

# MODEL JURY SELECTION QUESTIONS

## Standard Jury Voir Dire

### Civil

[Revised as Promulgated by Directive #4-07]

1. In order to be qualified under New Jersey law to serve on a jury, a person must have certain qualifying characteristics. A juror must be:

- Age 18 or older
- A citizen of the United States
- Able to read and understand the English language.
- A resident of \_\_\_\_\_ county (*the summoning county*)

Also, a juror must not:

- Have been convicted of any indictable offense in any state or federal court
- And must not have any physical or mental disability which would prevent the person from properly serving as a juror. Please consider that the Judiciary will provide reasonable accommodations consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Is there any one of you who does not meet these requirements?

2. a. This trial is expected to last for \_\_\_\_\_. Is there anything about the length or scheduling of the trial that would interfere with your ability to serve?

b. Do you have any medical, personal or financial problem that would prevent you from serving on this jury?

c. Do any of you have a special need or require a reasonable accommodation to help you in listening, paying attention, reading printed materials, deliberating, or otherwise participating as a fair juror? The court will provide reasonable accommodations to your special needs but I will only be aware of any such needs if you let me know about them. My only purpose in asking you these circumstances relates to your ability to serve as a juror. If you have any such request, please raise your hand and I will speak to you at sidebar.

[Note: If a juror makes a request, contact the ADA Coordinator to see if the TCA can meet the request right away (e.g., a portable speaker system available immediately) or if the juror's service should be deferred so that the TCA can arrange the accommodation timely (e.g., an ASL interpreter that may require three or four months' reservation in advance).]

3. *Introduce the lawyers and the parties.* Do any of you know either/any of the lawyers? Has either / any of them or anyone in their office ever represented you or brought any action against you? Do you know Mr./Ms \_\_\_\_\_?

Names of Parties

4. *Read names of potential witnesses.* Do you know any of the potential witnesses?

[Note: List witnesses' names here or attached a separate sheet.]

5. I have already briefly described the case. Do you know anything about this case from any source other than what I've just told you?

6. Are any of you familiar with the area or address of the incident?
7. Have you or any family member or close personal friend ever filed a claim or a lawsuit of any kind?
8. Has anyone ever filed a claim or a lawsuit against you or a member of your family or a close friend?
9. Have you or a family member or close personal friend either currently or in the past been involved as a party ...as either a plaintiff or a defendant...in a lawsuit involving damages for personal injury?
10. A plaintiff is a person or corporation [or other entity] who has initiated a lawsuit.  
Do you have a bias for or against a plaintiff simply because he or she has brought a lawsuit?
11. (a) A defendant is a person or corporation [or other entity] against whom a lawsuit has been brought.  
Do you have a bias for or against a defendant simply because a lawsuit has been brought against him or her?

[Ask if applicable]

- (b) The defendant is a corporation. Under the law, a corporation is entitled to be treated the same as anyone else and is entitled to be treated the same as a private individual. Would any of you have any difficulty in accepting that principle?
12. The court is aware that there has been a great deal of public discussion about something called Tort Reform (laws that restrict the right to sue or

- limit the amount recovered). Do you have an opinion, one way or the other, on this subject?
13. If the law and evidence warranted, would you be able to render a verdict in favor of the plaintiff or defendant regardless of any sympathy you may have for either party?
  14. Based on what I have told you, is there anything about this case or the nature of the claim itself, that would interfere with your ability to be fair and impartial and to apply the law as instructed by the court?
  15. Can you accept the law as explained by the court and apply it to the facts regardless of your personal beliefs about what the law is or should be?
  16. Have you ever served on a trial jury before today, here in New Jersey or in any state court or federal court?
  17. Do you know anyone else in the jury box other than as a result of reporting here today?
  18. Would your verdict in this case be influenced in any way by any factors other than the evidence in the courtroom such as friendships or family relationships or the type of work you do?
  19. Have you ever been a witness in a civil matter, regardless of whether it went to trial?
  20. Have you ever testified in any court proceeding?
  21. New Jersey law requires that a plaintiff has to prove fault of a defendant before he or she is entitled to recover money damages from that defendant. Do you have any difficulty accepting that concept?

## **Biographical Question**

*The following questions should be asked of each potential juror, one by one, in the jury box:*

You have answered a series of questions about civil trials and civil cases. Now we would like to learn a little bit about each of you. Please tell us the type of work you do; whether you have ever done any type of work which is substantially different from what you do now; whether you've served in the military; what is your educational history; who else lives in your household and the type of work they do, if any; whether you have any children living elsewhere and the type of work they do; which television shows you watch; any sources from which you learn the news, i.e. the newspapers you read or radio or TV news stations you listen to; if you have a bumper sticker that does not pertain to a political candidate, what does it say? What you do in your spare time and anything else you feel is important.

