



**Superior Court of California
County of Sonoma
Summary of Proposed Amendments to the Local Rules
Eff. 01/01/2027**

~~abcde~~ Deleted text
abcde New/Revised text
abcde Unchanged text

Proposed Amendments to Local Rules

Rule 4

Rule 5

Rule 9

Rule 10

Rule 17

PLEASE NOTE: If a rule or a subsection to a rule does not appear in this document, it remains unchanged from the 07/01/2026 edition.

RULE 4 RULES APPLICABLE TO ALL CIVIL CASES

4.1 ASSIGNMENT TO ONE JUDGE FOR ALL PURPOSES AND CASE MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE

In every general civil case, at the time of filing a complaint, by order of the Presiding Judge, the Clerk of the Court will issue a Notice of Assignment of Case to One Judge for All Purposes and Notice of Case Management Conference. The Notice will include the name of the Assigned Judge and the date, time and location of the Case Management Conference. A copy of the Notice must be served with the summons and complaint, and with any cross-complaint.

(Effective 1/1/2027)

4.24 DIFFERENTIAL CASE MANAGEMENT

A. The following rules are adopted to advance the goals of the Trial Court Delay Reduction Act set forth in Government Code §§ 68603, et seq., and addressed by §§ 2.1 and 2.2 of the Standards of Judicial Administration and California Rules of Court, Rules 3.710 et seq., all incorporated herein by reference. It is the intent of this court that these rules satisfy the court's obligations under the Trial Court Delay Reduction Act, ~~and the requirements under of~~ the California Rules of Court and that ~~the court adopt these local rules on differential case management~~ are consistent with the California Rules of Court and the Standards of Judicial Administration.

1. Initial Case Management Conference

Upon the filing of every complaint the clerk shall provide to the plaintiff Notice of the Case Management Conference, and information on how to obtain an ADR packet, which plaintiff is required to serve with the complaint.

2. Notice to Added Party

Any party who adds a party to the proceeding must inform the new party of any pending dates set by the court including a pending case management conference date, a pending settlement conference date and a pending trial date.

3. Continuance of Case Management Conference

Requests to continue a Case Management Conference must be set forth in the Case Management Conference Statement. The Assigned Judge has discretion to determine whether a continuance request will be granted.

4. Tentative Ruling on Case Management Conference

Three (3) court days preceding each scheduled CMC calendar, the Assigned Judge or their designee will cause to be recorded a tentative ruling for any cases set on the CMC calendar. The tentative ruling may be obtained on the court's website at www.sonoma.courts.ca.gov. The tentative ruling will become the ruling of the Court at the conference unless any party desiring to be heard so advises the judicial assistant in the Assigned Judge's chambers no later than 24 hours before the scheduled conference and also notifies all parties or their attorneys. Appearances will be required or dispensed with by the court as indicated in the tentative rulings. Where appearances are required by the Court, or no tentative ruling is indicated on a case, then all principal trial counsel and self-represented parties shall appear at the conference at the time scheduled in any notice, order to show cause, or as otherwise directed by the Court.

5. Death of a Party

When a party to a case dies, the attorney for that party shall promptly serve and file a notice with the Court.

- B.** All general civil cases shall be deemed to be cases subject to California Rules of Court, Rule 3.714(b)(1) or (2), based on the amount in controversy, unless otherwise requested in a Case Management Statement (Judicial Council form CM-110) filed by counsel or any self-represented party and thereafter ordered by the court.

C. Unlawful Detainer Injunctions

Unless a separate management plan is defined in the California statutes or in the California Rules of Court, unlawful detainer actions and Injunctive proceedings pursuant to Code of Civil Procedure shall be placed in the local case management plan for disposition within six months.

D. Uninsured and Underinsured Motorist Actions

At the time the complaint or petition is filed, or within 30 days after discovering that the case is an uninsured or underinsured motorist case, plaintiff /petitioner shall file an ex parte application with a supporting declaration and proposed order requesting that the case be designated as an uninsured or underinsured motorist case. To allow for arbitration of the plaintiff/petitioner's claim, the Civil Case Management Rules do not apply to a case designated by the court as "Uninsured Motorist" or "Underinsured Motorist" as defined in Government Code § 68609.5 and Insurance Code § 11580.2 until 180 days from the date of the designation. The clerk's office shall set a Case Management Conference on the earliest available CMC calendar

after 180 days from the designation of the case as an uninsured or underinsured case.

All other civil actions identifiable on the Civil Case Cover Sheet (Judicial Council form #CM-010) under the headings of Judicial Review, Enforcement of Judgment, or Miscellaneous Civil Petition, shall be placed in the local case management plan for disposition within nine months.

(Eff. 1/1/1997; Rev. 7/1/2004, 1/1/2007, 1/1/2008, 7/1/2011, 1/1/2014, 7/1/14, 1/1/15, 1/1/16; 7/1/16. 1/1/2027)

4.2 ASSIGNMENT TO ONE JUDGE FOR ALL PURPOSES AND CASE MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE [\[Repealed\]](#)

[Rule 4.2 repealed effective January 1, 2027; adopted effective January 1, 1997; previously amended 7/1/2026.](#)

- ~~**A.**—In every general civil case, at the time of filing a complaint, by order of the Presiding Judge, the Clerk of the Court will issue a Notice of Assignment of Case to One Judge for All Purposes and Notice of Case Management Conference. The Notice will include the name of the Assigned Judge and the date, time and location of the Case Management Conference. A copy of the Notice must be served with the summons and complaint, and with any cross-complaint.~~
- ~~**B.**—Tentative Rulings: Three (3) court days preceding each scheduled Case Management Conference calendar, the Assigned Judge or their designee will cause to be recorded a tentative ruling for any cases set on the Case Management Conference calendar. The tentative ruling will be posted on the court’s website at www.sonoma.courts.ca.gov (click on the “Online Services” tab on the home page, select “Tentative Rulings” in the drop-down menu, and then click on the link to “Civil”). A copy of the tentative rulings will also be posted outside the Assigned Judge’s courtroom. The tentative ruling will become the ruling of the Court at the conference unless any party desiring to be heard so advises the judicial assistant in the Assigned Judge’s chambers no later than 24 hours before the scheduled conference and also notifies all parties or their attorneys. Appearances will be required or dispensed with by the court as indicated in the tentative rulings. Where appearances are required by the Court, or no tentative ruling is indicated on a case, then all principal trial counsel and self-represented parties shall appear at the conference at the time scheduled in any notice, order to show cause, or as otherwise directed by the Court.~~

~~(Eff. 1/1/1997; Rev. 1/1/2003, 7/1/2004, 1/1/2014, Repealed 1/1/2016, Eff. 7/1/19; Rev. 1/1/2022, 7/1/2026)~~

4.4 **ORDERS TO SHOW CAUSE**

- A. Each case ~~included by this rule~~ will be reviewed for compliance with ~~these~~ [all applicable](#) rules, and orders to show cause may be issued for failure to comply.
- B. Orders to Show Cause will be scheduled on calendars at such times and places as designated by the Assigned Judge.
- C. In the afternoon two (2) court days preceding the Order to Show Cause hearing, commencing at 2:00 p.m., the Assigned Judge or their designee will cause to be recorded a tentative ruling of any case set on the Order to Show Cause calendar. The tentative ruling will be posted on the court's website at www.sonoma.courts.ca.gov (click on the "Online Services" tab on the home page, select "Tentative Rulings" in the drop-down menu, and then click on the link to "Civil"). A copy of the tentative rulings will also be posted outside the Assigned Judge's courtroom.

(Eff. 1/1/1997; Rev. 7/1/2004, 1/1/2016, 7/1/19, 1/1/2022, Renumbered 1/1/2023, 7/1/2024, 7/1/2026, [1/1/2027](#))

4.5 **SANCTIONS**

Failure to comply with these rules [through an Order to Show Cause determination](#) or [in violation of](#) the [Code of Civil Procedure and/or](#) California Rules of Court may result in the imposition of sanctions.

