



UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS

Margaret M. Robertie
Clerk of Court

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Welcome to the United States District Courthouse!

Federal courts across the country have adapted to the COVID-19 situation and are getting back to business with new protocols and safety measures in place. Only one trial is conducted at a time in this judicial district so the courthouse team can focus on maintaining a variety of safety protocols.

We are closely following and reinforcing the guidelines from the CDC and local health authorities and have taken precautionary measures to limit the potential spread of the virus while also ensuring that we can continue with essential, constitutionally-mandated judicial proceedings. For example, we are taking the following precautions for trials: (1) utilizing a covid-screening questionnaire and automated temperature scanning kiosk at the public entrance; (2) those reporting for jury selection will report to a jury assembly room with socially distanced seating and will remain masked at all times; (3) prospective jurors will be brought before the Court in small groups for preliminary questioning in a socially distanced setting; (4) jurors and all participants in the trial will be seated in a socially distanced manner throughout trial; (5) a variety of masks and shields will be utilized; (6) jurors and all participants will be required to wear masks or other face-coverings at all times, unless directed to remove their mask by the presiding judge; (7) those selected to serve as jurors will be provided with hand sanitizer and other supplies for use during court proceedings; (8) court facilities will be cleaned and sterilized more frequently; and (9) the courthouse HVAC system has been adjusted in accordance with CDC guidelines for maximizing air circulation.

Our judges and the entire courthouse team continue to monitor the COVID-19 situation in real time and is responding to conditions as they evolve, both inside and outside the courthouse.

Please let the court know if you or someone in your household is a healthcare worker involved in the treatment of COVID-19 or if you or someone in your household is at high risk for complications from COVID-19 because of age or an underlying health condition. Please contact the court immediately (618-482-9148) if you develop flu-like symptoms such as a cough, fever or shortness of breath or have been in contact with anyone who has been diagnosed with a COVID-19 infection.

Serving as a juror is both a privilege and an honor. For more than 200 years, we, as free citizens of this country, have looked to juries to preserve liberty and the independence of the judiciary.

Thank you for your service.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Margaret M. Robertie". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Margaret M. Robertie
Clerk of Court

**THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS
COVID-19 ENTRANCE CRITERIA AND SAFETY PROTOCOLS**

In response to public health concerns associated with the COVID-19 outbreak, and pursuant to Administrative Order No. 266, the following restrictions and protocols shall apply:

- All persons seeking entry to, or occupying the courthouse, must wear a face mask (no scarfs, neck gaiters, or masks with air vents) in the public areas of the courthouses; this includes the lobby, elevator banks, restrooms, public corridors, and, unless excused by the presiding judge, courtrooms. The face mask must always completely conceal the wearer's nose and mouth. The only persons excepted from this requirement are those who provide documentation that they are unable, for medical reasons, to wear a face covering, in which case a shield and social distancing will suffice. If you don't have a face mask, the Court will provide one.

- Any person falling into one of the following categories **SHALL NOT ENTER** either courthouse:
 - People with these symptoms or combinations of symptoms within the last 14 days:
 - Fever or chills
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Fatigue
 - Muscle or body aches
 - Headache
 - New loss of taste or smell
 - Sore throat
 - Congestion or runny nose
 - Nausea or vomiting
 - Diarrhea

 - Persons who have been diagnosed with or have had contact with anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 within the last 14 days. Per the CDC, "close contact" is defined as being within six feet of someone for longer than 15 minutes.

 - Persons who have been asked to self-quarantine by any doctor, hospital, or health agency within the last 14 days, or who are awaiting the results of a COVID-19 viral test.

- If you have questions, call for assistance: 618-482-9148 or speak to Court personnel.

