

(m) (1) A judge shall appoint at least 2 alternate jurors when impaneling a jury for any proceeding:

(i) In which the defendant is being tried for a crime for which the death penalty may be imposed; or

(ii) Which is held under the provisions of this section.

(2) The alternate jurors shall be retained during the length of the proceedings under such restrictions and regulations as the judge may impose.

(3) (i) If any juror dies, becomes incapacitated, or disqualified, or is discharged for any other reason before the jury begins its deliberations on sentencing, an alternate juror becomes a juror in the order in which selected, and serves in all respects as those selected on the regular trial panel.

(ii) An alternate juror may not replace a juror who is discharged during the actual deliberations of the jury on the guilt or innocence of the defendant, or on the issue of sentencing.

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(b) (1) Except as provided in [paragraph (2)] PARAGRAPHS (2) AND (3) of this subsection, a person who has been sentenced to life imprisonment is not eligible for parole consideration until the person has served 15 years or the equal of 15 years when considering the allowances for diminution of period of confinement provided for in Article 27, § 700 and Article 27, § 638C, of the Code.

(2) A person who has been sentenced to life imprisonment as a result of a proceeding under Article 27, § 413 is not eligible for parole consideration until the person has served 25 years or the equal of 25 years when considering the allowances for diminution of period of confinement provided for in Article 27, § 700 and Article 27, § 638C, of the Code.

(3) (I) IF A PERSON IS SENTENCED TO IMPRISONMENT FOR LIFE WITHOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF PAROLE UNDER ARTICLE 27, § 412 OR § 413 OF THE CODE, THE PERSON IS NOT ELIGIBLE FOR PAROLE CONSIDERATION AND MAY NOT BE GRANTED PAROLE AT ANY TIME DURING THE TERM OF THE SENTENCE.

(II) NOTHING CONTAINED IN THIS PARAGRAPH MAY BE CONSTRUED TO RESTRICT THE AUTHORITY OF THE GOVERNOR TO PARDON OR