

Rule 17. The trial.

(a) **Defendant's presence.** In all cases the defendant shall have the right to appear and defend in person and by counsel. The defendant shall be personally present at the trial with the following exceptions:

(a)(1) In prosecutions of misdemeanors and infractions, the defendant may consent in writing to trial in the defendant's absence;

(a)(2) In prosecutions for offenses not punishable by death, the defendant's voluntary absence from the trial after notice to defendant of the time for trial shall not prevent the case from being tried and a verdict or judgment entered therein shall have the same effect as if defendant had been present; and

(a)(3) The court may exclude or excuse a defendant from trial for good cause shown which may include tumultuous, riotous, or obstreperous conduct.

Upon application of the prosecution, the court may require the personal attendance of the defendant at the trial.

(b) **Calendar priorities.** Cases shall be set on the trial calendar to be tried in the following order:

(b)(1) misdemeanor cases when defendant is in custody;

(b)(2) felony cases when defendant is in custody;

(b)(3) felony cases when defendant is on bail or recognizance; and

(b)(4) misdemeanor cases when defendant is on bail or recognizance.

(c) **Jury trial in felony cases.** All felony cases shall be tried by jury unless the defendant waives a jury in open court with the approval of the court and the consent of the prosecution.

(d) **Jury trial in other cases.** All other cases shall be tried without a jury unless the defendant makes written demand at least 14 days prior to trial, or the court orders otherwise. No jury shall be allowed in the trial of an infraction.

(e)(1) **Number of jurors.** In all cases, the number of members of a trial jury shall be as specified in Utah Code § 78B-1-104.

(e)(2) In all cases the prosecution and defense may, with the consent of the accused and the approval of the court, by stipulation in writing or made orally in open court, proceed to trial or complete a trial then in progress with any number of jurors less than otherwise required.

(f) **Trial process.** After the jury has been impaneled and sworn, the trial shall proceed in the following order:

(f)(1) The charge shall be read and the plea of the defendant stated;

(f)(2) The prosecuting attorney may make an opening statement and the defense may make an opening statement or reserve it until the prosecution has rested;

(f)(3) The prosecution shall offer evidence in support of the charge;

(f)(4) When the prosecution has rested, the defense may present its case;

(f)(5) Thereafter, the parties may offer only rebutting evidence unless the court, for good cause, otherwise permits;

(f)(6) When the evidence is concluded and at any other appropriate time, the court shall instruct the jury; and

(f)(7) Unless the cause is submitted to the jury on either side or on both sides without argument, the prosecution shall open the argument, the defense shall follow and the prosecution may close by responding to the defense argument. The court may set reasonable limits upon the argument of counsel for each party and the time to be allowed for argument.

(g) **Alternate jurors.** If a juror becomes ill, disabled or disqualified during trial and an alternate juror has been selected, the case shall proceed using the alternate juror. If no alternate has been selected, the parties may stipulate to proceed with the number of jurors remaining. Otherwise, the jury shall be discharged and a new trial ordered.

(h) **Questions by jurors.** A judge may invite jurors to submit written questions to a witness as provided in this section.

(h)(1) If the judge permits jurors to submit questions, the judge shall control the process to ensure the jury maintains its role as the impartial finder of fact and does not become an investigative body. The judge may disallow any question from a juror and may discontinue questions from jurors at any time.

(h)(2) If the judge permits jurors to submit questions, the judge should advise the jurors that they may write the question as it occurs to them and submit the question to the bailiff for transmittal to the judge. The judge should advise the jurors that some questions might not be allowed.

(h)(3) The judge shall review the question with counsel and unrepresented parties and rule upon any objection to the question. The judge may disallow a question even though no objection is made. The judge shall preserve the written question in the court file. If the question is allowed, the judge shall ask the question or permit counsel or an unrepresented party to ask it. The

question may be rephrased into proper form. The judge shall allow counsel and unrepresented parties to examine the witness after the juror's question.

(i) **Juries visiting off-site places.** When in the opinion of the court it is proper for the jury to view the place in which the offense is alleged to have been committed, or in which any other material fact occurred, it may order them to be conducted in a body under the charge of an officer to the place, which shall be shown to them by some person appointed by the court for that purpose. The officer shall be sworn that while the jury are thus conducted, the officer will suffer no person other than the person so appointed to speak to them nor shall the officer speak to the jury on any subject connected with the trial and to return them into court without unnecessary delay or at a specified time.

(j) **Admonition prior to recess.** At each recess of the court, whether the jurors are permitted to separate or are sequestered, they shall be admonished by the court that it is their duty not to converse among themselves or to converse with, or suffer themselves to be addressed by, any other person on any subject of the trial, and that it is their duty not to form or express an opinion thereon until the case is finally submitted to them.

(k) **Deliberations.** Upon retiring for deliberation, the jury may take with them the instructions of the court and all exhibits which have been received as evidence, except exhibits that should not, in the opinion of the court, be in the possession of the jury, such as exhibits of unusual size, weapons or contraband. The court shall permit the jury to view exhibits upon request. Jurors are entitled to take notes during the trial and to have those notes with them during deliberations. As necessary, the court shall provide jurors with writing materials and instruct the jury on taking and using notes.

(l) **Jury under officer's charge.** When the case is finally submitted to the jury, they shall be kept together in some convenient place under charge of an officer until they agree upon a verdict or are discharged, unless otherwise ordered by the court. Except by order of the court, the officer having them under the officer's charge shall not allow any communication to be made to them, nor shall the officer speak to the jury except to ask them if they have agreed upon their verdict, and the officer shall not, before the verdict is rendered, communicate to any person the state of their deliberations or the verdict agreed upon.

(m) **Juror questions during deliberations.** After the jury has retired for deliberation, if they desire to be informed on any point of law arising in the cause, they shall inform the officer in charge of them, who shall communicate such request to the court. The court may then direct that the jury be brought before the court where, in the presence of the defendant and both counsel, the court shall respond to the inquiry or advise the jury that no further instructions shall be given. Such response shall be recorded. The court may in its discretion respond to the inquiry in writing without having the jury brought before the court, in which case the inquiry and the response thereto shall be entered in the record.

(n) **Incorrect verdict.** If the verdict rendered by a jury is incorrect on its face, it may be corrected by the jury under the advice of the court, or the jury may be sent out again.

(o) **Directed verdict.** At the conclusion of the evidence by the prosecution, or at the conclusion of all the evidence, the court may issue an order dismissing any information or indictment, or any count thereof, upon the ground that the evidence is not legally sufficient to establish the offense charged therein or any lesser included offense.

Effective May 1, 2019

[Advisory Committee Notes](#)