In the event that any attorney, any party represented by counsel, or any party appearing in pro per fails to comply with any of the requirements of, or orders made, pursuant to Rules 2, 4, 5, 7 or 9, or the California Rules of Court, the Court may impose sanctions upon motion of a party or on its own motion. Sanctions may be imposed pursuant to Government Code § 68609(d); Code of Civil Procedure §§ 128.5, 128.7, 177.5, 575.2, and California Rules of Court, Rule 2.30.

Unless otherwise ordered, any monetary sanctions imposed by the Court shall be paid forthwith and payable to the Sonoma County Superior Court.

(Eff. 1/1/1997; Rev. 7/1/2004, 1/1/2007, 7/1/2008, 1/1/2016, Renumbered 1/1/2023, 7/1/2024, 1/1/2027)

4.7 **JURY DEMAND**

A jury must be demanded [on or before the hearing date on](#) in the [initial](#) Case Management Statement [and failure to timely comply may constitute waiver. Perfection of a demand for jury trial must also comport with all other requirements set forth under Code of Civil Procedure § 631.](#) ~~For purposes of these rules, the date of the Trial as described herein in Rule 4.9.A will be construed as the date of trial.~~

(Eff. 1/1/1997; Rev. 7/1/2004, 1/1/2014, 7/1/2014, 1/1/2021; Renumbered 1/1/2016; 7/1/2018, Renumbered 1/1/2023, 7/1/2024, [1/1/2027](#))

4.8 DEPOSIT OF JURY FEES

A. Deposit

Jury fees in civil cases must be deposited with the Superior Court Clerk in accordance with the dictates of Code of Civil Procedure § 631.

B. Refund

Unless superseded by Code of Civil Procedure § 631(b), written application for refund of jury fees for any reason must be made within twenty (20) business days from the date on which the jury is waived or the action is settled, dismissed, or a continuance thereof granted, pursuant to Code of Civil Procedure § 631.3.

C. Forfeiture

Jury fees on deposit will be forfeited and will not be applied to a future trial date if: the matter is settled without notice to the court, the jury is waived without two (2) court days' notice to the court, or the trial date is continued without two (2) court days' notice to the court, pursuant to Code of Civil Procedure § 631.3.

D. Notice

Notice to the court under this rule must be in writing. The file date is used to determine compliance with timelines contained herein.

E. Post-Trial

After completion of the trial, any remaining jury fees on deposit will be returned only upon written request to the Clerk of the Court. The request for refund must be submitted within thirty (30) calendar days of the completion of the trial, otherwise any funds remaining on deposit shall be forfeited.

(Eff. 1/1/1997; Removed 1/1/2021, Renumbered/Eff. 7/1/2024, [1/1/2027](#))

4.9 TRIAL AND TRIAL-RELATED MOTIONS

A. Trial Calendar

Trials, both long cause and short cause, will be called on such dates and at such times as shall be set by the Assigned Judge. ~~In-person attendance by counsel at the call of the Trial is mandatory unless excused by the Assigned Judge.~~

B. Continuances

Requests for trial continuances ~~Continuances of trials may be granted, upon good cause shown, must be made either~~ by stipulation of ~~all the~~ parties or upon written notice of motion. A judge or judicial officer may exercise discretion in determining whether to grant or deny such request. ~~Failure to complete discovery does not constitute good cause.~~ Any motion for continuance must be calendared for hearing before the Assigned Judge on the Trial calendar at least seven (7) calendar days in advance of the trial date, unless good cause is shown for a shortening of such time. ~~Stipulation of trial counsel by itself does not constitute good cause for granting a continuance.~~

C. Good Cause Requirement

Any Request for a trial continuance must be supported by a good cause showing as defined in California Rule of Court, Rule 3.1332.

1. Failure to complete discovery or mediation/settlement discussion does not constitute good cause for a trial continuance.
2. Stipulation of trial counsel by itself does not constitute good cause for granting a continuance.

Requests for continuance of trials or trials de novo in small claims cases must follow the procedure set out in Code of Civil Procedure § 116.570.

(Eff. 1/1/1997; Rev. 7/1/2004, 7/1/2011, 1/1/2014, 1/1/2021; Renumbered 1/1/2016; 7/1/2018, Renumbered 1/1/2023, Rev. 7/1/2024, 1/1/2025, 1/1/2027)

4.10 PRETRIAL MATTERS AND COMMENCEMENT OF TRIAL

A. Uniform Procedures

The procedures prescribed in this rule apply uniformly to trials throughout the Civil Division except in expedited jury trials under Code of Civil Procedure § 630.01 et seq., which are governed by California Rules of Court, Rules 3.1545–3.1552. Judges may, in the exercise of discretion, order different procedures based on the particular requirements of an individual case.

B. Trial

Each case is called for trial on the ~~Friday as~~ date specified by the court in its Notice of Trial as served on all parties. Unless otherwise ordered, it is mandatory that parties and their counsel ~~are to~~ appear in-person and ~~should expect and~~ be prepared to begin the trial of a case on the first date of Trial.

C. Duty to Meet and Confer

At least seven (7) court days before trial, all attorneys of record and unrepresented parties must meet and confer in a good faith effort to reach agreement and enter into written stipulations or written joint statements on the matters described in subdivisions (D) and (G) of this rule. All such stipulations and statements must be filed, and courtesy copies delivered, at the time and in the manner stated in subdivisions (D) and (G). A stipulation or joint statement may be filed instead of any submission of an individual party that this rule requires or permits.

D. ~~Pretrial~~ Trial Documents

By 3:30 p.m. on the sixth (6th) court day before trial or as otherwise ordered by the court, the parties **must** file the following trial documents listed below with the Civil Clerk's Office, serve the documents on all parties, and deliver endorsed copies to the chambers of the Assigned Judge the same day. Failure to timely file and serve these trial documents may result in their exclusion. During the 'meet & confer' process the parties are to strive filing 'joint' documents wherever possible. ~~Timelines for the submittal of pretrial documents for matters coming before the court under the Lanterman-Petris-Short Act are set by the judge presiding over that matter at their discretion.~~

1. Voir Dire Questionnaire

Any proposed voir dire questions which, due to unusual or sensitive circumstances, a party requests the judge to ask prospective jurors.

~~2. Any proposed jury questionnaire.~~

2. Witness List

A joint list, in alphabetical order, of all witnesses to be called, indicating which party intends to call each witness and time estimates for their examination. The list should also note any anticipated issue concerning a witness that might require the court's attention, including but not limited to scheduling constraints, health problems, security precautions, and the need for a translator or interpreter.

3. Trial Estimate

A joint estimate of the length of the trial.

4. Neutral Statement

A joint neutral statement of the case to be read to the jury.

5. [Motions in Limine](#)

~~All motions in limine.~~ Any written opposition to a motion in limine must be filed with the Civil Clerk's Office, and an endorsed filed copy delivered to the Assigned Judge, by 3:30 p.m. three (3) court day before trial.

6. [Lodging Deposition Transcripts](#)

Identification by each party of all deposition testimony that the party intends to offer in evidence on the ground that the witness is unavailable to testify at trial, designated by witness, date or volume, and pages and lines.

7. [Jury Instructions](#)

A list of all requested California Civil Jury Instructions (CACI) by number, in numerical order, with titles.

8. [Special Instruction](#)

A list of all proposed CACI jury instructions and special jury instructions, with all proposed wording.

9. [Verdict Forms](#)

All proposed verdict forms.

10. [Trial Orders](#)

Signed copies of the Trial Orders of the Court, containing those provisions to which the parties have stipulated.

[Timelines for the submittal of trial documents for matters coming before the court under the Lanterman-Petris-Short Act are set by the judge presiding over that matter at their discretion.](#)

E. Exhibits to Be Used in Opening Statement and/or Trial

On the day that motions in limine are heard, prior to that hearing, each party must show all other parties all electronic presentations, demonstrative exhibits, charts, diagrams, photographs, enlargements, and all other tangible things that the party intends to use in the party's opening statement and/or during trial. Any party who objects to any

such material must make the objection at the hearing of the motions in limine, and the judge will rule on all such objections presented.

