

Rule 46. Objecting to a Ruling or Order

A formal exception to a ruling or order is unnecessary. When the ruling or order is requested or made, a party need only state the action that it wants the court to take or objects to, along with the grounds for the request or objection. Failing to object does not prejudice a party who had no opportunity to do so when the ruling or order was made.

(As amended Mar. 2, 1987, eff. Aug. 1, 1987; Apr. 30, 2007, eff. Dec. 1, 2007.)

NOTES OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON RULES—1937

Abolition of formal exceptions is often provided by statute. See Ill.Rev.Stat. (1937), ch. 110, §204; Neb.Comp.Stat. (1929) §20-1139; N.M.Stat. Ann. (Courtright, 1929) §105-830; 2 N.D.Comp.Laws Ann. (1913) §7653; Ohio Code Ann. (Throckmorton, 1936) §11560; 1 S.D.Comp.Laws (1929) §2542; Utah Rev.Stat. Ann. (1933) §§104-39-2, 104-24-18; Va.Rules of Court, Rule 22, 163 Va. v, xii (1935); Wis.Stat. (1935) §270.39. Compare N.Y.C.P.A. (1937) §§583, 445, and 446, all as amended by L. 1936, ch. 915. Rule 51 deals with objections to the court's instructions to the jury.

U.S.C., Title 28, [former] §§776 (Bill of exceptions; authentication; signing of by judge) and [former] 875 (Review of findings in cases tried without a jury) are superseded insofar as they provide for formal exceptions, and a bill of exceptions.

NOTES OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON RULES—1987
AMENDMENT

The amendments are technical. No substantive change is intended.

COMMITTEE NOTES ON RULES—2007 AMENDMENT

The language of Rule 46 has been amended as part of the general restyling of the Civil Rules to make them more easily understood and to make style and terminology consistent throughout the rules. These changes are intended to be stylistic only.

Rule 47. Selecting Jurors

(a) EXAMINING JURORS. The court may permit the parties or their attorneys to examine prospective jurors or may itself do so. If the court examines the jurors, it must permit the parties or their attorneys to make any further inquiry it considers proper, or must itself ask any of their additional questions it considers proper.

(b) PEREMPTORY CHALLENGES. The court must allow the number of peremptory challenges provided by 28 U.S.C. §1870.

(c) EXCUSING A JUROR. During trial or deliberation, the court may excuse a juror for good cause.

(As amended Feb. 28, 1966, eff. July 1, 1966; Apr. 30, 1991, eff. Dec. 1, 1991; Apr. 30, 2007, eff. Dec. 1, 2007.)

NOTES OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON RULES—1937

Note to Subdivision (a). This permits a practice found very useful by Federal trial judges. For an example of a state practice in which the examination by the court is supplemented by further inquiry by counsel, see Rule 27 of the Code of Rules for the District Courts of Minnesota, 186 Minn. xxxiii (1932), 3 Minn.Stat. (Mason, supp. 1936) Appendix, 4, p. 1062.

Note to Subdivision (b). The provision for an alternate juror is one often found in modern state codes. See N.C.Code (1935) §2330(a); Ohio Gen.Code Ann. (Page, Supp. 1926-1935) §11419-47; Pa.Stat. Ann. (Purdon, Supp. 1936) Title 17, §1153; compare U.S.C., Title 28, [former]

§417a (Alternate jurors in criminal trials); 1 N.J.Rev.Stat. (1937) 2:91A-1, 2:91A-2, 2:91A-3.

Provisions for qualifying, drawing, and challenging of jurors are found in U.S.C., Title 28:

§411 [now 1861] (Qualifications and exemptions)

§412 [now 1864] (Manner of drawing)

§413 [now 1865] (Apportioned in district)

§415 [see 1862] (Not disqualified because of race or color)

§416 [now 1867] (Venire; service and return)

§417 [now 1866] (Talesmen for petit jurors)

§418 [now 1866] (Special juries)

§423 [now 1869] (Jurors not to serve more than once a year)

§424 [now 1870] (Challenges)

and D.C. Code (1930) Title 18, §§341-360 (Juries and Jury Commission) and Title 6, §366 (Peremptory challenges).

NOTES OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON RULES—1966
AMENDMENT

The revision of this subdivision brings it into line with the amendment of Rule 24(c) of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure. That rule previously allowed four alternate jurors, as contrasted with the two allowed in civil cases, and the amendments increase the number of a maximum of six in all cases. The Advisory Committee's Note to amended Criminal Rule 24(c) points to experience demonstrating that four alternates may not be enough in some lengthy criminal trials; and the same may be said of civil trials. The Note adds:

"The words 'or are found to be' are added to the second sentence to make clear that an alternate juror may be called in the situation where it is first discovered during the trial that a juror was unable or disqualified to perform his duties at the time he was sworn."

NOTES OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON RULES—1991
AMENDMENT

Subdivision (b). The former provision for alternate jurors is stricken and the institution of the alternate juror abolished.

The former rule reflected the long-standing assumption that a jury would consist of exactly twelve members. It provided for additional jurors to be used as substitutes for jurors who are for any reason excused or disqualified from service after the commencement of the trial. Additional jurors were traditionally designated at the outset of the trial, and excused at the close of the evidence if they had not been promoted to full service on account of the elimination of one of the original jurors.

The use of alternate jurors has been a source of dissatisfaction with the jury system because of the burden it places on alternates who are required to listen to the evidence but denied the satisfaction of participating in its evaluation.

Subdivision (c). This provision makes it clear that the court may in appropriate circumstances excuse a juror during the jury deliberations without causing a mistrial. Sickness, family emergency or juror misconduct that might occasion a mistrial are examples of appropriate grounds for excusing a juror. It is not grounds for the dismissal of a juror that the juror refuses to join with fellow jurors in reaching a unanimous verdict.

COMMITTEE NOTES ON RULES—2007 AMENDMENT

The language of Rule 47 has been amended as part of the general restyling of the Civil Rules to make them more easily understood and to make style and terminology consistent throughout the rules. These changes are intended to be stylistic only.

Rule 48. Number of Jurors; Verdict; Polling

(a) NUMBER OF JURORS. A jury must begin with at least 6 and no more than 12 members, and