



News Release

The 26th Judicial District of North Carolina

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July 6, 2005

For Immediate Release:

JURORS ISSUED ORDERS TO SHOW CAUSE FOR FAILING TO APPEAR FOR JURY SERVICE

The Mecklenburg County Trial Court Administrator's Office has issued Orders to Show Cause to potential jurors who have continuously failed to appear for jury service. The Orders are being served by the Mecklenburg County Sheriff's Office. The Orders instruct jurors to appear before the presiding Superior Court Judge in Courtroom 307 of the Mecklenburg County Civil Courthouse on Friday, July 8, 2005, at 2:00 PM to show cause, if any, why they should not be held in contempt of court for failing to obey a jury summons. Jurors will have an opportunity in open court to explain before a judge why they continuously failed to appear as summonsed before being sentenced. The judge could fine them from \$50 up to \$500 and/or sentence them to jail for up to 30 days.

The Trial Court Administrator's Office issues between 5,000 and 6,000 jury summons each month and is issuing Orders to Show Cause for those who do not appear in an attempt to curtail the large number of no shows which occur on a daily basis. Issuing an Order to Show Cause is a final attempt to get citizens to respond to their jury summons.

The jury system software automatically tracks how many times a juror fails to appear for jury service. If a person fails to appear for jury service, they are automatically rescheduled to a later date to give them another opportunity to respond. After failing to appear a certain number of times, the system automatically prints out an Order to Show Cause. This process has proven to be very effective and efficient. Show cause hearings have been successfully conducted at least once every quarter since the system upgrade in January of 2004. However, a designated Superior Court Judge has now been assigned to hear these cases on a monthly basis. An Assistant District Attorney will also now be present to represent the State.

To date, all jurors have been fined and/or ordered to serve. One juror was imprisoned for 30 days. Jurors who do not appear for the show cause hearings are subsequently arrested and held under a bond.

For more information regarding this news release, please contact: Charles Keller, Community Access and Outreach Administrator, at 704-347-7864 or email charles.w.keller@nccourts.org.

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