Benton Jury Trials in SMY/Ct#1

Trial Courtroom – SMY/Ct#1 (See attached diagrams)

- **Civil Voir Dire Seating:**
 - SMY's Ct#1 ideally seats 20-25 jurors, which should be sufficient to garner the usual 6-8 jurors for a civil trial.
 - 7 in the jury box, plus one in a chair next to the box, and 12-20 in the gallery (with gel cushions). If there is a shackled litigant, the gallery seating drops to 17 max. due to line of sight issues. If necessary, 3-4 more people could be seated inside the well area.
 - If more than 20 are seated for voir dire, there is no room for staff/students in the gallery.
 - The Bankruptcy Courtroom can seat 25 and be used the selection conference drags on, since the jury room can only seat 7-8.

- **Civil Trial Seating:**
 - 7 jurors can sit in the box, and the 8th can sit in a cushioned char at the far end of the bottom row (allowing the juror to see the monitor in the box).
 - 20 people can sit in the gallery (far right side can see shackled litigant).
 - 7-8 can sit in the jury room for 15-minute breaks, but it is too small for deliberations or meals, so deliberation must occur in the courtroom. (Be mindful of keeping jurors out of the room during movement of any shackled litigant.) Litigants use attorney conf. rooms.

- **Criminal Voir Dire Seating:**
 - SMY's Ct#1 seats is situated well for 24 jurors, and up to 27 if the defendant is not shackled (due to line of sight concerns). That should be sufficient to process half of a large pool (48) in the AM and half in the PM. If necessary, 3-4 more could be squeezed into the well.
 - The Bankruptcy Courtroom can seat 25, so the PM group can wait there is the AM selection runs long, or the PM jurors arrive early. Bankruptcy can also be used for prolonged selection conference since the jury room can only seat 7-8.

- **Criminal Trial Seating:**
 - 7 jurors can sit in the box, and the remaining 9 on the left side of the gallery, totaling 16. This arrangement allows for good sight lines to monitors and witness stand, and it allows 8 people to sit on the right side, thereby eliminating the need to broadcast via zoom/audio.
 - Motions or prolonged breaks will necessitate either letting jurors move out into the public hallway, or be moved into the Bankruptcy room, since on 7-8 can fit in the jury room.
 - Deliberations must occur in the courtroom. (Be mindful of moving a shackled defendant.) Litigants move to the attorney conference rooms.
 - JPG's Ct#3 or RJD's Ct#2 could be used for remote viewing by a victim (Jerod and Anita would have to set up zoom.)

Civil Trial Protocols

- **Venire**
 - 24 jurors in the venire to select 8-person jury – arriving at 8:00 (lining up outside by spaced flags)
 - CSOs pass out:
 - “Welcome! Safety is Our Priority” letter.
 - Covid screening questions and safety protocols
 - If there’s bad weather,
 - Seated randomly in SMY Ct#1
 - Roll is taken, the movie is played, and introductory instructions given while the juror books are being prepared.
 - Juror exit the courtroom and line up in a spaced manner around the District/Bankruptcy corridor.
 - Courtroom is disinfected.
 - Juror are then called in proper order and lined up along the opposite wall.
 - Jurors are walked into the courtroom and seated in the box and gallery.
 - Voir dire occurs – a mike runner may be needed.
 - Venire returns to the corridor area and/or Bankruptcy courtroom during the strike conference. (Those who have private things to discuss can be shuttled in and out as the judge directs.)
 - The venire returns to the courtroom (same seats) and is informed of who has been selected.
 - Work slips are distributed in the hallway to those not selected.
- **Trial**
 - Lunch break –jurors dine outside the building and report back to the jury room (allowing for movement of any shackled litigant).
 - Juror bags containing a fresh notebook, pen, hand sanitizer, juror badge, and CRD business card are distributed to each juror by CRD.
 - Jurors are assigned a number and corresponding seat.
 - 2 15-minute breaks in the AM, and 2 15-minute breaks in the PM –snacks and water in jury room.
 - Because the jury room is a tight fit for 8, prolonged breaks should be kept to a minimum. Jurors should be permitted to stand in the hallway to better space out. If necessary, the Bankruptcy courtroom may be used so all jurors can sit in a larger space.
 - End-of-day:
 - Instruct jurors on not using social media and not discussing trial.
 - Instruct jurors to be mindful of covid safety protocols in the evening.
 - Instruct jurors that they should call the Court (as stated in their instructional sheet) in the event they have any symptoms, covid exposure, or can’t attend the next day.
 - Ensure counsel and prison know to call CRD in case of illness, etc.
 - Juror bags are collected by CRD at the end of the day and redistributed the next morning.
 - Jurors report the next morning to the jury room (to allow a shackled litigant movement into the courtroom).

