

**INSTRUCTIONS TO THE JURY FOLLOWING SELECTION
(CRIMINAL)**

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN OF THE JURY:

1. Turn off all cell phones and other electronic devices. While you are in the courtroom and while you are deliberating, do not communicate with anyone through any electronic device. For example, do not communicate by phone, text message, email message, chat room, blog, or social networking websites such as Facebook, Twitter or Myspace. You may give your employer and family members this number to contact you in an emergency: 361-575-4550. Do not post information about the case on the Internet before these court proceedings end and you are released from jury duty. Do not record or photograph any part of these court proceedings, because it is prohibited by law.
2. To avoid looking like you are friendly with one side of the case, do not mingle or talk with the lawyers, witnesses, parties, or anyone else involved in the case. You may exchange casual greetings like “hello” and “good morning.” Other than that, do not talk with them at all. They have to follow these instructions too, so you should not be offended when they follow the instructions.
3. Do not accept any favors from the lawyers, witnesses, parties, or anyone else involved in the case, and do not do any favors for them. This includes favors such as giving rides and food.
4. Do not discuss this case with anyone, even your spouse or a friend, either in person or by any other means including by phone, text message, email message, chat room, blog, or social networking websites such as Facebook, Twitter or Myspace. Do not allow anyone to discuss the case with you or in your hearing. If anyone tries to discuss the case with you or in your hearing, tell me immediately. We do not want you to be influenced by something other than the evidence admitted in court.
5. Do not talk about the case with anyone during the trial, not even with other jurors, until the end of the trial. You should not discuss the case with your fellow jurors until the end of the trial so that you do not form opinions about the case before you have heard everything.

After you have heard all the evidence, received all of my instructions, and heard all of the lawyers’ arguments, you will then go to the jury room to discuss the case with the other jurors and reach a verdict.

6. Do not investigate this case on your own. For example:
 - a. Do not try to get information about the case, lawyers, witnesses, or issues from outside this courtroom.
 - b. Do not go to places mentioned in the case to inspect the places.

- c. Do not inspect items mentioned in this case unless they are presented as evidence in court.
- d. Do not look anything up in a law book, dictionary, or public record to try to learn more about the case.
- e. Do not look anything up on the internet to try to learn more about the case.
- f. Do not let anyone else do any of these things for you.

This rule is very important because we want a trial based only on evidence presented in open court. Your conclusions about this case must be based only on what you see and hear in this courtroom because the law does not permit you to base your conclusions on information that has not been presented to you in open court. All the information must be presented in open court so the parties and their lawyers can test it and object to it. Information from other sources, like the Internet, will not go through this important process in the courtroom. In addition, information from other sources could be completely unreliable. As a result, if you investigate this case on your own, you could compromise the fairness to all parties in this case and jeopardize the results of this trial.

- 7. Do not tell other jurors your own experiences or other people's experiences. For example, you may have special knowledge of something in the case, such as business, technical, or professional information. You may even have expert knowledge or opinions, or you may know what happened in this case or another similar case. Do not tell the other jurors about it. Telling other jurors about it is wrong because it means the jury will be considering things that were not presented in court.
- 8. During the trial, if taking notes will help focus your attention on the evidence, you may take notes using the materials the court has provided. Do not use any personal electronic devices to take notes. If taking notes will distract your attention from the evidence, you should not take notes. Your notes are for your own personal use. They are not evidence. Do not show or read your notes to anyone, including other jurors.

You must leave your notes in the jury room or with the bailiff. The bailiff is instructed not to read your notes and to give your notes to me promptly after collecting them from you. I will make sure your notes are kept in a safe, secure location and not disclosed to anyone.

You may take your notes back into the jury room and consult them during deliberations. But keep in mind that your notes are not evidence. When you deliberate, each of you should rely on your independent recollection of the evidence and not be influenced by the fact that another juror has or has not taken notes. After you complete your deliberations, the bailiff will collect your notes.

When you are released from jury duty, the bailiff will promptly destroy your notes so that nobody can read what you wrote.

9. It is your duty to listen to and consider the evidence and to determine the disputed facts of this case. After you have heard all the evidence, I will give you instructions to follow as you make your decision. You will be asked to determine whether the Defendant is not guilty or guilty of the offense charged.

Every juror must obey my instructions. If you do not follow these instructions, you will be guilty of juror misconduct, and I may have to order a new trial and start this process over again. This would waste your time and would require the taxpayers of this county to pay for another trial.

Do you understand these instructions? If you do not, please tell me now.

Please keep these instructions and review them as we go through this case. If anyone does not follow these instructions, tell me.

JUDGE _____