F. Trial Briefs

The court finds trial briefs to be very helpful and encourages their submission. Any trial brief must be filed with the Civil Clerk's Office, and an endorsed filed copy delivered to the Assigned Judge, by 3:30 p.m. six (6) court days before trial. This does not preclude supplemental briefs on specific issues that arise during the trial. Timelines for the submittal of trial briefs for matters coming before the court under the Lanterman-Petris-Short Act are set by the judge presiding over that matter at their discretion.

G. Jury Instructions and Verdict Forms

- ~~1. In every jury trial, before the first witness is sworn, six (6) court days prior to the first day of trial, each party must deliver to the judge, and serve upon all other parties, all proposed jury instructions on all applicable law disclosed by the pleadings, and all proposed verdict forms.~~
- ~~2. Before closing argument begins, each party must deliver to the judge and serve upon all other parties any additional proposed jury instructions on questions of law arising from the evidence that were not disclosed by the pleadings.~~
- ~~3. Each proposed jury instructions must be printed in black ink on a separate piece of paper. Proposed instructions must not identify the requesting party or any party or counsel in the case. The jury instructions must be assembled in a packet with a face sheet that lists all requested instructions and the requesting parties.~~
- ~~4. Timelines for the submittal of jury instructions and verdict forms for matters coming before the court under the Lanterman-Petris-Short Act are set by the judge presiding over that matter at their discretion.~~

G. Service of Trial Documents

All documents authorized by this rule that a party files with or otherwise submits to the court must be served by a means that is reasonably calculated to assure delivery to all other parties by the earlier of (1) the time when delivery to the court is due under this rule, or (2) the time when the document is actually delivered to the court. Such means include, but are not limited to, personal delivery, facsimile transmission (fax), email, and other means of electronic transmission that are no slower than fax

(Adopted 1/1/1997, Repealed 1/1/2021, Reinstated/Eff and renumbered 7/1/2023, Formerly Rule 4.9, Rev. 7/1/2024, 1/1/2025, [1/1/2027](#))

4.11 VOIR DIRE

The trial judge shall conduct general voir dire [and](#) Counsel will be permitted to conduct supplemental questioning.

(Adopted 1/1/1997, Repealed 1/1/2021, Reinstated/Eff and renumbered 7/1/2023, Formerly Rule 4.10, [1/1/2027](#))

4.14 DISCOVERY FACILITATOR PROGRAM

A. Policy of the Sonoma County Superior Court

It shall be the policy of the Sonoma County Superior Court to encourage use of the Discovery Facilitator Program in connection with any discovery dispute that arises in a civil case. Participation in the Discovery Facilitator Program shall be deemed to satisfy a party's obligation to meet and confer under applicable law. All Discovery Facilitator Program related documents, with the exception of the moving papers and any opposition and reply thereto, shall be submitted to the Civil Clerk's office for review and processing. It is intended that participation in the Discovery Facilitator Program shall not delay the scheduling or hearing of any discovery motion.

NOTE: CODE OF CIVIL PROCEDURE § 1013 SHALL APPLY TO ALL NOTICES SERVED PURSUANT TO THIS RULE.

B. Discovery Facilitator Panel

A list of qualified discovery facilitators shall be maintained at the Sonoma County Superior Court, with the assistance of the Sonoma County Bar Association. Each panelist must be an active member of the State Bar with at least ten (10) years' experience, or a retired judge, and approved by the Presiding Judge or the Supervising Judge of the Civil Division of the Sonoma County Superior Court.

C. Participation by Stipulation

A discovery dispute or potential dispute may be referred to the Discovery Facilitator Program pursuant to stipulation by the parties or their counsel of record. See subsection 4.14 E for additional rules regarding the section of a discovery facilitator.

D. Mandatory Participation

[At any time after the filing of discovery motion, the Court may, in its discretion, issue an Order referring the motion to the Discovery Facilitator Program. Once such order is made for a particular discovery motion, participation in the Discovery](#)

Facilitator Program is mandatory. ~~The Court may require participation in the Discovery Facilitator Program in the following instances:~~

- ~~1. At any time after the filing of a discovery motion, the Court may, in its discretion, issue an Order referring the motion to the Discovery Facilitator Program. In the event any party desires not to submit the motion to the Discovery Facilitator Program, within five (5) calendar days of service of the order referring the case to the Discovery Facilitator Program, such party may file with the Civil Clerk's office a "Notice of Intent to Opt Out of Discovery Facilitator Program", and the order issued pursuant to this subparagraph shall be vacated.~~
- ~~2. In the event any party desires a dispute or potential dispute to be included in the Discovery Facilitator Program, such party may request referral to the program in paragraph 19 (entitled, "Other Issues") of the Case Management Statement. The Court shall hear from all parties on the issue at the case management conference, and shall determine, in its discretion, whether such dispute or potential dispute shall be included in the Discovery Facilitator Program.~~
- ~~3. In the event a party desires that a dispute or potential dispute be included in the Discovery Facilitator Program prior to the time of the next scheduled case management conference, or at a time when no further case management conferences are scheduled, such party may bring a motion in accordance with Sonoma County Local Rules, Rule 5, and applicable provisions of the Code of Civil Procedure and California Rules of Court, for referral of the matter to the Discovery Facilitator Program. Such motion must be accompanied by a declaration setting forth a basis for good cause for inclusion in the program.~~

E. Selection of a Discovery Facilitator

Once the Court has issued an order referring the discovery motion(s) into the Discovery Facilitator Program the judicial assistant shall select at random, a number of names from the list of potential discovery facilitator equal to the number of sides directly involved in the discovery motion, plus one and mail to the parties or their counsel of record, the "Notice and Order Re: Inclusion in Discovery Facilitator Program".

~~The moving party shall contact opposing party(ies) and make a reasonable and good faith attempt to informally select a discovery facilitator from the list of potential discovery facilitators maintained by the Sonoma County Superior Court. The parties shall promptly notify the Court by filing a stipulation with the Civil Clerk's office if they choose a facilitator on their own. If the parties cannot agree, the moving party shall contact the Assigned Judge's judicial assistant, and the discovery facilitator shall be selected as follows:~~

~~The judicial assistant shall select, at random, a number of names from the list of potential discovery facilitators equal to the number of sides, plus one, and mail to the parties or their counsel of record, the “Notice and Order Re: Inclusion in Discovery Facilitator Program”.~~

1. Each side has five (5) calendar days from the date of service by mail of the “Notice and Order Re: Inclusion in Discovery Facilitator Program” to file a written rejection entitled “Notice of Rejection of Discovery Facilitator” (to be submitted to the Civil Clerk’s office), of no more than one name on the list. If there are two or more parties on a side, they must join in the rejection of a single name.
2. Promptly on the expiration of the five (5) day period, the judicial assistant shall appoint, at random, one of the persons on the list whose name was not rejected, if more than one name remains.
3. The judicial assistant shall assign the case to a discovery facilitator and shall serve by mail the “Notice and Order of Appointment of Discovery Facilitator” on all parties or their counsel of record. Upon receipt of the “Notice and Order of Appointment of Discovery Facilitator”, the parties shall forthwith deliver to the facilitator copies of all pleadings concerning the discovery dispute.

The discovery facilitator shall establish the procedures in each case to be utilized by the parties, through telephone conferences, exchange(s) of letters or emails, and/or in-person conferences for discussion and possible resolution of the discovery dispute.

F. Compensation

The discovery facilitator shall devote up to two (2) hours, without charge to any of the parties, in an attempt to facilitate resolution of the discovery dispute. In the event a resolution cannot be achieved within that period of time, the parties may agree to continue with the discovery facilitator provided that agreement is reached between and among the parties and the discovery facilitator as to compensation of the discovery facilitator.

G. Resolution

In the event a resolution of the discovery dispute is achieved, the facilitator shall notify the Court in writing of the disposition and shall serve a copy on all parties, not later than five (5) court days before the scheduled law and motion hearing date. In the event the parties are unable to resolve the discovery dispute with the discovery facilitator, the discovery facilitator shall prepare and serve on all parties or their counsel of record a report which contains the following information:

1. A brief summary of the dispute and contentions of the parties;
2. Any legal or factual analysis made by the discovery facilitator in connection with their role in attempting to resolve this dispute;
3. A statement indicating whether moving and/or opposing parties met and conferred in good faith.

