

**Jury service is more manageable than ever for California employers. Your courts recently adopted the one-day or one-trial jury system. It's simpler and more user-friendly than before. The one-day or one-trial system recognizes that everyone's time is valuable. And, because it's easier to understand, it actually helps you plan for your employee's absence during jury service.**

**It's Different.** Recognizing the realities of the workplace, the California courts have implemented the one-day or one-trial system to make jury service as manageable as possible for everyone. It works like this:

Your employee is summoned and appears at the courthouse at a designated time (or, at some courts, simply telephones or visits a Web site). If the employee is not selected for a jury that day, he or she is excused and has satisfied his or her obligation for at least a year. Or if the employee is selected for a jury, service in that trial satisfies the employee's obligation for at least a year.

**It's Better.** The one-day or one-trial system has taken the waiting out of jury service, streamlining the process to minimize the impacts on your business and your employees. In most cases, potential jurors report for one day and they've completed their service for at least a year. For employees, this reduces unproductive waiting time and the potential for lost income. The system also works for employers because it reduces the uncertainty of when and for how long your employees will be unavailable for work, and minimizes the economic and operational inconvenience of employee absences.

**It's The Law.** One-day or one-trial jury service is a major reform for the state's court system. What hasn't changed is that jury service is a duty under state law. It remains a legal obligation for employers to allow employees to serve without fear of harassment or dismissal resulting from their jury service. The California Labor Code prohibits employers from firing or harassing an employee who is summoned to serve as a juror.

*Please weigh  
all these factors  
when considering  
your company's  
jury service  
compensation policy.  
It's another way  
to show support for  
American ideals,  
for your community,  
and for  
your employees.*

### **For More Information**

To find out more about an employer's role in the judicial system, please visit the California Courts Web site at

**[www.courtinfo.ca.gov/jury](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/jury)**

On the employer pages of the site you'll find a model juror compensation policy, a partial list of companies already compensating their employees for jury service, and more information about the benefits of the one-day or one-trial system. Send your comments and questions to [CAjuror@jud.ca.gov](mailto:CAjuror@jud.ca.gov)

**Administrative Office of the Courts  
455 Golden Gate Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94102-3688  
415-865-4200  
[www.courtinfo.ca.gov](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov)**



## **ONE-DAY OR ONE-TRIAL — IT'S BETTER FOR BUSINESS**

INFORMATION FOR EMPLOYERS  
ABOUT CALIFORNIA'S NEW JURY SYSTEM



# *It's Different. It's Better. It's The Law.*

## Frequently Asked Questions

### *Can an employee seek a postponement of jury service?*

Yes, recognizing that some businesses may be seasonal, the courts will allow in most cases one postponement of service to a date chosen by the employee. The deferred date usually must be within 90 days of the original date. This enables employees to select a more convenient time to serve.

### *My business can't afford to let our employees serve. What can I do to get my employees out of their jury service?*

The courts understand that jury service may pose challenges to both employers and their employees, and that is why the one-day or one-trial system has been adopted. However, the employer has a legal obligation to let the employee serve without fear of harassment or dismissal resulting from jury service. The California Labor Code prohibits an employer from firing or harassing an employee who is summoned to serve as a juror. Employees who are harassed or fired can file a claim with the Labor Board, and employers can also be prosecuted criminally and face a misdemeanor charge if found guilty.

### *Is it mandatory for my firm to pay an employee during jury service?*

Employers are not required by law to compensate employees while they serve on a jury, but many do. These employers recognize that without juries our legal system will come to a halt and that financial hardship may discourage employees from fulfilling their civic duty.

### *Will the state reimburse me if I compensate my employees to fulfill their jury service?*

Jurors are currently reimbursed by the courts \$15/day after the first day of service and 34¢/mile one-way, from the juror's home to the courthouse. If an employer compensates the employee for jury service, those funds paid by the courts to the juror are refundable by the employee to the employer. However, the courts do not reimburse the employer directly.

### *Are there human resources guidelines available to help my firm adopt a jury duty compensation policy?*

The California court system wants to make it as easy and convenient as possible for businesses to adopt an employee compensation policy. Please check the California Courts Web site to download a sample policy, as well as to find additional information about the one-day or one-trial system.

### *Can I stay in communication with my employee during a trial?*

You are free to communicate with your employee during trial recess at the employee's discretion. However, you are not permitted to communicate in any way about the trial with your employee.

## Facts About Jury Service

- FACT:** Four out of five people who appear at the courthouse in response to a juror summons are excused after just one day. Many of those who are excused may not even need to appear at the courthouse.
- FACT:** Statewide, some 10 million residents may receive a juror summons this year; of those, just 180,000 will actually serve on a jury.
- FACT:** The average length of a jury trial in California is just 3 to 5 days.
- FACT:** Loss of income is a primary concern for prospective jurors.

## Why Compensate?

### It's an Investment in America.

Many prospective jurors cite a loss of pay as a legitimate reason for not serving on a jury. Yet juries play an important and crucial role in our country's democratic process. Without them, the legal system would grind to a halt. Your help is essential to ensuring that all citizens are available to serve on juries when called. One of the ways you can help is to consider compensating your employees during jury service if you don't already.

### It's an Investment in Your Employee.

Lack of compensation while performing jury duty, which after all is an important civic duty and honor, places a financial burden on many employees. Paying your staff during their service could contribute to boosting morale as they recognize that their employer values their civic service. Offering paid jury service is a values statement about your company and may differentiate your business in offering a competitive employment package.

### It's an Investment in Your Business.

Businesses benefit from the jury system too! Civil litigation in particular is filled with a variety of business-related disputes, including contracts, environmental issues, product defects, malpractice, intellectual fraud, and wrongful termination. Wouldn't you want people like yourself and your employees deciding these cases?

**Do The Math** Try thinking about it this way: Employee John makes \$35,000 per year. What do you think is the most important benefit your company provides John?

- 14 vacation days — Total annual cost \$1,900
- 10 sick days — Total annual cost \$1,350
- 8 paid holidays — Total annual cost \$1,100
- Vision, dental, and medical insurance — Total annual cost \$3,600
- Tuition reimbursement — Total annual cost \$1,900
- 1-day jury service or 5-day trial — Total annual cost \$100–\$700