

Jury Service in Nebraska

Nebraska Judicial Branch



Cell Phones, Portable Electronics & Internet/Social Networking

Once you are summoned to serve as a juror you should be aware that you are not to use electronic devices to discover, discuss, or share any information about the case for which you are called or selected.

In determining what the facts of any particular case are, jurors must rely solely upon the evidence that is presented within the four walls of the courtroom and the general knowledge that everyone has. Jurors must also disregard their personal knowledge of any of the facts of their particular case.

Electronic devices should not be used in any way to discover or share any information about a case. This includes cell phones, Blackberries, computers, and any other electronic devices. Also included are any searching, blogging, emailing, and texting, and using Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, LinkedIn, or any other similar social networks.

Jurors must not conduct their own independent research about cases. Jurors may not consult dictionaries, other reference materials, or electronic devices to obtain any information about a case, about the parties involved, the issues, the locations, or anything else that has to do with that case.

Jurors are not allowed to use a computer, cell phone, or any other electronic device at any time while in the courtroom and during deliberations near the end of the

trial. Electronic devices may be used ONLY during breaks or recesses, but not to obtain or disclose information about their particular case or any of the people involved in that case.

Any information obtained outside of the courtroom, whether through reference materials, newspapers, television, and computer, or other electronic devices, could be misleading, inaccurate, or incomplete. For example, information found in newspapers, books, or on the internet may be wrong. In addition, relying on any of this information would be unfair because the parties involved would not have the opportunity to refute, explain, or correct that information.



Items That Can Be Brought to the Courthouse When Responding to a Jury Summons

You are welcome to bring a laptop, smart phone, cellular phone or other electronic device to the courthouse. You should be aware that, in some locations, you will need to pass through security or be asked to leave your cell phone with the clerk of the court. The ideal item for a juror to bring to the courthouse is a book or a magazine, although sometimes the court will restrict newspapers or magazines containing information that may relate to an upcoming trial.

Because security is taken very seriously, you may find that everyday items like penknives, knitting needles, scissors, or metal nail files cannot be brought into the court facility. Check with your local court to confirm what you may bring with you.

"The American system of trial by jury is unique. No other nation relies so heavily on ordinary citizens to make its most important decisions about law, business practice, and personal liberty--even death. Ideally, Americans take their participation seriously lest they someday stand before their peers seeking justice."

-Stephen J. Adler, journalist and author