The facilitator shall file such report with the court no later than five (5) court days before the scheduled law and motion hearing date for this discovery issue.

(Eff. 1/1/2008; Rev. 1/1/2009, 7/1/2009, 1/1/2014, 7/1/2015, 1/1/2016, Rev. and renumbered 1/1/2023, Rev. 7/1/2024, [1/1/2027](#))

4.17 DEMURRER FACILITATOR PROGRAM

A. Policy of the Sonoma County Superior Court

It shall be the policy of the Sonoma County Superior Court to encourage use of the Demurrer Facilitator Program in connection with any demurrer that is filed with respect to any pleading in a civil case. Participation in the Demurrer Facilitator Program shall be deemed to satisfy a party's obligation to meet and confer under applicable law. All Demurrer Facilitator Program related documents, with the exception of the moving papers and any opposition and reply thereto, shall be submitted to the Civil Clerk's office for review and processing. It is intended that: 1) participation in the Demurrer Facilitator Program shall not delay the scheduling or hearing of any demurrer; and 2) demurrer facilitators shall not render substantive findings of fact or law, as their purpose shall be to encourage voluntary resolution through a facilitative process.

NOTE: CODE OF CIVIL PROCEDURE § 1013 SHALL APPLY TO ALL NOTICES SERVED PURSUANT TO THIS RULE.

B. Demurrer Facilitator Panel

A list of qualified demurrer facilitators shall be maintained at the Sonoma County Superior Court, with the assistance of the Sonoma County Bar Association. Each panelist must be an active member of the State Bar with at least ten (10) years' experience, or a retired judge, and approved by the Presiding Judge or the Supervising Judge of the Civil Division of the Sonoma County Superior Court.

C. Participation by Stipulation

A dispute or potential dispute regarding a demurrer and any corresponding motion (i.e., demurrer and motion to strike) may be referred to the Demurrer Facilitator Program pursuant to stipulation by the parties or their counsel of record.

D. Mandatory Participation

At any time after the filing of a demurrer or motion to strike as to any pleading, the Court may, in its discretion, issue an order referring the motion to the Demurrer Facilitator Program. Once such order is made for a particular pleading motion, participation in the Demurrer Facilitator Program is mandatory.

~~The Court may require participation in the Demurrer Facilitator Program in the following instances:~~

- ~~1. At any time after the filing of a demurrer the Court may, in its discretion, issue an order referring the demurrer to the Demurrer Facilitator Program. In the event any party desires not to submit the motion to the Demurrer Facilitator Program, within five (5) calendar days of service of the order referring the case to the Demurrer Facilitator Program such party may file with the Civil Clerk's office a "Notice of Intent to Opt Out of Demurrer Facilitator Program," and the order issued pursuant to this subparagraph shall be vacated.~~
- ~~2. In the event any party desires a dispute or potential dispute to be included in the Demurrer Facilitator Program, such party may request referral to the program in paragraph 19 (entitled, "Other Issues") of the Case Management Statement. The Court shall hear from all parties on the issue at the Case Management Conference and shall determine, in its discretion, whether such dispute or potential dispute shall be included in the Demurrer Facilitator Program.~~
- ~~3. In the event a party desires that a dispute or potential dispute be included in the Demurrer Facilitator Program prior to the time of the next scheduled Case Management Conference, or at a time when no further Case Management Conference is scheduled, such party may bring a motion in accordance with Sonoma County Local Rule 5, and applicable provisions of the Code of Civil Procedure and California Rules of Court, for referral of the matter to the Demurrer Facilitator Program. Such motion must be accompanied by a declaration setting forth a basis for good cause for inclusion in the program.~~

E. Selection of a Demurrer Facilitator

Once the Court has issued an order referring the pleading motion(s) into the Demurrer Facilitator Program the judicial assistant shall select, at random, a number of names from the list of potential discovery facilitators equal to the number of sides directly involved in the discovery motion, plus one, and mail to the parties or their counsel of record, the "Notice and Order Re: Inclusion in Demurrer Facilitator Program".

~~The moving party shall contact opposing party(ies) and make a reasonable and good faith attempt to informally select a demurrer facilitator from the list of potential demurrer facilitators maintained by the Sonoma County Superior Court. The parties shall promptly notify the Court by filing a stipulation with the Civil Clerk's office if they choose a facilitator on their own. If the parties cannot agree, the moving party shall contact the Assigned Judge's judicial assistant, and the demurrer facilitator shall be~~

selected as follows:

~~1. The judicial assistant shall select, at random, a number of names from the list of potential demurrer facilitators equal to the number of sides, plus one, and mail or email to the parties or their counsel of record the “Notice and Order Re: Inclusion in Demurrer Facilitator Program.”~~

1. Each side has five (5) calendar days from the date of service of the “Notice and Order Re: Inclusion in Demurrer Facilitator Program” to file a written rejection entitled “Notice of Rejection of Demurrer Facilitator” to be submitted to the Civil Clerk’s office, of no more than one name on the list. If there are two or more parties on a side, they must join in the rejection of a single name.
2. Promptly on the expiration of the five (5) day period, the judicial assistant shall appoint, at random, one of the persons on the list whose name was not rejected, if more than one name remains.
3. The judicial assistant shall assign the case to a demurrer facilitator and shall serve by mail or email the “Notice and Order of Appointment of Demurrer Facilitator” on all parties or their counsel of record. Upon receipt of the “Notice and Order of Appointment of Demurrer Facilitator,” the parties shall forthwith deliver to the demurrer facilitator copies of all pleadings concerning the discovery dispute. The demurrer facilitator shall establish the procedures in each case to be utilized by the parties, through telephone conferences, exchange(s) of letters or emails, and/or in-person conferences for discussion and possible resolution of the dispute.

F. Compensation

The demurrer facilitator shall devote up to (2) hours, without charge to any of the parties, in an attempt to facilitate resolution of the dispute. In the event a resolution cannot be achieved within that period of time, the parties may agree to continue with the demurrer facilitator provided that agreement is reached between and among the parties and the demurrer facilitator as to compensation of the demurrer facilitator.

G. Resolution

In the event a resolution of the discovery dispute is achieved, the facilitator shall notify the Court in writing of the disposition and shall serve a copy on all parties, not later than five (5) court days before the scheduled law and motion hearing date.

In the event the parties are unable to resolve the discovery dispute with the discovery facilitator, the discovery facilitator shall prepare and serve on all parties or their counsel of record a report which contains the following information:

1. A brief summary of the dispute and contentions of the parties;

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2. Any legal or factual analysis made by the discovery facilitator in connection with their role in attempting to resolve this dispute;
3. A statement indicating whether moving and/or opposing parties met and conferred in good faith.

The facilitator shall file such report with the court, no later than five (5) court days before the scheduled law and motion hearing date for this discovery issue.

(Eff. 7/1/2014, Rev. 7/1/2015, 1/1/2016, Rev. and renumbered 1/1/2023, [1/1/2027](#))

RULE 5 RULES APPLICABLE TO CIVIL LAW AND MOTION PROCEEDINGS

5.1 SCHEDULING

A. Law & Motion

Civil law and motion matters will be heard at such times and places as designated by the Assigned Judge. The calendar will include all civil law and motion matters except DMV Writs of Mandate, Unlawful Detainer matters (see these rules, Rule 2.2D), Orders of Examination (see these rules, Rule 5.2), and Orders to Show Cause for Injunctions Prohibiting Harassment, which will be heard in other courtrooms as designated by the Presiding and/or Supervising Judge.

B. Court Clerk Sets Hearings

All civil law and motion matters will be scheduled for a hearing date, time, and location at the Clerk's Office upon filing all moving papers and payment of any applicable fees. Moving parties are to ensure that any opposing party receives timely notice of the assigned hearing date.