[Note: This question is intended to be an open-ended question which will allow and encourage the juror to speak in a narrative fashion, rather than answer the question in short phrases. For that reason, it is suggested that the judge read the question in its entirety, rather than part by part. If the juror omits a response to one or more sections, the judge should follow up by asking, in effect: "I notice you didn't mention [specify]. Can you please tell us about that?"]

**Omnibus Qualification Questions (Two)**

1. Is there anything, whether or not covered in the previous questions, which would affect your ability to be a fair and impartial juror or in any way be a problem for you in serving on this jury?
  
2. Is there anything else that you feel is important for the parties in this case to know about you?

**STANDARD JURY VOIR DIRE  
(AUTO, SLIP & FALL, MEDICAL MALPRACTICE)**

**Auto**

1. How many of you are licensed drivers?
  
2. Have you or any family member or close personal friend ever been involved in a motor vehicle accident in which an injury resulted?
  
3. (a) Have you or a family member or close personal friend ever been involved in litigation or filed a claim of any sort?  
  
(b) Has anyone ever filed a claim or lawsuit against you or a family member or close personal friend?
  
4. Have you or a family member or close personal friend sustained an injury to the \_\_\_\_\_ or have chronic problems with \_\_\_\_\_?
  
5. [Ask if applicable] Have you or a family member or close personal friend utilized the services of a chiropractor?
  
6. The court is aware that there has been a great deal of public discussion in print and in the media about automobile accident lawsuits and automobile accident claims. Do you have an opinion, one way or the other on this subject?

## **Slip and Fall**

1. Is anyone a tenant?
2. Is anyone a landlord?
3. Is anyone a homeowner?
4. Have you or a family member or close personal friend ever been involved ...as either a plaintiff or a defendant...in a slip and fall accident in which an injury resulted?
5. Have you or a family member or close personal friend ever been involved in litigation or filed a claim of any sort?
6. Have you or a family member or close personal friend sustained an injury to the \_\_\_\_\_ or have chronic problems with \_\_\_\_\_?

## **Medical Malpractice**

Note: This information is not to be included on printed copies provided to jurors.

It is expected that the parties will submit a few specific questions seeking juror attitudes towards particular injury claims, such as pecuniary loss for wrongful death or a claim for emotional distress, if applicable, or juror attitudes about other particular types of claims, such as wrongful birth or informed consent issues. In particular, wrongful birth claims might require a questionnaire or separate voir dire to address attitudes about termination of pregnancy.

Before asking the questions below, explain that the trial involves a claim of medical negligence, which people sometimes refer to as medical malpractice and that the terms both mean the same thing.

1. Have you, or family member, or a close personal friend, ever had any experience, either so good or so bad, with a doctor or any other health care provider, that would make it difficult for you to sit as an impartial juror in this matter?
2. If the law and the evidence warranted, could you award damages for the plaintiff even if you felt sympathy for the doctor?
3. Regardless of plaintiff's present condition, if the law and evidence warranted, could you render a verdict in favor of the defendant despite being sympathetic to the plaintiff?
4. Have you, any family member, or close personal friend ever worked for:
  - Attorneys
  - Doctors, Hospitals or Physical Therapists
  - Any type of health care provider
  - Any ambulance / EMT / Rescue

5. Have you, or any members of your family, been employed in processing, investigating or handling any type of medical or personal injury claims?
6. Is there anything that you may have read in the print media or seen on television or heard on the radio about medical negligence cases or caps or limits on jury verdicts or awards that would prevent you from deciding this case fairly and impartially on the facts presented?
7. This case involves a claim against the defendant for injuries suffered by the plaintiff as a result of alleged medical negligence. Do you have any existing opinions or strong feelings one way or another about such cases?
8. Have any of you or members of your immediate family ever suffered any complications from [specify the medical field involved]?
9. Do you have any familiarity with [specify the type of medical condition involved] or any familiarity with the types of treatment available?
10. Are you, or have you ever been, related (by blood or marriage) to anyone affiliated with the health care field?
11. Have you or any relative or close personal friend ever had a dispute with respect to a health care issue of any kind with a doctor, chiropractor, dentist, nurse, hospital employee, technician or other person employed in the health care field?
12. Have you or any relative or close personal friend ever brought a claim against a doctor, chiropractor, dentist, nurse or hospital for an injury allegedly caused by a doctor, dentist, nurse or hospital?

13. Have you or any relative or close personal friend ever considered bringing a medical or dental negligence action but did not do so?
  
14. Have you or any relative or close personal friend ever been involved with treatment which did not produce the desired outcome?