaiting entry. The sidewalk will be marked off showing the appropriate distance to wait to allow for social distancing. At the check-in station, Staunton City Sheriff Office personnel will ask you a series of questions as recommended by the CDC. Your temperature will be checked with a handheld or mounted thermometer upon your entrance to the courthouse. You are required to wear a face covering that covers your nose and mouth. If you do not have a mask, one will be provided for you. You will be asked to make use of the hand sanitizer station when you enter the building.

Next, you will follow the directions of the bailiffs and ascend to the second floor in a socially distanced manner. You will see signage and markings throughout the building to assist you. You will be directed by a bailiff where you need to go and you will be checked in, equipped with additional PPE as necessary, and await the convening of Court. Social distancing and mask wearing must be practiced at all times.

More potential jurors are summonsed than actually serve. Prospective jurors will be placed in socially distanced seating in the courtroom for the question and answer portion of the jury selection process known as *voir dire*. Any jurors not selected will be excused to exit the courthouse in a socially distanced manner and will be discharged. Due to space limitations in the courthouse, it may be necessary to do the jury selection process in stages. If that occurs, you may be directed to leave the courthouse in a socially distanced manner but return at a later specified time for the remainder of the *voir dire*. If that occurs, when you return at the specified time, you will need to enter through the same side handicapped accessible entrance and be re-screened before you may enter the building again.

Once a jury is selected, those jurors will remain in the courtroom for the trial. The courthouse will have been sanitized prior to your arrival. It will also be cleaned and disinfected during breaks and after the jury is discharged for the day. All high touch surfaces throughout the building are cleaned every two hours during the day.

Please feel free to bring any PPE you desire. We will have masks, gloves, and hand sanitizer available for each juror. Each juror will be seated at least six feet apart. If selected to serve as a juror, you will be allowed to depart the court building each day for lunch. Upon your return from lunch, you will go through the same security screening measures you experienced during your initial entry.

If you are selected to serve on a jury for a criminal trial, you will be seated in the main gallery of the courtroom for the duration of the trial and jury deliberations will take place in the auxiliary courtroom on the same floor, which will be marked for social distancing. The second-floor restrooms will be closed to public use and will be reserved for jurors. They will be marked for usage by one person at a time. The bathrooms will be cleaned and sanitized at the beginning and end of each day and high touch surfaces will be cleaned at regular intervals throughout the day. If you are selected to serve on a jury for a civil trial, you will be seated in and around the regular jury box and will deliberate in the regular jury deliberation room. That room contains two single occupant bathrooms and the room will be marked to show appropriate social distancing. Regardless of whether the trial is criminal or civil, jurors seating will be designated and you will utilize that seat throughout the trial.

The attorneys, parties, witnesses and court personnel will be wearing face coverings and other PPE. Please understand these procedures are implemented for your protection.

Thank you for serving in this very important judicial system function. Jury trials are a vital part of our judicial system and each party is entitled to a fair and impartial jury. We appreciate your willingness to serve, especially during this difficult time. Should you have any concerns or questions, please contact the Circuit Court Clerk, Staci Falls, at (540) 332-3874.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anne F. Reed". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A" and "R".

Anne F. Reed, Judge