~~C. Parties shall deliver courtesy copies of all documents filed in connection with a law and motion proceeding directly into the drop box for the department hearing the matter. Courtesy copies do not need to be file endorsed.~~

C. Dropping a Hearing Date

If any matter scheduled on the law and motion calendar is resolved, dismissed, settled or becomes moot for any reason, the moving party shall immediately notify the judicial assistant for the Assigned Judge if the motion is to be dropped from the law and motion calendar. Said notification may be made by telephone, followed by a letter of confirmation.

D. Appendix Requirement

When a party is required to provide an appendix of authorities other than California cases, statutes, constitutional provisions, or state or local rules pursuant to California Rules of Court, Rule 3.1113(i)(1), the appendix shall be lodged electronically or in the Clerk's office.

(Eff. 1/1/1997; Rev. 1/1/2006, 7/1/2007, 7/1/2008, 1/1/2013, 7/1/2014, 7/1/18; 7/1/19, 1/1/2020; Rev. and renumbered 1/1/2021, Rev. 7/1/2024, 1/1/2025, 1/1/2027)

5.2 **ORDER OF EXAMINATION CALENDAR**

A. Hearings

The Order of Examination Calendar will be heard as designated by the Supervising Judge of the Civil Division. Hearing dates will be designated by the department assigned to hear the matter and indicated when the order is returned to the applicant for service; the court cannot accommodate requests for specific dates. No tentative rulings will be made available for matters on this calendar.

B. Representation of Corporation

Corporations in civil actions must be represented by legal counsel at the order of examination hearing.

C. Judgment Debtor's Failure to Appear

If the party named in the Application and Order for Appearance and Examination fails to appear at the time and place specified in the order, and proper proof of service of the order has been filed with the clerk, a warrant for the arrest of the party may issue. The judgment creditor must prepare a declaration and warrant for the judge's signature. Such declaration and warrant must be delivered to the Clerk's Office within six (6) months of the issuance order. A new Order of Examination will be required if the warrant is not issued within the six (6) months' time period. Subsequent warrants must be accompanied by an original declaration.

D. Service of Warrants

All warrants must be served by the Sheriff's Department.

E. In-Custody Judgment Debtors

The Sheriff's Office will notify the Clerk's Office if the judgment debtor is taken into custody. Upon receipt of this notification, the Clerk's Office will arrange a bail hearing date on the next misdemeanor calendar in the Criminal Division. Within their discretion, the judge presiding at the misdemeanor calendar hearing shall effect the release of the judgment debtor upon the condition that they appear at a designated Order of Examination Calendar in the future. The clerk shall give notice to the judgment creditor of the date, time, and location of that hearing by mailing a copy of the minute order of the bail hearing.

F. Warrant of Attachment/Contempt of Court Hearings

A fine will be ordered upon the court's finding of contempt for failure to appear at the Order of Examination. When bail has been posted by the judgment debtor, the fine will be deducted from the bail. The balance of the bail will be returned to the

judgment debtor unless the parties stipulate or the court enters a turnover order transferring all or part of the bail to the judgment creditor or another third party. Bail posted by an individual other than the judgment debtor will be returned to the depositor and the judgment debtor will be ordered to pay the contempt fine to the court. Failure to pay said fine may subject the judgment debtor to further sanctions.

(Eff. 1/1/1997; Rev. 7/1/2002, 7/1/2008, 7/1/2011, 1/1/2014; Rev. and renumbered 1/1/2021, 7/1/2024, [1/1/2027](#))

5.3 **CONTINUANCES**

A. **Requests for Continuances by Stipulation**

~~Requests for continuances (along~~ [Along](#) with the required fees) or notification of dropping of law and motion matters must be filed by the moving party with the Civil Clerk's Office by 4:00 p.m. at least three (3) court days prior to the scheduled hearing date. The moving party must also deliver, on the day of the filing, a courtesy copy of the documents (these do not need to be file endorsed) to the respective department assigned to the matter. Only one continuance by stipulation will be granted; after that, if the case cannot proceed the court may drop the matter or require that it be re-noticed.

B. **Notice**

It is the responsibility of the moving party to notify the judicial assistant for the Assigned Judge when a pending motion may be dropped due to a stipulation or for any other reason. No hearing will be automatically dropped from the calendar.

(Eff. 1/1/1997; Rev. 7/1/2004, 7/1/2008, 1/1/2014, 7/1/2024, [1/1/2027](#))

5.4 **MEET AND CONFER CONFERENCE**

A. **Moving Party's Requirements**

Prior to the hearing date on all motions, the moving party must make a reasonable and good faith attempt to informally resolve the motion with the opposing party(s) or attorney(s) in person or by telephone, and in accordance with applicable law. The conference must occur not less than five (5) calendar days preceding the noticed or continued date of hearing as to all motions, except motions for summary judgment and/or motions for summary adjudication of issues. With reference to any motion for summary judgment and/or motion for summary adjudication of issues, the conference must occur not less than ten (10) calendar days preceding the noticed or continued date of hearing on such motion.

B. **Opposing Party's Requirements**

In response, the opposing party(s) or attorney(s), during the conference, must also

make a reasonable and good faith attempt to informally resolve the motion with the moving party or their attorney in person or by telephone and in accordance with applicable law. In the event the motion is not so resolved, then the moving party must file not less than two (2) court days before the hearing date a declaration pursuant to Code of Civil Procedure § 2016.040 setting forth facts applicable to the meet and confer conference. Orders of Examination are exempt from the requirement of this section.

(Eff. 1/1/1997; Rev. 7/1/2004, 7/1/2008, 1/1/2021, [1/1/2027](#))

5.5 **HEARINGS, TENTATIVE RULINGS AND ORAL ARGUMENTS**

A. **Tentative Rulings**

During the court day preceding each law and motion calendar, by 2:00 p.m., the Court will issue a tentative ruling for each matter noticed on such calendar. Tentative rulings may be obtained online between the hours of 2:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. on the day before the hearing on the court's website at www.sonoma.courts.ca.gov (Click on the "Online Services" tab on the home page, select "Tentative Rulings" in the drop-down menu, and then click on the link to "Civil"). A copy of the tentative ruling will also be posted outside the Assigned Judge's courtroom. Where appearance has been required or invited by the court, then oral argument may be presented. Appearance is always required on small claims law and motion matters and on all claims of exemption, unless otherwise stated on the tentative ruling.

B. **Oral Argument Time Limits**

Oral argument of all counsel and parties in any law and motion matter shall not exceed 20 minutes in length.

C. **Non-Appeances**

When the moving party fails to appear at the date and time scheduled for a hearing, the matter may be dropped, continued or ruled upon at the discretion of the Assigned Judge with or without the request of the responding party(ies).

D. **Remote Appearances**

Subject to the court's discretion, a party, witness, or counsel may make [remote telephonic or video](#) appearances before the court as set forth in California Rules of Court, Rule 3.6702.

(Eff. 1/1/1997; Rev. 7/1/2004, 7/1/2008; Rev. and renumbered 1/1/2021, 7/1/2024, 7/1/2026, [1/1/2027](#))

5.6 EX PARTE APPLICATIONS

A. Subject Matter Requirement

Each request for an ex parte application, notice, and declaration must comply with California Rules of Court, Rules 3.1200 et seq. All civil ex parte law and motion applications including applications for temporary relief, orders to show cause, orders shortening time or extending time, extraordinary writs, and other provisional remedies, except as otherwise provided, must be presented to the Assigned Judge at the times and locations as designated on the Court's Website, the sole exception to this rule is found in Rule 17.17 herein.

1. Exclusions

The following matters shall be deemed excluded from the ex parte applications presented under this rule and shall be governed by other applicable sections of the Sonoma County Superior Court Rules, to wit: family law matters, domestic violence and civil harassment matters.

B. Notice Requirement

Each application must include a written declaration showing that notice of the ex parte application has been given to the opposing party or counsel no later than 10:00 AM the court day before the ex parte [California Rules of Court, Rules 3.1200 - 3.1207]. The application must provide the details for the relief requested, including whether the opposing party is represented by counsel, the nature of the contact, and whether such party has agreed to the requested order or a factual showing in support of any application requested to be issued without notice.