- **Deliberations**

- Jurors should file into the jury room for a break and to allow everyone else to vacate the courtroom. Litigants move to attorney conference rooms.
- The courtroom is disinfected
- JERS system is set up for exhibit viewing, or exhibit books are passed out to each juror.
- Window is masked.
- Jury deliberates (one person is designated to operate JERS and one person writes notes, etc.)
- Questions or the Verdict will require the jury to exit the room so the attorneys and litigants can reenter the courtroom, then the jury is brought back in. (Disinfecting may be necessary.)
- CRD has service certificates and token gift to pass out.

Criminal Trials (Same as for civil, except as noted below)

- **Venire**

- 48 called in to select a 16-person jury. 24 arrive at 8:00; 24 arrive at 11:00 (?)
- Strikes for cause are made at the end of each voir dire session and those people are released with instructions in re any future service. Those not released are told to call the jury line at 5:30 to learn whether they were selected or released.
- At the end of the PM session, peremptory strikes are made and 16-person jury is selected. Those not released are told to call the jury line at 5:30 to learn whether they were selected or released. Jury calls the 16 selected to ensure they know they must appear the next morning. If anyone has a last-minute emergency and cannot attend, the Court will be notified.

- **Trial**

- Breaks for 16 jurors will require jurors be allowed to access the public hallway (more bathrooms and more space). If the weather is nice, the outside "smoking area" may allow jurors more safe space to spread out.

Courtroom Protocols

- EVERYONE will stay masked unless otherwise directed. (Peekaboo masks and face shields will be on standby.)
- Attorneys will speak from podium positioned center-bench, unless they opt to speak from table. If there is a shackled pro se litigant, attorneys should speak from the counsel table, except if addressing a video witness or using ELMO. (There will be plexiglass shielding to protect the CRD, Reporter and CSO.) Attorneys must wipe down the podium themselves and not touch the mic. (Mic covers will be changed daily and/or as necessary.)
- Witnesses will wipe down area at conclusion of testimony. (Wipes will be nearby.)
- Attorneys will be responsible for cleaning their areas. (Cleaning wipes will be at hand.)
- Defendant will wear a mask unless otherwise directed to lower his mask for identification purposes. Defendant may use the telephone system at counsel table to communicate with counsel. (IT will offer instructions.)

