

Jury Trials

The parties are required to exchange proposed jury instructions prior to the final pretrial conference. Also, attorneys should submit a stipulated set of instructions at the commencement of trial. The parties shall provide a copy for each juror. If the parties are unable to stipulate to all proposed instructions, disagreements will be discussed and resolved by the Court at the final pretrial conference. Instructions are submitted in 14 point type, with each instruction on a separate page.

Trial briefs are submitted and exchanged no later than the commencement of trial.

The parties conduct their own *voir dire* of prospective jurors after preliminary screening by the Court. Two alternates are used in criminal trials, so that a jury will be comprised of either 8 persons or 14 persons. However, no juror is designated as an alternate until the trial is concluded. At that point, in criminal trials, two jurors are selected as the alternates by blind draw and are excused from the deliberations. The number of peremptory challenges allowed is provided for by Rule 47(b). The JMS system is utilized.

The jury is charged after closing arguments. However, at the beginning of trial, before opening statements, the Court will give preliminary short form jury instructions. Jurors are allowed to take notes.

Jurors also may ask questions of witnesses, by submitting proposed questions in writing to the Court, for review and discussion with counsel with an opportunity to object. Jurors are allowed to take instructions into the jury room during deliberation.