~~C. The following matters shall be deemed excluded from the ex parte applications presented under this rule and shall be governed by other applicable sections of the Sonoma County Superior Court Rules, to wit: family law matters, domestic violence and civil harassment matters.~~

- C. Each application must also include a declaration showing that there is a compelling need for emergency handling of the ex parte application and for the requested relief and why it should not be processed routinely by the Civil Clerk's Office.

D. Meet & Confer Requirement

If the application is opposed, the attorneys must meet and confer prior to presentation of the ex parte.

(Eff. 1/1/1997; Rev. 1/1/2006, 1/1/2007, 7/1/2008, 1/1/2014, 7/1/2017; Rev. and renumbered 1/1/2021, Rev 7/1/2024, 1/1/2027)

RULE 9 RULES APPLICABLE TO FAMILY LAW PROCEEDINGS

9.11 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE RESTRAINING ORDERS (FAMILY CODE §§ 6200-6389)

- A. All requests for domestic violence restraining orders must adhere to the requirements of Family Code section 6200 et seq. When submitting a request for a domestic violence restraining order, the requesting party or counsel shall simultaneously include proposed orders. This includes a pre-filled and completed DV-110 with any required attachments, such as a DV-140 if there is a request for child custody and visitation orders. Failure to complete the proposed orders may result in the imposition of sanctions.
- B. [If notice is provided, opposition](#) ~~Opposition~~ papers must be received by 8:30 a.m. on the day of the review. A copy of the opposition papers shall also be served personally, by fax or e-mail on the opposing party by 8:00 a.m. on the day of judicial review. If service of the opposition papers is not possible, a declaration shall be filed providing the reasons for the lack of service.
- C. Judicial review of the requests for temporary orders shall be conducted Monday through Friday beginning at 8:30 a.m. by a judicial officer designated by the Presiding Judge. At the discretion of the judicial officer, oral argument may be taken. If this is to occur, the court will notify counsel or parties by noon on the day of the review. If counsel or parties wish to appear by telephone, their pleadings shall indicate.
- D. [A domestic violence restraining order which includes a minor may be modified by the Juvenile Dependency Court, see Local Rule 10.10.](#)

(Eff. 7/1/13; Renumbered 1/1/2016; 7/1/2017, 7/1/2024, 7/1/2025, 1/1/2026, 7/1/2026, [1/1/2027](#))

9.12 EX PARTE/EMERGENCY FAMILY LAW ORDERS

It is the policy of this court not to grant ex parte/emergency orders changing the status quo with respect to child custody, parenting plans or residence exclusion without a very strong factual showing of grave danger or severe detriment to the child prior to the time the issues can be properly set for a noticed hearing with both parties present and afforded an opportunity to be heard. The court may in its discretion refer the matter to Family Court Services for a child custody recommending counseling appointment prior to signing an order shortening time for the prompt calendaring of the matter at the earliest available option on the Court's calendar.

A. Declarations

1. Factual Basis

All declarations shall be based upon personal knowledge of the declarant. Declarations containing hearsay are subject to a motion to strike the whole unless the hearsay is substantiated by a supplemental declaration by the hearsay declarant.

2. Extraordinary Relief

A very specific declaration must be given when extraordinary relief is sought. A specific declaration includes the dates of incidents, detailed descriptive facts and specific harm threatened or actually caused. Conclusions, feelings, wishes or fears alone will not support an ex parte/emergency order. Extraordinary relief includes without limitation: temporary custody of children, temporary possession and use of personal property, limited contact with children, or removal of one party from the family residence.

3. Declarations Upon Ex Parte/Emergency Application

Ex parte/Emergency orders are sometimes rendered without giving an opportunity for the parties to be personally seen and heard. The temptation to indulge on paper in unrestrained exaggeration is ever-present. Concealment of relevant facts is a danger. Accordingly, attorneys, parties and persons employed to type pleadings (typing services) shall adhere to the highest standards of full disclosure in preparing the declarations in support of ex parte/emergency orders.

4. Change of Status Quo

THERE IS AN ABSOLUTE DUTY TO DISCLOSE THE FACT THAT A REQUESTED EX PARTE/EMERGENCY ORDER WILL RESULT IN A CHANGE OF THE STATUS QUO.

B. Notice

Notice of the intent to file an ex-parte/emergency request for temporary family law orders must be given to the opposing party or attorney by 10:00 a.m. one court day before the application is scheduled to be reviewed by the assigned judicial officer. This notice requirement can be waived by the court if (1) notice is impossible, or (2) notice would frustrate the very purpose of the order, or (3) immediate and irreparable harm could be suffered if notice were given. Local Form FL-016 and Judicial Council form FL-303 have been adopted for optional use in advising the Court that you have given notice to the other side. See either form for information

for applicants. A completed FL-016 or FL-303 must be submitted to the court when your request for temporary/emergency orders is submitted. This section shall not apply to requests pursuant to the Domestic Violence Prevention Act per California Rule of Court, Rule 5.165.

C. Delivery of Application

The application, including all declarations, attachments, and documents intended for court review shall be delivered to the opposing party/attorney by 11:00 a.m. one court day before the application is scheduled to be reviewed by the assigned judicial officer. A blank copy of Local Form CA-106 must be delivered to the opposing party/attorney with the applicant's documents. This section shall not apply to requests pursuant to the Domestic Violence Prevention Act per California Rule of Court 5.165.

D. Opposition

If notice was provided, any opposition ~~Opposition~~ papers must be received by the Court on the day the application is scheduled to be reviewed by the assigned judicial officer. A copy of the opposition papers shall also be served personally, by fax or e-mail (only if the party is represented by counsel or a self-represented party has consented to email service) on the opposing party or attorney by 9:30 a.m. on the day of judicial review. Local Form CA-106 has been adopted for optional use in submitting opposition. Information for the opposing party is included with form CA-106.

E. Judicial Review

Judicial review of the applications for ex parte/emergency family law orders shall be conducted Monday through Friday beginning at 10:00 a.m. by a judicial officer designated by the Presiding Judge.

At the discretion of the judicial officer, oral argument may be taken. If this is to occur, the court will notify counsel or parties by noon on the day of the review. If counsel or parties wish to appear by telephone or videoconference, their pleadings shall so indicate.

F. Set Aside of Ex Parte/Emergency Order (Domestic Violence and Family Law)

If a responding party requests an ex parte/emergency order be set aside prior to the date set for hearing on the Domestic Calendar, notice shall be given to the moving party in the same manner as described in Sonoma County Local Rules, Rule 9.12 and 9.13. The judicial officer may order an earlier hearing date or modify the orders on a proper showing in lieu of setting aside the orders.

(Eff. 7/1/2005; Rev. 1/1/2007, 7/1/2007, 1/1/2008, 1/1/2009, 7/1/2009, 1/1/2010, 7/1/2010; Revised and Renumbered 7/1/2011 – formerly Rule 9.11; Rev. 1/1/2012, 7/1/2012, 7/1/2013, 7/1/2014; 7/1/2015; Renumbered 1/1/2016, 1/1/2019, 7/1/2024, 7/1/2026, [1/1/2027](#))

9.17 PREPARATION OF ORDERS AFTER HEARING

- A.** Unless otherwise ordered by the court, the moving party must, within ten (10) days of the ruling, prepare a written order following any hearing. Parties shall follow the procedures outlined in California Rules of Court, Rule 5.125.
- B.** On the Child Support Calendar, the order shall be prepared and presented to the court for approval before the end of the court session whenever possible.
- C.** On the Domestic Violence Calendar, the order shall be prepared and presented to the court for approval before the end of the court session.
- D.** Any order that includes an order for child or family support shall have attached the following:
 - 1. A Judicial Council approved computer-generated support calculation. If the parties do not agree upon a single calculation, each party may attach a computer-generated calculation; and
 - 2. Notice of Rights and Responsibilities Regarding Child Support, Childcare and Healthcare Costs and Reimbursement Procedures if the order provides for payment of childcare costs and/or healthcare costs (Local Form FL-192).

In addition, the parties shall submit a completed Child Support Case Registry Form (Judicial Council form FL-191) with the order. This form is not required if the local child support agency is an intervener in the case.