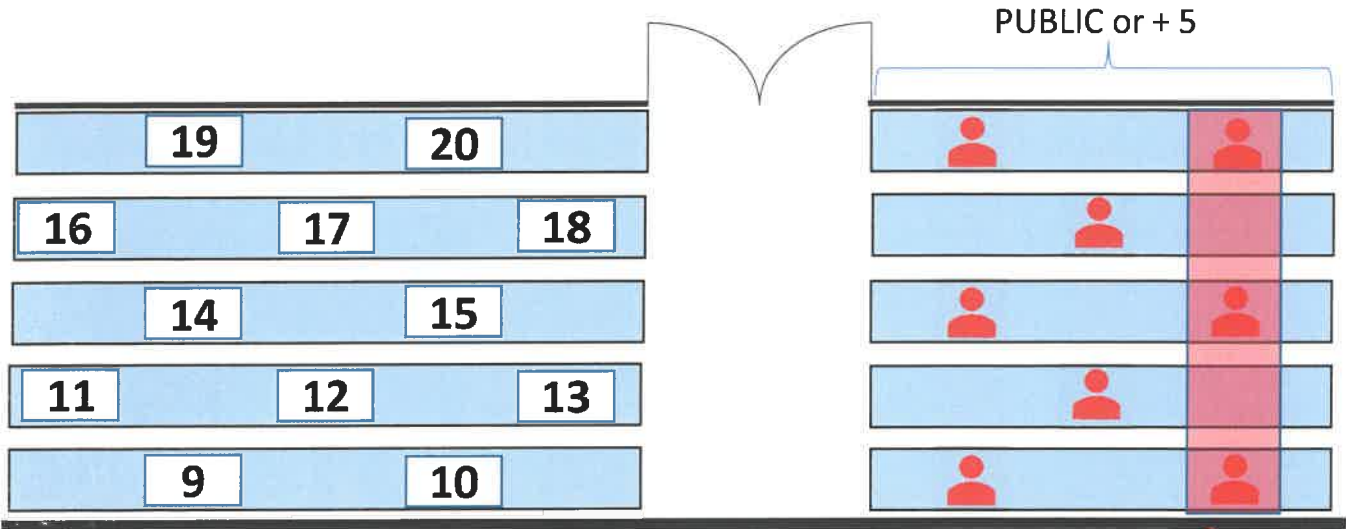
3/31/2021

- Closed-circuit headsets are used for sidebar situations.
- Bottled water will be available to all.
- End-of-day
 - Instruct jurors on not using social media and not discussing trial.
 - Instruct jurors to be mindful of covid safety protocols in the evening.
 - Instruct jurors that they should call the Court (as stated in their instructional sheet) in the event they have any symptoms, covid exposure, or can't attend the next day.
 - Ensure counsel and prison know to call CRD in case of illness, etc.

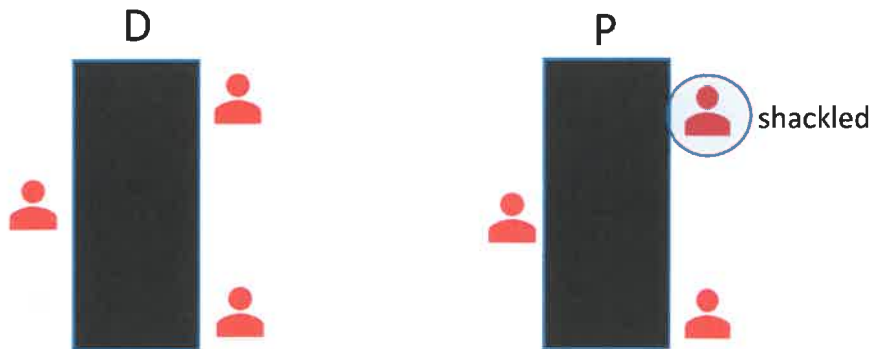
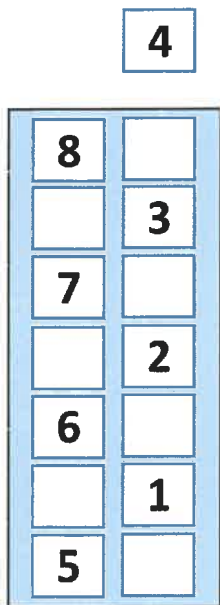
Cleaning/GSA Issues

- All courtrooms and jury rooms will be kept cooler than usual in order to increase air flow.
- Each morning, all rooms in the courthouse that are utilized will be cleaned each day and as necessary by using prescribed cleaning agents.
- Purell spray and shop wipes, and sanitizing wipes, will be available to clean through out the day.
- Attorneys and witnesses will be responsible for cleaning the witness stand and their areas. (Cleaning wipes will be at hand.)
- Between jury voir dire sessions, Court staff will clean the juror seating areas.

