

**Please read!**  
**COVID-19 Concerns – Jury Summons**

We in the judicial system are acutely aware of the current health environment and orders from the various government authorities. We are in compliance with the directives and mandates. The functions of the court system are deemed essential, however, and perhaps more important, there is no suspension of our constitutionally-based duties toward each individual having business in the courts. This is particularly important with respect to those accused of crimes. From the time of our founding as a nation, each of us has the guaranteed right to a speedy trial before a jury. The denial of this right was even one of the bases for the colonists' declaration of independence from England, thus this was the only right guaranteed in our original constitution.

The Supreme Court of Texas and the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals were each very clear on the continuing responsibilities of the local courts in each of our 254 counties. Having due consideration of all of the factors relating to the maintenance of public health, local dockets are substantially reduced and only the most important or time sensitive matters are being heard, in many cases by electronically remote means. Regardless, we are bound to consider the future and the rights of those with pending cases, with particular emphasis on those with pending criminal law-based cases. This is why you received a summons for jury duty.

Our hope is that our scheduled cases can be resolved by agreement that effectuates a just result. If so, your personal appearance will not be required and you will be so notified. If not, we need your service in support of our constitutional system.

As virtually everyone is aware, the future is uncertain and your local justice system is not excepted from that reality. Future directives may issue from our leadership with which we will comply. Like you, we do not know what those directives will be or how long they will last. All the while, however, we are obligated to continue our functions as the judicial branch of government. I expect you would not wish us to do otherwise. Like you, we are not immune from the current health concerns and placing you in jeopardy would have the same effect upon us so, we are not here to assert authority simply because we can.

We all undoubtedly have concerns about what happens in the future, thus that is why we are planning for it now. If we do not, we risk more problems simply from not planning. We ask for your understanding in this regard knowing our responsibility is to protect the liberty interests of all, which includes you, our local constituents. Please remember that many died to uphold and protect our system and all of us, as potential jurors, are a part of that. While individual liberty, regardless of the time, is never without risk, we are making all efforts to keep you safe in this process. In short, you are required to obey your summons, but if your personal appearance can be avoided, you will be so notified.

Please log onto to the website listed on your jury summons. By doing so, you will receive notification by email or text message of any cancellations of jury duty. Should your jury duty proceed as scheduled, you will receive a reminder by email or text message.

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