

Sioux City Courthouse
Social Distancing Jury Trial Plan
May 4, 2020

This is a draft plan for jury trial operations when we start back up with jury trials in order to address concerns about the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

I. Pre-Jury Selection Procedures

1. Judge letter to prospective jurors encouraging jury duty and describing protective steps that will be taken included in jury mailing. Clerk letter encouraging jurors to bring appropriate masks from home. Include in the packet the emergency contact form for jurors to complete at home and bring to the courthouse.
2. Clerk of Court to call in more prospective jurors than usual.
3. Court will plan on seating two alternate jurors (total of 8 for civil trial, 14 for criminal trial).
4. Court will use Courtroom on third floor for all jury trials, if possible.

II. Jury Selection Procedures

1. Prospective jurors are to report to main floor of courthouse just outside of the large check in room, check in, and sent to appropriate waiting location.

30 pre-seated prospective jurors will report inside the first floor jury assembly room.

Remaining prospective jurors report to the Magistrate Judge Courtroom, first floor.

2. Pre-trial conference to take place in third floor Courtroom.
3. When the Court is ready, prospective jurors are brought into the third floor Courtroom.

Prospective jurors will be seated in the gallery, two to a bench, and in the chairs located directly in front of the rail; Clerk's Office to pre-mark seat assignments in the courtroom. See Diagram 1 (SC Jury Selection).

Remaining jurors remain in the Magistrate Judge Courtroom and watch proceedings via VTC (spread out); Clerk's Office attendant with pre-selection seating chart to staff room to monitor VTC connection and facilitate/escort alternates moving to third floor Courtroom as needed.

4. During jury selection, jurors will not be allowed to wear facemasks while seated for the selection process unless all parties agree.
5. Hardship excuses heard at sidebar with only judge and juror; attorneys listen in via headphones. All participants who come up to the sidebar microphone should wear a mask.
6. If the court excuses a juror, then Clerk's Office attendant in the Magistrate Judge Courtroom on first floor will escort replacement to third floor Courtroom.
7. During break for exercise of peremptory strikes, the 30 prospective jurors to use second floor jury rooms after remainder prospective jurors are excused.