CIVIL VOIR DIRE: 20-25 jurors



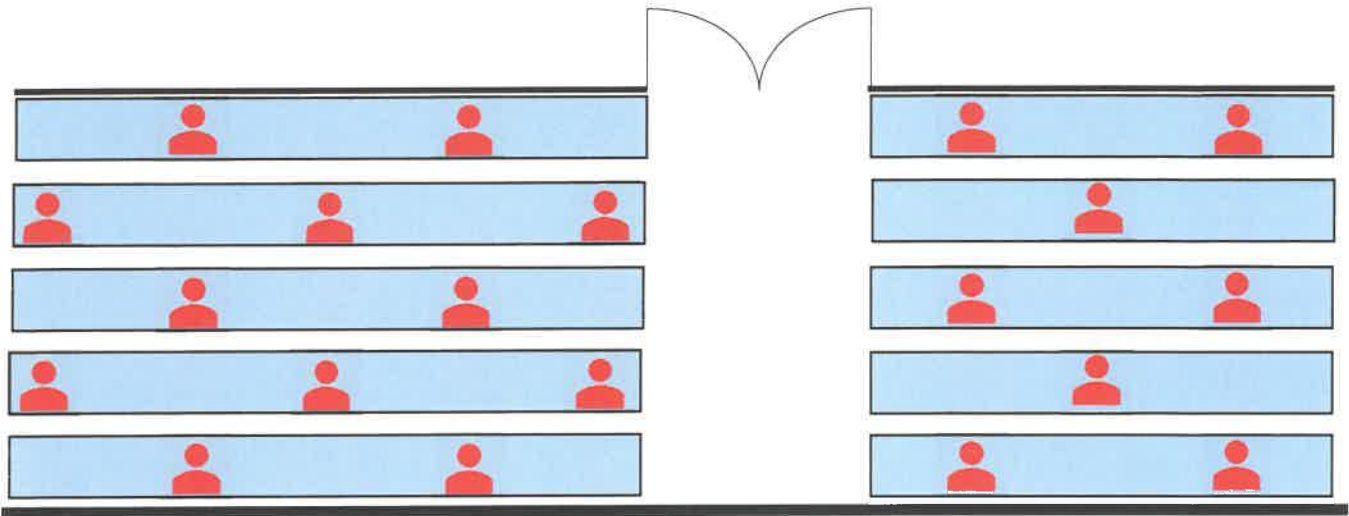
these are questionable due to their line of sight to shackled defendant



SMY

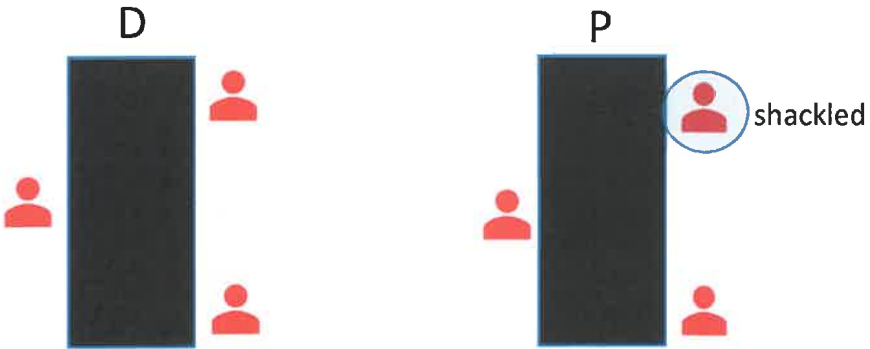
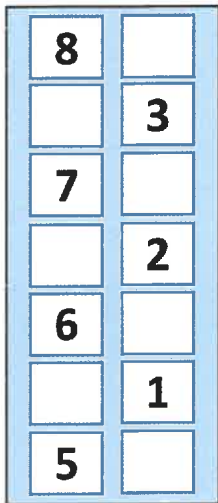
- 12-17 Gallery
- 8 in box
- 20 – 25 total

