

Riverside County – Menifee Court  
Department M-301  
Judge Stephen Gallon

## General Orders

Unless otherwise directed by written order or stated on the record in open court, the following procedures apply to all matters assigned to Department M-301. The term “counsel” includes any self-represented party. Noncompliance with these procedures may result in sanctions, including those authorized under Code of Civil Procedure section 177.5.

The Court prefers all appearances be made remotely unless the presentation of physical evidence requires in-person attendance. Zoom is the platform used for remote appearances. Participants may join via device or telephone:

- **Call-in Numbers:** 1 (833) 568-8864 (TOLL FREE); 1 (669) 254-5252
- **Meeting ID:** 161 538 5472
- [Instructions for Remote Appearances](#)

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## I. Ex Parte Applications

1. Heard Monday through Friday at 8:30 a.m. Applications set on Fridays may be continued to the next court day. The Court may grant or deny any ex parte request without a hearing.
2. Requests to shorten notice or advance a hearing date will not be considered unless:
  - The motion is filed;
  - A hearing date is set;
  - The appropriate fee is paid or waived.

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## II. Law and Motion

1. Tentative rulings are posted by 3:00 p.m. the court day before the hearing at [Tentative Rulings](#) or by phone at (760) 904-5722.
2. To request oral argument, parties must notify Judicial Secretary **Kari Gates** at (760) 904-5722 and inform all other parties by 4:30 p.m. the day prior.
3. Tentative rulings become final at the hearing unless a request for oral argument is made by 4:30 p.m. the previous day.
4. If no request is made, the tentative ruling is adopted by minute order without a hearing.

## 5. Discovery Motions:

- Parties must first meet and confer (*by phone, in person, or video*). **\*Note this is different than the Code of Civil Procedure**
- If unresolved, request an Informal Discovery Conference (IDC) by emailing **DeptM301@riverside.courts.ca.gov** (cc all parties).
- File a **joint IDC brief** (3 pages max) three court days before the IDC.
- Discovery motions filed without first seeking an IDC may result in denial of sanctions.

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## III. Trials

### 1. Trial Setting Conferences

- At the TSC, the parties are to provide the Court with a time estimate of the trial or Trial Estimate. The Trial Estimate shall be given in days. The Trial Estimate shall include one day of Jury Selection, one day of Jury Instruction/Closing Arguments, and one day of Deliberations.
- The remaining trial time shall be divided equally between the parties. The Court will keep track of time use by the parties. A party uses it's allocated time during Opening Statements, Direct Examination, Cross Examination, Closing Arguments, and failures to have a witnesses ready during their case in chief.
- For purposes of calendar management, the Court will require strict adherence to the Trial Estimates given at the TSC.

### 2. Pre-Trial Filings

All parties must comply with Local Rule 3401 and *Reales Investment, LLC v. Johnson* (2020) 55 Cal.App.5th 463. The following documents are due by **8:30 a.m. on the date set for trial:**

- Joint Statement of the Case
- Joint Exhibit List (exchange all exhibits 14 days before trial; excludes impeachment evidence)
- Joint Witness List (with time estimates)
- Jury Instructions (Joint; Plaintiff's; Defendant's)
- Joint Verdict Form(s)
- Motions in Limine Binder (with oppositions)

Failure to comply delays voir dire and incurs **\$250 per missing document per day.**

### 3. Trial Schedule

- Evidence is heard Mon–Fri, 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. and 1:30 p.m.–3:30 p.m. (4 hours/day).
- Counsel must be present 9:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

- During jury deliberations, counsel must remain within 5 minutes of the courtroom.

#### **4. Conduct During Trial**

- Reading or highlighting unofficial transcripts (“Daily”) to the jury is prohibited.
  - Trial continuances require a noticed motion. Ex parte requests require exigent circumstances. Day-of-trial requests require extraordinary circumstances.
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#### **IV. Trial Call and Mediation**

1. Trials are called Fridays at 8:30 a.m. Parties must be prepared for a pretrial conference.
  2. Mediation is encouraged at trial call. All parties, insurance reps, and settlement authorities must be present unless excused in advance.
  3. Settlements must be reported immediately per Rule 3.1385. The Court will then:
    - Cancel the mediation;
    - Vacate the trial;
    - Set an OSC re: Dismissal After Settlement.
  4. If Department M-301 is unavailable, the case may be reassigned, trailed, or continued.
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#### **V. Witnesses**

1. Without prior court approval, no witness may testify, and no questions may be asked about:
    - Excluded or limited evidence;
    - Settlement discussions;
    - Financial status of parties;
    - Race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, etc.;
    - Other litigation;
    - Insurance (unless the insurer is a party);
    - Retention of counsel by an insurer.
  2. Speaking objections are prohibited.
  3. Non-party, non-expert witnesses are excluded from the courtroom until called.
  4. Counsel must have one backup witness on standby.
  5. Counsel must provide opposing counsel with the next day’s witness order and related exhibits (in order of use) before leaving court.
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#### **VI. Exhibits and Transcripts**

1. Materials used solely to refresh recollection may not be shown to the jury.

2. Deposition transcripts must be lodged (original certified copy) on the first trial day if being read.
  3. Exhibits must be moved into evidence by the end of the trial day they are referenced.
  4. Lodged transcripts may be returned to counsel post-trial; counsel must retain per CCP § 2025.550(b).
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## VII. Jury

1. Jurors and alternates are deemed present unless otherwise stated on the record.
  2. Alternates are randomly selected. If a substitution is needed, alternates will be contacted in random order.
  3. Post-deliberation jury questions or notices: The Court will notify counsel. If counsel does not respond within 15 minutes, the Court may act without their input.
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## VIII. Personal Injury & Property Damage Cases

1. No witness or counsel may reference:
    - Insurance coverage;
    - Insurance benefits received (unless Civil Code §3333.1(a) applies).
  2. Past medical expenses must reflect amounts paid and accepted by providers.
  3. In claims against health care providers, MICRA limitations on non-economic damages may not be mentioned.
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## IX. Experts

- **Sanchez objections** must be raised via motion in limine unless waived by stipulation.
  - By setting a trial date, parties stipulate to making all experts and PMKs available for deposition no later than 90 days before trial.
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## X. Post-Trial

At the end of trial, the Court may return exhibits to the offering party's counsel. Counsel must retain them until:

1. All parties agree in writing to destroy them;
2. Appeals are resolved and any retrial is concluded;
3. The appeal period expires without a notice of appeal.