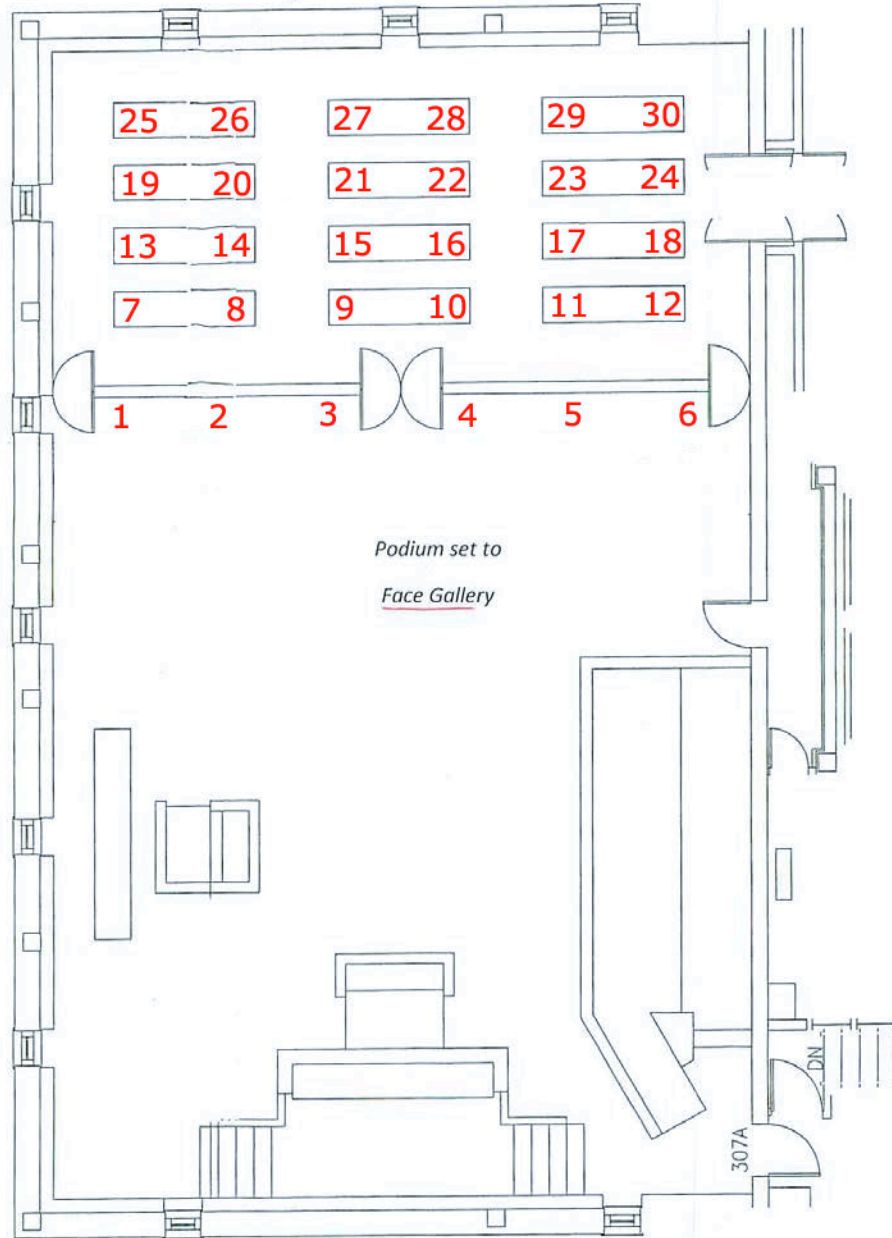
Jury Trial Procedures

1. Jurors spread out every other seat (seats added in front of jury box). See Diagram 2 (SC Jury Trial Box)
2. Jurors encouraged, but not ordered, to wear facemasks.
3. During trial, to implement social distancing, jurors will be assigned to one of the two jury deliberation rooms for breaks. Half to each room.
4. Witnesses (including incarcerated witnesses) to wear facemasks until in witness chair.
5. Juror's notebooks will not be touched by anyone; cleaning staff to wipe down seats, common surfaces, etc. each night.

Jury Deliberations

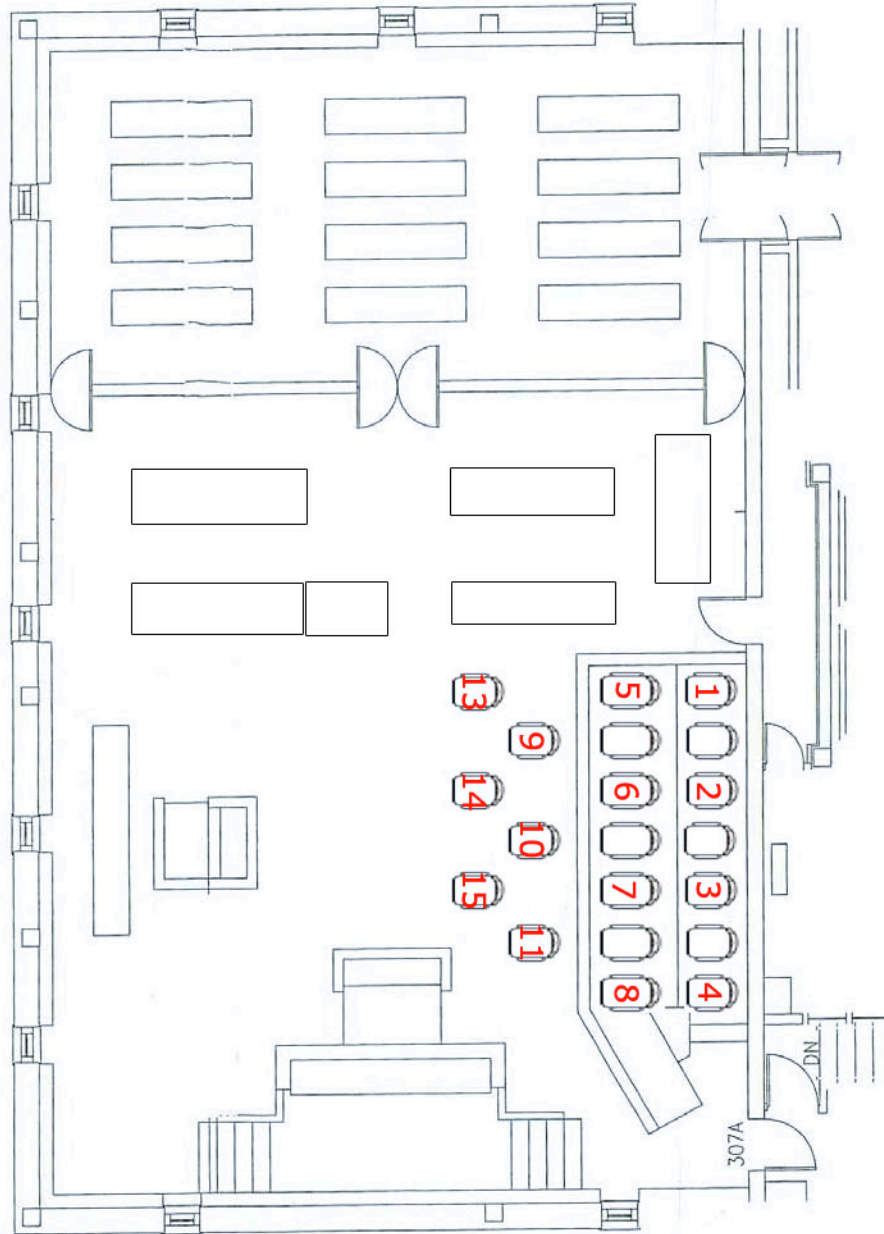
1. Jurors to deliberate in first floor jury assembly room, with access to bathrooms across the hall. See Diagram 3 (SC Jury Deliberations).
2. JERS to be set up; all other personal electronics stored in second floor jury space.
4. Jurors instructed that only the foreperson is to use the mouse to operate JERS, only the foreperson will write jury questions or/or complete the verdict forms.
4. Post-verdict, Clerk's Office to distribute court questionnaire (if any) to jurors.

