

CV101A General admonitions. [self-represented litigant version]

Now that you have been chosen as jurors, you are required to decide this case based only on the evidence that you see and hear in this courtroom and the law that I will instruct you about. For your verdict to be fair, you must not be exposed to any other information about the case. This is very important, and so I need to give you some very detailed explanations about what you should do and not do during your time as jurors.

First, although it may seem natural to want to investigate a case, you must not try to get information from any source other than what you see and hear in this courtroom. You may not use any printed or electronic sources to get information about this case or the issues involved. This includes [but is not limited to](#) the Internet, reference books or dictionaries, newspapers, magazines, television, radio, computers, iPhones, Smartphones, or any social media or electronic device.

You may not do any personal investigation. This includes visiting any of the places involved in this case, using Internet maps or Google Earth, talking to possible witnesses, [using artificial intelligence \(AI agents, sites, searches, apps, or bots\)](#), or creating your own experiments or reenactments.

Second, although it may seem natural, you must not communicate with anyone about this case, and you must not allow anyone to communicate with you. You may not communicate about the case by any means, including by emails, text messages, tweets, blogs, chat rooms, comments, other postings, or any social media.

You may notify your family and your employer that you have been selected as a juror and you may let them know your schedule. But do not talk with anyone about the case, including your family and employer. You must not even talk with your fellow jurors about the case until I send you to deliberate. If you are asked or approached in any way about your jury service or anything about this case, you must respond that you have been ordered not to discuss the matter. And then please report the contact to the clerk or the bailiff, and they will notify me.

[Name of plaintiff] [name of defendant] is representing him/herself.

[Name of defendant] [name of plaintiff] is represented by _____.

[Name of plaintiff], [name of defendant], attorneys for the [plaintiff][defense] and

witnesses are not allowed to speak with you during the case. When you see [plaintiff's] [defendant's] attorneys at a recess or pass them in the halls and they do not speak to you, they are not being rude or unfriendly - they are simply following the law.

I know that these restrictions affect activities that you consider to be normal and harmless and very important in your daily lives. However, these restrictions ensure that the parties have a fair trial based only on the evidence and not on outside information. Information from an outside source might be inaccurate or incomplete, or it might simply not apply to this case, and the parties would not have a chance to explain or contradict that information because they wouldn't know about it. That's why it is so important that you base your verdict only on information you receive in this courtroom. Courts used to sequester-or isolate-jurors to keep them away from information that might affect the fairness of the trial, but we seldom do that anymore. But this means that we must rely upon your honor to obey these restrictions, especially during recesses when no one is watching.

Any juror who violates these restrictions jeopardizes the fairness of the proceedings, and the entire trial may need to start over. That is a tremendous expense and inconvenience to the parties, the court and the taxpayers. Violations may also result in substantial penalties for the juror.

If any of you have any difficulty whatsoever in following these instructions, please let me know now. If any of you becomes aware that one of your fellow jurors has done something that violates these instructions, you are obligated to report that as well. If anyone tries to contact you about the case, either directly or indirectly, or sends you any information about the case, please report this promptly as well. Notify the bailiff or the clerk, who will notify me. These restrictions must remain in effect throughout this trial. Once the trial is over, you may resume your normal activities. At that point, you will be free to read or research anything you wish. You will be able to speak-or choose not to speak-about the trial to anyone you wish. You may write, or post, or tweet about the case if you choose to do so. The only limitation is that you must wait until after the verdict, when you have been discharged from your jury service.

So, keep an open mind throughout the trial. The evidence that will form the basis of your verdict can be presented only one piece at a time, and it is only fair that you do not form an opinion until I send you to deliberate.

References

MUJI CV 101.

Preliminary Jury Instructions for use with self-represented litigants, U.S. District Court,
Eastern District of California.

Committee Notes

News articles have highlighted the problem of jurors conducting their own internet research or engaging in outside communications regarding the trial while it is ongoing. See, e.g., *Mistrial by iPhone: Juries' Web Research Upends Trials*, New York Times (3/18/2009). The court may therefore wish to emphasize the importance of the traditional admonitions in the context of electronic research or communications.

Committee Amended

12/2013, 3/2020