

**To All Prospective Jurors Summoned to Appear for Jury Selection in the 81st/218th Judicial District Court Atascosa County, Texas**

**Re: Precautions for Safety Due to COVID-19 for Upcoming Jury Service Dear Prospective Juror:**

You have been randomly selected to appear for potential service as a juror in Atascosa County. The jury process is a vital step of the justice system in the State of Texas. Jurors are tasked with the responsibility of determining guilt or innocence in a criminal case or a degree of fault of a given party in a civil case.

In light of the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic, we want to assure you that Atascosa County has taken every reasonable precaution to protect the health and safety of you and court staff. We have called upon county officials and employees to provide their expertise and assistance in order to proceed in a manner that is safe for all participants. The judges formulated a trial plan in accordance with the requirements of the Texas Supreme Court and Office of Court Administration, and this plan was reviewed and approved by the Local Administrative Judge and the Regional Administrative Judge. The Health Department monitors COVID-19 numbers daily and has approved our plan to proceed with the trial.

**Please review the below list of precautions related to the summons requesting your appearance:**

1. Jury selection will occur at the Atascosa County Justice Center. The facilities will receive extensive cleaning prior to jury selection. Bathroom facilities and other high contact areas will be cleaned at regular intervals throughout the day. Hand sanitizer will be made available at multiple locations throughout the building. For those selected as jurors, social distancing guidelines, sanitization, and sanitization products will continue to be required and available when the jury trial begins.
2. Prospective jurors will be required to wear face coverings while they are in the building. Individuals are encouraged to bring a face covering with them. If an individual does not have a face covering, a disposable face mask will be provided.
3. At the building entrance, each prospective juror will have their temperature screened and will be questioned regarding their COVID-19 symptoms and exposure.

**In coordination with guidance from the Office of Court Administration, please review the below additional guidelines as it pertains to COVID-19 exemptions individuals can claim for the reasons detailed below:**

1. Vulnerable Population: Individuals who are over age 65 and individuals with serious underlying health conditions, such as high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, obesity, asthma, and those whose immune systems are compromised such as by chemotherapy for cancer or other conditions requiring such therapy are considered to be vulnerable populations.

2. Symptoms or Exposure: Individuals, or a member of your household, who have symptoms such as fever, chills, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, muscle or body aches, coughing, nausea and vomiting, headache, fatigue, sore throat, loss of taste or smell, and diarrhea. Individuals who have had exposure to someone with a confirmed case of COVID-19 or exposure, within the past 30 days, to individuals exhibiting symptoms related to COVID-19.
3. Other Hardships: Upon review by the court, individuals who would like to claim an exemption due to existing hardships as it relates to job or income loss, child care, primary caretaker of someone in a vulnerable population category, travel issues, or any other matters that could be considered that will cause issue for jury service.

On behalf of Atascosa County Courts, District Courts, and the District Clerk's Office, we want you to know that we are mindful of your concerns during this time and are committed to taking every reasonable precaution to maintain your health and safety. Your requested appearance is invaluable to the community and we look forward to seeing you.

Sincerely,

Judge Russell Wilson

Judge Lynn Ellison

Judge Bob Brendell