CIVIL TRIAL - 8 jurors




Guard

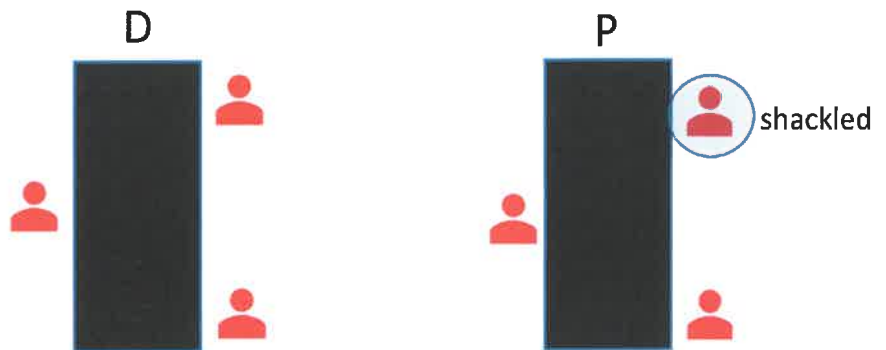
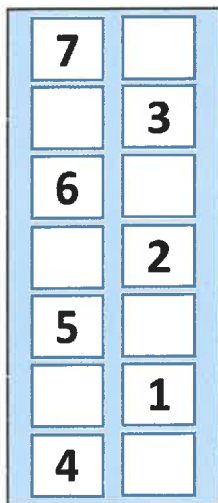
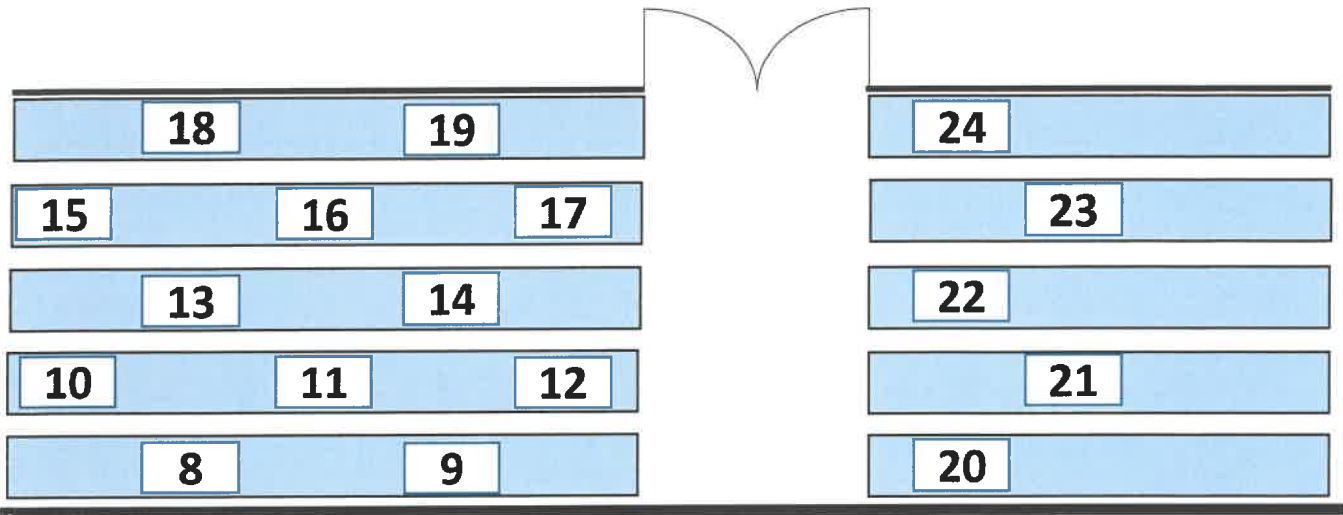
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Guard