DIAGRAM 1 – SC JURY SELECTION



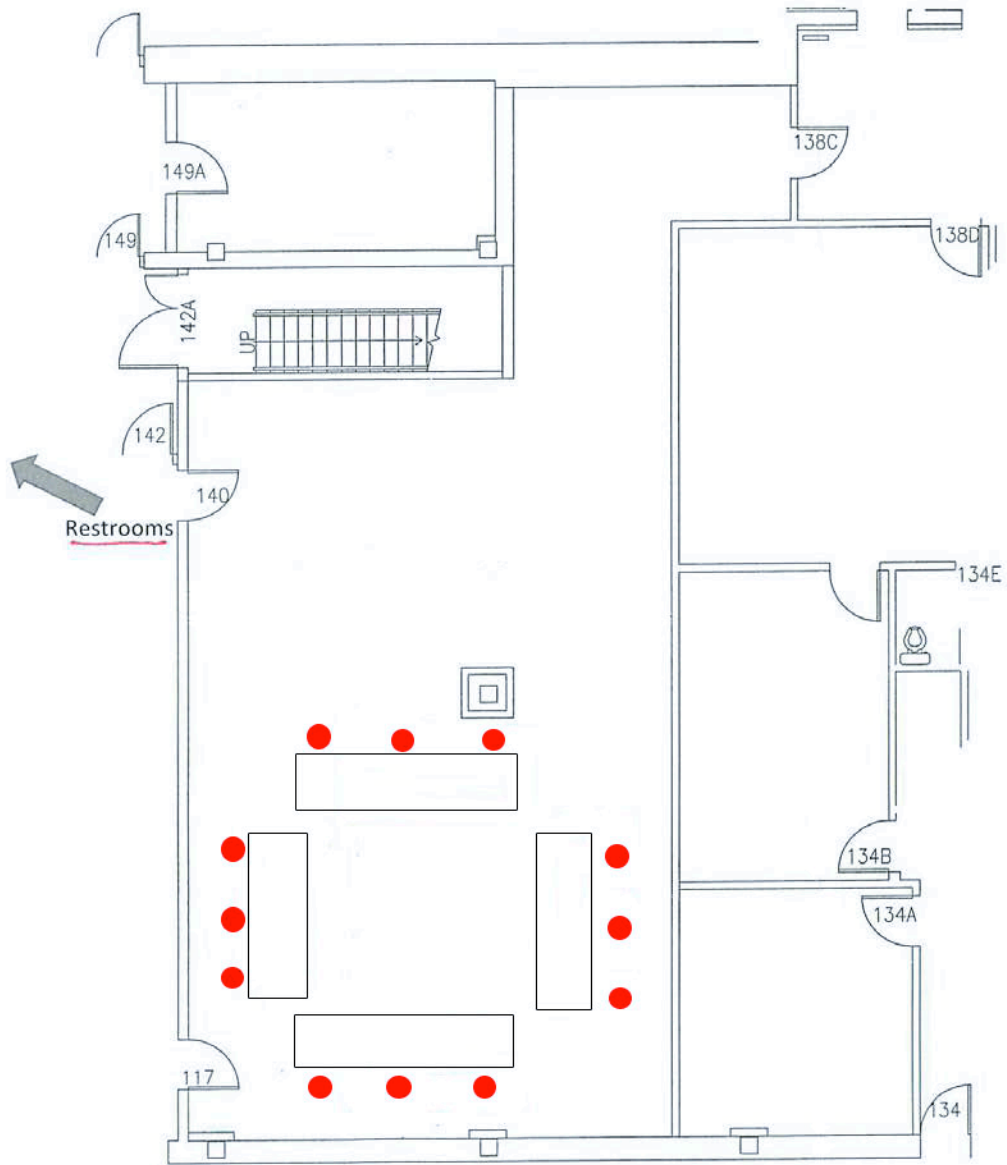
SC TRIAL COURTROOM – 3d FLOOR

DIAGRAM 2 – SC JURY TRIAL BOX



SC TRIAL COURTROOM – 3d FLOOR

DIAGRAM 3 – SC JURY DELIBERATIONS



SC JURY ASSEMBLY – 1st FLOOR