

Summons to Jury Duty

You've been called to Jury Duty, but don't live in Massachusetts



Massachusetts Law states that students who live in the state for more than 50% of the year are members of the community and are considered eligible to be called to jury duty. Jury duty is a civil obligation that every citizen is required to meet when called.

Northeastern recognizes that this can cause an inconvenience when students are scheduled to report on a day when they are expected to be in classes or exams. Below is some information that will be helpful in managing this situation.

Professors have been alerted that jury duty is a responsibility that can be considered an 'excused absence' allowed in the course. You cannot be academically disadvantaged by complying with the jury summons.

Give professors as much notice as possible if you need to miss a class or have a test or quiz rescheduled.

If you happen to be chosen as a juror on a trial that may go longer than three days you should, if needed, contact We Care for assistance in working with your professors.

If (for any reason) your original summons is on a day that you cannot be present, you can contact the jury commissioner's office and request a substitute (specific) date when you will be available. Once that new date has been selected, it cannot be changed.

Do not ignore the summons! Jury duty is a legal obligation and must be taken seriously. Even if you are unable to meet the obligation at the time, you must respond to the summons (see above). Judges can impose fines for those who do not show up for jury duty. Additionally, bench warrants can be issued and remain in effect until the obligation is fulfilled.

Employers and/or professors may want proof of the obligation, so make sure to bring a copy of your summons as well as your attendance record if requested. The court official will give you a proof of attendance document once you complete your obligation.

You can respond to your jury summons online at the [Massachusetts Juror Service Website](#). See the [Massachusetts Court Resources for Jury Duty](#) website for additional assistance.

You've been called to Jury Duty in your home state

Go to your state's government website to look at the specific obligations of that court. Many of these sites have a frequently asked questions section that can answer most of your questions. It will also have contact information so that you can call with a specific question.



Ask to defer your jury duty date. Read your paperwork carefully.

The instructions for deferring jury duty may be included right on the summons. Most summons contain a number to call for questions or a website link with answers to frequently asked questions. It is becoming common in many states to be able to fill out a jury duty deferral request online. Most states allow you to defer one time and some even allow you to choose your "make-up date".

The common practice for requesting a jury duty deferral involves contacting the court, stating your valid reason for not being able to attend on the date you are summoned, and providing an alternate date or time period when you will be available to fulfill your civic duty. If the court officials determine that you have a legitimate reason to miss jury duty on a particular day, they will allow you to defer but they will almost certainly reschedule your summons at your earliest convenience.

If you need to miss class or work/co-op because of jury duty

Make sure to inform your professors and/or employer as soon as possible. Everyone appreciates a "heads-up" when something like this occurs. Be proactive and work with your professors/employers to ensure that you will be able to make up any work that you may miss as a result of this obligation. Employers are required to allow you to serve jury duty without penalty but look at your employer's HR website for specifics.

Hold on to your summons/verification of attendance. Employers and/or professors may want proof of the obligation, so make sure to bring a copy of your summons as well as your attendance record if requested. The court official will give you a proof of attendance document once you complete your obligation. This could also prove useful should you be called to serve again before you are required to do so.