SMY ➤ 20 Gallery Seating for Public, Press, etc.
➤ 8 in box

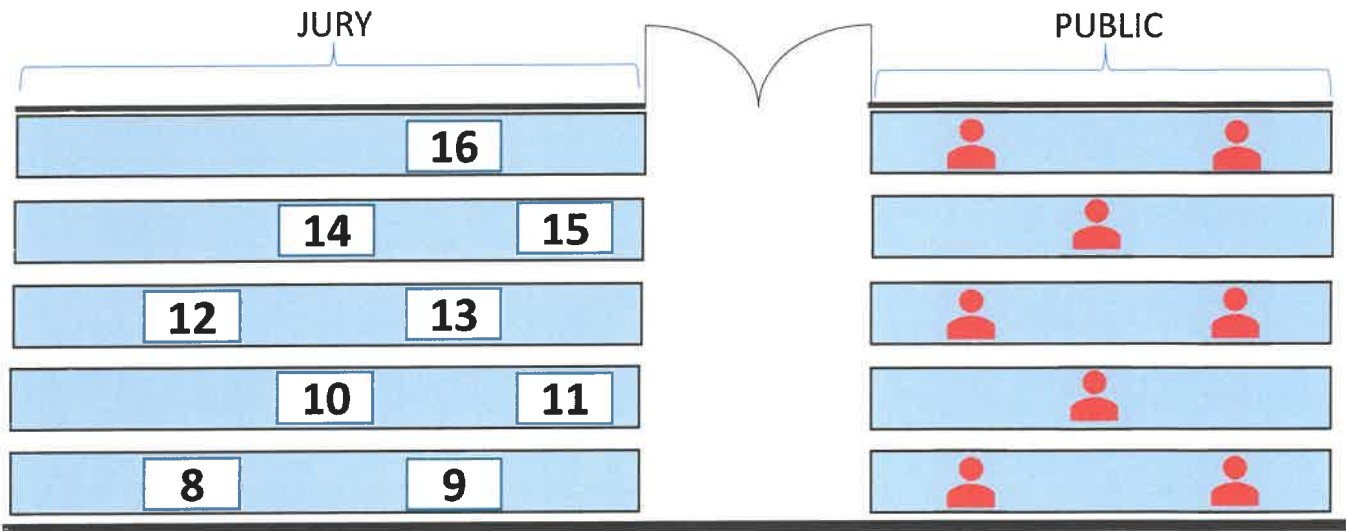
CRIMINAL VOIR DIRE: 24



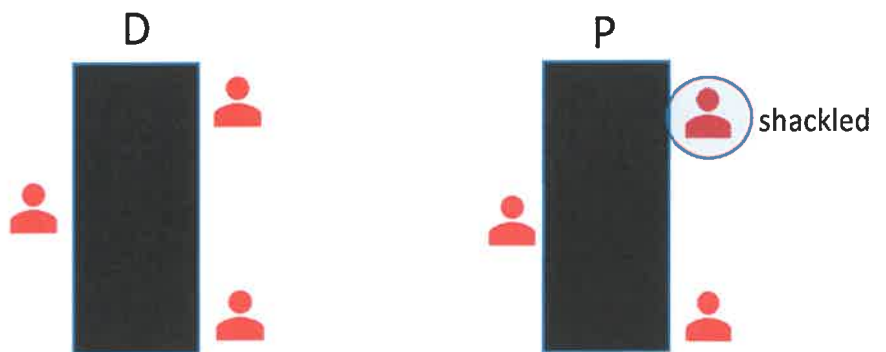
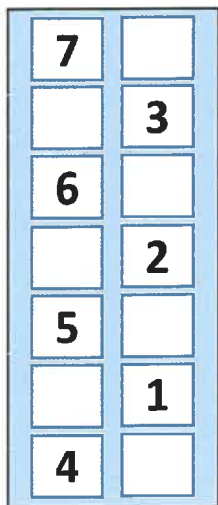
SMY