- ~~**E.** The Court shall set a compliance calendar date within 90 days after the hearing to assure the Order After Hearing is filed.~~
- E.** In accordance with Local Rule 9.4.B.2, for cases in which both parties are self-represented, the Court may direct the Family Law Facilitator/Self Help Center staff to complete Judgment documents based on settlements reached during Settlement Conferences at court, or after Trial. The Family Law Facilitator/Self Help Center is not limited to ten (10) days in which to draft the Judgment.
 - 1. After Settlement Conference, if the parties are not at court to review and sign the Judgment, the draft shall be mailed to the parties, who shall have twenty (20) days from the date the drafted Judgment is mailed in which to approve or refuse to sign the drafted Judgment.

2. If the Judgment is approved by the parties, they shall cooperate in signing the Judgment and any other necessary documents and submit them for filing prior to the compliance date. The parties may use the service of the Family Law Facilitator/Self Help Center staff for assistance in signing and submitting the Judgment documents. Once the Judgment is filed, the compliance date shall be dropped.
3. If either party refuses to approve the drafted Judgment, the refusing party shall provide the other party, in writing, with an itemization of objections and a proposed alternative to the drafted judgment.
 - a. If the refusal is resolved, and parties agree to sign the proposed Judgment or an alternative to the Judgment, they shall follow the procedures after approval as stated in #2 above.
 - b. If the parties do not resolve the refusal, they shall appear at the compliance hearing. Ten (10) days prior to the hearing, the refusing party(ies) shall file and serve a declaration itemizing the items refused and the reasons for the refusal.
4. After trial, the drafted Judgment shall be submitted directly to the judge for approval.

(Eff. 1/1/2006; Rev. 1/1/2007, 7/1/2008, 7/1/2009, 7/1/2010; Revised and Renumbered 7/1/2011 – formerly Rule 9.14, 7/1/12, Rev., 1/1/2016, 1/1/2017, 1/1/2021, Revised and renumbered 1/1/2016, Rev. 7/1/2025, [1/1/2027](#))

9.20 FAMILY LAW SETTLEMENT CONFERENCES

A. Family law judicial officers may refer cases for a Settlement Conference which shall be conducted by a settlement conference officer as directed by the family law judicial officers. When setting a settlement conference date, the Court may set a Case Management Conference or Master Calendar date following the settlement conference date. The Court will serve all parties personally or by mail.

B. Interdisciplinary Settlement Conference Pilot Program

For child custody matters, the Court may, in its discretion, appoint a panel to assist the Court and the parties at the settlement conference. The panel may include attorneys, mediators, and/or mental health professionals. Experience requirements for panelists may be obtained from the Family Law Supervising Judge's Judicial Assistant or from the Court's website. Any such panelists will be appointed to serve as the Court's own expert pursuant to Evidence Code § 730, and the Court may find good cause to permit the panelists to review Family Court Services' recommendations and other confidential information in the file, pursuant to Family

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Code § 3025.5.

- C. To request a Settlement Conference, parties (or their attorney, if represented) shall submit Local Form FL-~~092074~~, [Case Management Conference \(request\)](#). ~~Request/Response to Request for Settlement Conference or Settlement Conference and Trial. The requesting party shall provide information and status of the matter to support the request for a Settlement Conference.~~

The family law judicial officer will review [the Case Management Conference request to determine whether](#) ~~the case could benefit from a Settlement Conference, cases set on the domestic, Case Management Conference, Child Support, and Trial calendars. If the court determines~~ the case could benefit from a Settlement Conference, [a Case Management Conference or a Master Calendar date for further setting](#). ~~an order will be entered and a date for the conference will be set as well as a Case Management Conference date.~~ The court will serve all parties with an order regarding the [court date](#). ~~conference personally or by mail.~~

Settlement Conferences will be scheduled only if Preliminary Declarations of Disclosure have been exchanged and an FL-141 has been filed by both parties or the requesting party has complied and there is good cause for proceeding without the other party having filed the Preliminary Declaration of Disclosure and FL-141.

- ~~D. — The request will be reviewed by a family law judicial officer. If the judicial officer determines a Settlement Conference is appropriate, the Court will issue an order and serve the parties and/or attorneys with the order setting both a Settlement Conference and a Case Management Conference. If the party requesting a Settlement Conference and/or Trial has provided a Preliminary Declaration of Disclosure and the responding party has not, if the Court does not set a Settlement Conference and/or Trial Date, the Court will place the matter on the next scheduled Case Management Conference at which time the Court may issue orders relating to the non-complying party's failure to exchange Preliminary Declaration of Disclosure, including, but not limited to, an order to comply, sanctions, and setting a trial and settlement conference as originally requested.~~

- D. Each party shall serve and submit Local Form FL-048, Settlement Conference Statement/Trial Brief prior to the conference. The Statement shall be filed ten (10) calendar days prior to the Settlement Conference. The Statement shall be stamped as "received." Failure to submit a Statement in a timely manner by both counsel for the parties shall result in the Settlement Conference being dropped. The failure of one party or counsel to submit a Statement in a timely manner may result in the Court rescheduling the conference ~~with the same panelist~~ and/or ordering the non-complying party to pay sanctions.

- E. Any request to drop or continue the Settlement Conference, ~~and~~ Case Management Conference [or Master Calendar](#) must be made to the Family Law Judicial Assistant by 5:00 p.m. at least three (3) court days prior to the [court date](#) ~~conference~~. Absent

extraordinary circumstances, making a request in an untimely manner or failing to appear at the [court date Settlement Conference](#) may result in the Court ordering such party to pay sanctions. ~~The Court will not drop the Case Management Conference unless a Judgment resolving all issues is submitted to the Court prior to the Case Management Conference date.~~

F. Appearances

Each party and principal trial attorney for each party shall attend the Settlement Conference. The Settlement Conference shall be conducted by a Settlement Conference officer to be appointed by the court. Unless notified otherwise, appearance by all parties is mandatory. An attorney or party who fails to attend or participate effectively in any Settlement Conference may be subject to sanctions. Any alternative to personal appearance shall be pre-approved by a judicial officer. When the local child support agency has intervened in a case, the agency will determine if its appearance is necessary and notify the Court whether it intends to appear. The agency may appear by telephone [or videoconference](#).

Settlement Conferences will last a maximum of three (3) hours or until the parties are excused by the Settlement Conference officer. Parties and counsel are expected to be present for the entire Settlement Conference, with the exception of the local child support agency, which may appear for support-related issues alone. If the agency is a party to the action, any settlement involving support issues requires the agency's signature.

~~G. — If a complete settlement is not reached at the Settlement Conference, the case shall remain set for a Case Management Conference so the court can determine the next steps needed to resolve the case.~~

(Eff. 1/1/2005; Revised and renumbered 1/1/2016, Rev. 7/1/2022, 7/1/2024, 1/1/2025, 7/1/2025; 1/1/2026, [1/1/2027](#))

9.23 TRIAL AND EVIDENTIARY HEARINGS

These proceedings are intended to take more time so that the parties may call and question witnesses, testify themselves, and submit documentary evidence for the court to review.

A. Setting Issues for Trial

1. A family law contested cause may be set for trial by filing Sonoma County Local Form FL-074, Request/Response to Request for Settlement Conference, Trial or Default Hearing. The request for trial may be presented to the judicial officer at the domestic calendar hearing. If no hearing is pending, the request shall be served and filed with the family law clerk. The request for trial does not need to be filed as a joint request of the parties.

