

Short Trial Program

Short Trial Overview

Purpose: Accelerated jury trial for civil cases



Jury

Venire: 8 jurors
Panel: 4 jurors selected randomly



Judge

Judge Pro Tem presides



Verdict

At least 3 of 4 jurors must agree



Trial Length

1 Day

Courtroom Roles

Courtroom Assistant

- Escorts jurors
- Manages jury needs
- Assists with courtroom equipment
- Manages Teams access for remote witnesses

Judicial Officer

- Sets and manages the pretrial schedule
- Conducts final pretrial and status conferences
- Rules on motions in limine & evidentiary issues
- Conducts voir dire and decides removals for cause
- Randomly selects 4 jurors from remaining panel
- Tracks time & keeps trial on schedule
- Reads preliminary and final instructions
- States admitted exhibits clearly on the record

45 Days Before Trial

Joint Final Pretrial Conference Memorandum Due

Include:

- Witness list
- Exhibit list
- Exhibit/witness objections
- Stipulated facts
- Stipulated exhibits
- Proposed jury instructions
- Proposed jury verdict forms
- Proposed verdict forms
- Stipulated facts
- Stipulated exhibits
- Proposed jury instructions
- Proposed verdict forms

30 Days Before Trial

Final Pretrial Conference

Discuss and rule on:

- Motions in Limine (if any)
- Exhibit stipulations
- Witness objections
- Jury Instructions (preliminary and final)
- Verdict forms
- Proposed voir dire questions
- Representatives present at trial
- Witness exclusion rule (if invoked)
- Time allocation for each side
- Who tracks time
- Remote witnesses
- Interpreter needs
- Exhibit format (paper exhibits required)

10 Days Before Trial

Final Status Conference

Confirm:

- Trial still proceeding
- No new issues
- Logistics confirmed

3 Days Before Trial

Check-in with ADR & Courtroom Assistant

Confirm:

- Jury logistics
- Courtroom equipment
- Interpreter availability
- Remote witness setup (Teams)

Typical Day-of-Trial Schedule

Morning

1. Judge and counsel meet
2. Jury panel arrives
3. Voir dire begins
4. Jury selection discussion
5. Jury instructions
6. Opening statements
7. Plaintiff evidence

Afternoon

1. Defense evidence
2. Closing arguments
3. Final instructions
4. Jury deliberations
5. Jury verdict
6. Release jurors

Time Limits

Stage

Time

Judge voir dire	10 min
Counsel voir dire	5 min per side
Openings	10 min per side
Evidence	2 hrs per side total
Closings	10 min per side
Final instructions	10 min

Contact Information

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)

Maricopa County Superior Court
South Court Tower, 12th Floor

Phone: 602-506-7884

Email: adroffice1@jbazmc.maricopa.gov

Web: <https://superiorcourt.maricopa.gov/adr>

Jury Selection Procedure

1. Swear the 8-person panel
2. Explain that 4 jurors will be selected
3. Conduct judge voir dire
4. Allow counsel 5 minutes per side for follow-up
5. Excuse panel briefly and confer privately with counsel
6. Decide removals for cause
7. Randomly draw the final 4 jurors from the remaining panel
8. Bring the panel back and announce the selected jurors
9. Excuse the other jurors
10. Swear the seated jurors and distribute pads/pens

Required Early Questions

- English comprehension
- Maricopa County residency
- Felony conviction/restoration of civil rights
- Whether jurors know staff, parties, counsel, witnesses, or others
- Hardship for a 1-day trial
- Ability to follow the law, free from bias

Oaths

- Voir dire oath
- Witness oath
- Trial oath for seated jurors
- Courtroom assistant oath for deliberations
- Interpreter oath

If an Affirmation Is Requested Use:

- “Do affirm” instead of “do solemnly swear”
- “Under the pains and penalties of perjury” instead of “so help you God”

Interpreter Reminders

- Ask early about witness interpreters; the file may not be flagged for them
- Coordinate interpreter needs as far in advance as possible
- Determine whether interpretation will be simultaneous or sequential
- Determine whether the interpreter or witness will appear in person or remotely
- Headsets may be used for jurors or for simultaneous interpretation

Bench Tips

- Short Trial is a full and official jury proceeding
- Read preliminary instructions
- Track each side's total time - 2 hours per side includes witnesses, cross, redirect, exhibits, and any allowed rebuttal
- State admitted exhibits clearly on the record
- Ensure the jury receives only admitted exhibits in deliberations
- Keep breaks short and on schedule
- Watch for audibility, visibility, interpreter, and technology issues
- Allow only court-provided notepads; no electronic note-taking
- Juror questions must be written, unsigned, and reviewed with counsel before being asked

Common Pitfalls to Avoid

- Forgetting to ask about witness interpreters
- Assuming exhibits will be electronic instead of paper
- Failing to identify admitted exhibits on the record
- Losing track of time limits
- Running past juror transportation cutoff without calling the jury office
- Skipping random selection after cause removals
- Using the wrong verdict form
- Omitting needed substantive RAJI instructions

Verdict Procedure

1. **Provide Correct Form(s)** - Ensure jury receives only applicable verdict form(s)
2. **Explain Voting Rule** - At least 3 of 4 jurors must agree
3. **Select Foreperson** - Jury selects a foreperson to lead deliberations
4. **Deliberate Properly** - Decide case based only on admitted evidence, court's instructions, and no outside influence
5. **Apply Correct Burden of Proof** - Typically claim must be more probably true than not true
6. **Complete Verdict Form** - The jury fills out the form that matches its decision:
 - **Plaintiff verdict:** state damages
 - **Comparative fault verdict:** state damages and percentages of fault
 - **Defense verdict:** find for defendant
 - **Damages-only verdict:** state plaintiff's full damages
7. **Juror Initials** - Each juror prints their initials by their juror number and only the foreperson initials the verdict form if unanimous
8. **Return to Court** - Verdict is returned to the Court
9. **If Impasse Occurs** - Instruct jury to consider identifying disagreements, continue deliberations, and send written note if assistance is needed
10. **Court Review Before Discharge** - Confirm correct form is used, all blanks completed, proper signatures, fault totals 100%, if applicable
11. **Post-Verdict** - ADR Assistant or Coordinator will send final documents to judge assigned to case for filing