- 17 Gallery
- 7 in box
- 24 total out of 48
- BK fits maximum of 30

CRIMINAL TRIAL - 16 jurors

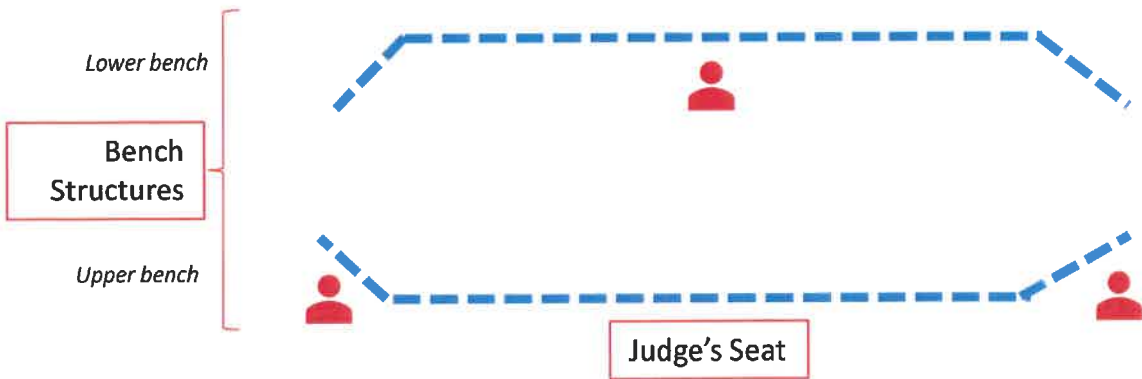
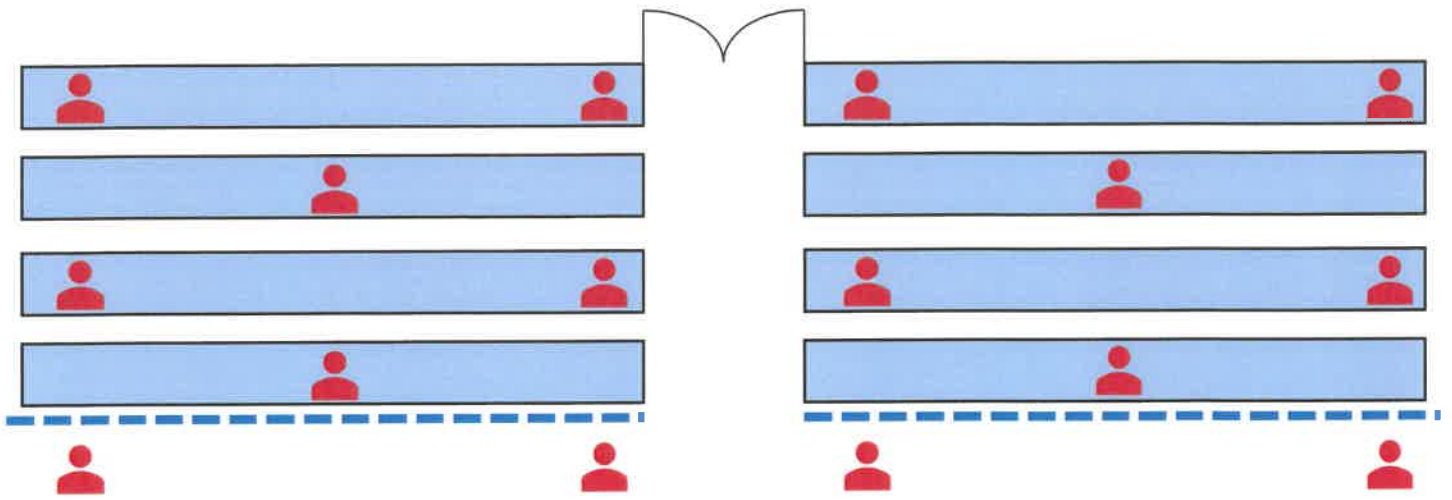



Guard




Guard

SMY



BTN Bankruptcy ➤ 25 seats