2. For contested causes set for trial directly from a domestic calendar, the judicial officer retains the discretion to set one or more of the following hearings: (1) Case Management Conference; (2) Settlement Conference.
3. Upon the filing of the Sonoma County Local Form FL-074 Request/Response to Request for Settlement Conference, Trial or Default Hearing, a Master Calendar date ~~Case Management Conference~~ shall be scheduled before the judicial officer assigned to the case pursuant to Sonoma County Local Rule, Rule 9.2. If on the FL-074 both parties indicate their desired trial dates, desired discovery cutoff date and accurate time estimate, the Court will set trial dates accordingly. ~~Case Management Conference may be scheduled within thirty (30) days of the filing of the request for trial. The court shall serve all parties or attorneys with a notice of Case Management Conference.~~
4. ~~If it is determined that a trial is necessary, the Court shall either set the trial date far enough out for the parties to be able to comply with the discovery deadlines set forth in the California Code of Civil Procedure., or obtain a stipulation from the parties regarding the discovery cut-off dates and set the trial date accordingly.~~
5. No matter will be set for trial until and unless the parties have exchanged their Preliminary Declarations of Disclosure and, if required, filed form FL-141, Declaration Regarding Service of Declaration of Disclosure.

B. Case Management Conference

If the court sets a Case Management Conference in lieu of a Settlement Conference or trial date, the parties or attorneys shall file a Case Management Conference Statement, form FL-092, ten (10) calendar days prior to the conference. At the Case Management Conference, the court will review the status of the case and may make orders pursuant to Sonoma County Local Rule, Rule 9.10.

C. Statement of Issues

If a Settlement Conference Statement/Trial Brief ~~of Issues~~ was submitted for a settlement conference, it ~~the Statement of Issues~~ shall be deemed the Statement ~~of Issues~~ for trial and filed in the court file unless, at the time of the settlement conference, the party indicates they will be filing another Statement ~~of Issues~~ ten (10) calendar days prior to the trial date.

If a settlement conference was not held, the parties or attorneys shall file ~~a Statement of Issues for Settlement Conference or Trial, Sonoma County form FL002,~~ Local Form FL-048, Settlement Conference Statement/Trial Brief ten (10) calendar days prior to the trial date.

~~The statement of issues shall include all information requested in the Statement of Issues, Sonoma County form FL002.~~

D. Meet and Confer

The parties, and attorneys, if any, shall meet and confer in a good faith effort to resolve all of the issues in the case. The parties, and attorneys, if any, shall state in the statement of issues the dates they met and conferred.

E. Continuing a Trial

1. Continuing Trials by Stipulation

The court, upon a showing of good cause, may grant stipulated requests to continue a trial. The stipulated request shall be submitted to the assigned judicial officer by noon ten (10) calendar days prior to the hearing date. Counsel or parties shall submit a stipulation to continue, a declaration stating why the continuance is necessary, and a proposed order for continuance. The court has discretion to determine if good cause exists to grant the continuance of the hearing. Stipulation by itself does not constitute good cause for granting a continuance.

2. Continuing Trials by Motion

A request to advance or continue a trial may be set for a hearing at the direction of the judicial officer assigned to hear the case.

F. Contempt Proceedings

The defendant in contempt proceedings shall not be required to comply with the meet and confer rules set forth above or participate in the preparation of the statement of issues.

G. Master Calendar Call

All matters to be set for trial shall be called on the assigned Master Calendar, or on another date set by the judicial officer, which will not be considered the initial trial date for discovery purposes. A matter will not proceed to trial on the date of the Master Calendar, at which time a specific date and time for commencement of the trial will be set.

(Eff. 7/1/2005; Rev. 7/1/2006, 7/1/2007, 1/1/2008, 1/1/2009, 7/1/2009, 7/1/2010; Revised and Renumbered 7/1/2011 – formerly Rule 9.20; Renumbered 1/1/2012 – formerly Rule 9.21, Rev. 7/1/2012, Rev. 7/1/2013, 7/1/2015, 1/1/2021, Renumbered 1/1/2016; 7/1/2017, 7/1/2025; 1/1/2026, [1/1/2027](#))

9.24 CHILD CUSTODY TRIALS

Either party may request an expedited custody trial on custody issues by filing a Request for Settlement Conference/Request for Settlement Conference and Trial, Sonoma County form FL-074. The request for trial does not need to be a joint request of the parties. The parties are not required to complete a Statement of Issues prior to trial.

~~The Court shall set a Case Management Conference on the domestic calendar approximately two weeks after receiving the request for an expedited child custody trial.~~

~~At the Case Management Conference, the Court may set a settlement conference, make interim orders, set the matter for trial, or make other pertinent orders. The Case Management Conference shall be continued to a date consistent with the status of the case.~~

(Eff. 1/1/1997; Rev. 7/1/2005, 1/1/2009, 7/1/2009, 1/1/2010, 7/1/2010, 1/1/2022; Revised and Renumbered 7/1/2011 – formerly Rule 9.21; Renumbered 1/1/2012 – formerly Rule 9.22, 7/1/2012, 1/1/2013, Rev. 7/1/2013, renumbered 1/1/2016, Rev. 7/1/2025, [1/1/2027](#))

RULE 10 RULES APPLICABLE TO JUVENILE COURT PROCEEDINGS

**10.10 MODIFICATION OF FAMILY COURT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
RESTRAINING ORDERS**

- A. In any case in which a Family Court Domestic Violence Restraining Order (“DVRO”) (Judicial Council Forms DV-110 or DV-130) includes protections for or custody orders related to a minor child subject to the jurisdiction of the Juvenile Dependency Court, and after notice to or with the consent of the parties to the DVRO and all other interested parties, the Juvenile Dependency Court may modify the Family Court DVRO in any of the following ways:
1. To remove a minor child who is the subject of a proceeding under Juvenile Court Law as a protected person on the DVRO and/or modify or terminate any visitation or custody orders set forth in the DVRO which pertain to the child;
 2. To provide in the DVRO for brief and peaceful contact with any protected person as required for Court-ordered placement of or visitation with the child;
 3. To vacate the DVRO and issue a Restraining Order- Juvenile (Judicial Council Form JV-250) in lieu of the DVRO, but only if all the protected persons listed in the DVRO are parties to the Juvenile Court case; or
 4. To modify or terminate any provision of the DVRO to allow the Juvenile Court to issue placement, custody, visitation, or reunification orders as determined to be appropriate by the Court.
- B. Any modifications to a DVRO must be made on a Temporary Restraining Order form (Judicial Council Form DV-110) or Restraining Order After Hearing form (Judicial Council Form DV-130) and filed both under the Family Court case number and the Juvenile Court case number. Any request to modify or terminate provisions of the DVRO for protected persons not subject to the jurisdiction of the Juvenile Court will be referred to the Family Court for consideration and hearing. The Juvenile Clerk’s Office will transmit a copy of the amended restraining order to law enforcement for entry into the required state data systems unless otherwise arranged, and also will transmit a copy to Family Court for inclusion in the Family Court file.

(Effective 1/1/2026)

**RULE 17 RULES APPLICABLE TO FILING AND GENERAL
PROCEDURE**

17.23 LIMITATIONS ON ELECTRONIC FILINGS

Notwithstanding any other provision of law or these rules, the following items may not be electronically filed:

A. Civil:

1. Subpoenaed documents;
2. Labor Commissioner deposit of cash or check; and
3. Payments for Bonds and Undertakings.

B. Criminal:

1. Bail Bonds;
2. Jail Cites; and
3. Bail Bonds Motions.

C. Probate:

1. Affidavit re: Real Property of Small Value;
2. ~~Bonds;~~
2. Financial Documents submitted by Private Professional Conservator;
3. Subpoenaed documents;
4. Undertakings; and
5. Will/Codicils – originals for filing or safekeeping.
6. [Electronic Filing of Bonds: A bond may be electronically filed unless otherwise prohibited by statute, the California Rules of Court, or order of the Court. An electronically filed bond must include a complete and legible copy of the executed bond, and all required attachments.](#)

[Electronic filing of a bond does not relieve any person of a requirement](#)

imposed by law to retain, lodge, file, or produce the original executed bond. The Court may require production of the original bond at any time. Acceptance of an electronically filed bond by the Clerk does not constitute approval of the bond or a determination of its legal sufficiency, including the amount, form, execution, surety, or supporting documentation.

D. Family Law:

1. Declaration for Default for Uncontested Judgment;
2. Judgments; and
3. Notice of Entry of Judgment.

(Adopted 1/1/2020; Rev. 7/1/2022, 1/1/2024, 7/1/2024, 7/1/2025, [1/1/2027](#))