

CHIEF JUDGE BENNETT'S VOIR DIRE INSTRUCTIONS

The following are Chief Judge Bennett's jury selection procedures.

1. Approximately 25 randomly-selected potential jurors will be notified to appear at the courthouse at 8:30 a.m. on the first day of trial. About a week before trial, the attorneys will receive from the Clerk of Court a list of the potential jurors, together with copies of their juror questionnaires. The attorneys also will receive a list of the first 14 potential jurors in the order in which they were randomly drawn. The court will be provided with a separate list of all of the potential jurors in the order in which they were randomly drawn.
2. The first 14 preselected potential jurors who appear for jury selection will be seated in order in the jury box,¹ and will be the potential jurors first considered for impanelment on the jury.
3. At 9:00 a.m., the Clerk of Court will open court.
4. Chief Judge Bennett will greet the jury, counsel, and the parties; announce the name of the case to be tried; and ask counsel if they are ready to proceed.
5. Chief Judge Bennett will swear in the entire jury panel.
6. Chief Judge Bennett will make some introductory remarks to the jury about the jury selection process.
7. Chief Judge Bennett will ask the entire jury panel if they are aware of any circumstance that might prevent their service on the jury, and may excuse anyone for whom he believes jury service would be an undue burden.
8. Chief Judge Bennett will make some brief opening remarks, and will read a statement of the case.
9. Chief Judge Bennett will introduce the courtroom staff. He then will ask the attorneys to identify themselves, the members of their firm, their clients, and the witnesses they expect to call at trial.
10. Chief Judge Bennett will engage the potential jurors in the jury box in an extensive voir dire, utilizing PowerPoint presentation software to display his questions on the presentation equipment in the courtroom. This voir dire may include questions for the panel requested by a party who has served and filed a timely pretrial request for voir dire.

¹If any of the first 14 preselected potential jurors does not appear for jury selection or is excused from jury service after arriving at the courthouse, that potential juror will be replaced with the next potential juror on the judge's list of preselected potential jurors, and the attorneys will be provided with an updated list.

11. After Chief Judge Bennett has completed his questions, each side will be permitted to conduct up to one-half hour of jury voir dire. A request for additional time for attorney voir dire because of the complexity or unusual nature of a case, or in multi-party cases, should be made at the final pretrial conference.

12. The parties will be permitted to challenge any potential juror for cause. These challenges may be made at the side-bar. If a potential juror is excused for cause, he or she will be replaced by the next potential juror on the jury list, who then will undergo the same questioning as the other potential jurors. There will be 14 potential jurors remaining in the jury box at the conclusion of voir dire.

13. The Clerk of Court will give counsel for the plaintiff(s) a list of the names of the 14 remaining potential jurors. Counsel for the plaintiff(s) is/are to strike one of the names by noting in the margin "B's first peremptory challenge," and then state aloud, "Exercised." The Clerk of Court then will take the list and hand it to counsel for the defendant(s), who is/are to strike one of the names by noting in the margin ") 's first peremptory challenge," and then state aloud, "Exercised." This procedure will be repeated until the plaintiff(s) and defendant(s) each have exercised 3 peremptory challenges, and 8 jurors remain in the jury box.

14. The names of the 8 remaining jurors will be announced by the Clerk of Court. Those persons will be placed in the jury box and will constitute the jury in the case. The rest of the panel will be excused.

15. Chief Judge Bennett will swear in the jury.

16. **THERE ARE NO ALTERNATE JURORS. ANY VERDICT MUST BE UNANIMOUS.** During trial, if any of the 8 jurors has to be excused from jury service for any reason, the case can be decided by as few as 6 jurors.

17. Upon stipulation of the parties, the verdict can be less than unanimous or decided by fewer than 6 jurors, or both.

18. Upon the request of any party, Chief Judge Bennett will consider modifying jury selection procedures in a particular case. Such modifications may include, but are not limited to, a twelve-person jury or an increase in lawyer participation in voir dire.