

**SAN DIEGO JUVENILE COURT
POLICY FOR INSPECTION AND COPYING
OF JUVENILE CASE FILE DOCUMENTS
(WIC § 827; Cal. Rules of Court, rule 5.552)**

I. INTRODUCTION AND APPLICATION

As a general rule, juvenile court records are confidential and cannot be inspected or copied without a court order issued by a judge of the juvenile court. This general rule is subject to numerous exceptions, which are contained in Welfare and Institutions Code ("WIC") sections 105, 204, 362.5, 827, and 827.10; rule 5.552 of the California Rules of Court ("CRC"); local rules (San Diego Superior Court Rules, Division VI - Juvenile, Chapter 6 - Access to Confidential Information); and this protocol. This protocol applies to juvenile case file documents, as defined in WIC § 827(e) and CRC 5.552(a), which are maintained in: [1] the San Diego Juvenile Court and/or [2] the offices of the San Diego Health & Human Services Agency Child Welfare Services ("HHSA") and/or [3] the San Diego Probation Department.

II. INSPECTION – NO COURT ORDER OR HEARING REQUIRED

Persons or entities described in WIC § 827(a)(1)(A) through (O) may inspect juvenile case file documents without a prior court order or hearing unless the documents sought are privileged or confidential pursuant to any other state or federal law or regulation. A person who is entitled to inspect juvenile case file documents pursuant to WIC § 827 must sign and file forms SDSC JUV-004 and SDSC JUV-237. Access to the court file normally can be given on the same day the forms are filed. However, if the file is on microfiche, there may be a delay of up to five court days to retrieve and print the file.

Inspection of documents maintained by HHSA: A person entitled to inspect HHSA documents pursuant to WIC § 827 may initiate the process by contacting the assigned social worker or the HHSA Legal Unit [see address in IV.C. below]. The person must fill out and sign form 04-171 and a stipulation. The process of producing the documents could take from three to ten business days, depending upon the location and the status of the case.

Inspection of documents maintained by Probation: A person entitled to inspect Probation documents pursuant to WIC § 827 may initiate the process by contacting the assigned probation officer or the Probation Support Manager [see address in IV.C. below]. The person must fill out and sign form J90 and a stipulation. The process of producing the documents could take from three to ten business days, depending upon the location and the status of the case.

To obtain a court order authorizing the inspection of documents that are privileged or confidential pursuant to any other state or federal law or regulation, a petition must be filed on form JV-570, and the procedures described in CRC 5.552(c)-(e) must be followed. (WIC § 827(a)(3)(A).) However, an attorney may inspect a psychological evaluation of his/her own client.

III. COPYING – NO COURT ORDER OR HEARING REQUIRED

Persons or entities described in WIC § 827(a)(1)(A), (B), (C), (D), (E), (F), (H), and (I) may receive copies of juvenile case file documents without a prior court order or hearing unless the documents to be copied are privileged or confidential pursuant to any other state or federal law or regulation. The procedures in section II will apply. Documents will be released only with signed forms SDSC JUV-004 and SDSC JUV-237 and a cover letter stating that the documents are confidential and cannot be released to anyone else not entitled to them. Copying will be done by court or HHSA or Probation personnel as appropriate, unless otherwise ordered by the court or agreed to by the parties. The person requesting the copies will pay all copying fees at the time of production (in accordance with the current San Diego Superior Court Schedule of Fees).

To obtain a court order authorizing the copying of documents that are privileged or confidential pursuant to any other state or federal law or regulation, a petition must be filed on form JV-570, and the procedures described in CRC 5.552(c)-(e) must be followed. (WIC § 827(a)(3)(A).) However, an attorney may receive a copy of a psychological evaluation of his/her own client.

IV. COURT ORDER REQUIRED

- A.** *A Request for Disclosure of Juvenile Case File* (form JV-570) must be filed to obtain a court order authorizing the following:
1. Inspection of juvenile case file documents by a person or entity not described in WIC § 827(a)(1)(A) through (O).¹
 2. Copies of juvenile case file documents by a person or entity not described in WIC § 827(a)(1)(A), (B), (C), (D), (E), (F), (H), and (I).
 3. Inspection and/or copies of juvenile case file documents that are privileged or confidential pursuant to any other state or federal law or regulation.
 4. Further dissemination of juvenile case file documents to a person or entity not described in WIC § 827(a)(1)(A) through (O).
 5. Attachment of a juvenile case file document to any other document(s) that will be released to a person or entity not described in WIC § 827(a)(1)(A) through (O).
 6. Permission for a social worker or probation officer to testify.

¹ If defense counsel seeks inspection or copies of documents from a file of someone other than his/her own client (e.g., the subject of the juvenile records is a victim or a witness), defense counsel must file a request for disclosure (JV-570), and must specify what is requested and why. When legally justified, the request for disclosure can be filed under seal.

- B. FORMS:** The following forms are available in the juvenile court business office or at <http://www.courts.ca.gov/forms.htm>:

JV-569: Proof of Service - Request for Disclosure
JV-570: Request for Disclosure of Juvenile Case File
JV-571: Notice of Request for Disclosure of Juvenile Case File
JV-572: Objection to Release of Juvenile Case File

The following forms are available in the juvenile court business office or at <http://www.sdcourt.ca.gov/pls/portal/docs>:

JUV-004: Petition to View Records and/or Request for Copies
JUV-237: Stipulation Regarding Inspection, Copying and Non-Dissemination of Juvenile Records without Court Order

- C. NOTICE:** The following parties must be given notice of the request for disclosure at least ten calendar days before the request is submitted to the court. Each of these parties must be served either personally or by first-class mail with the completed JV-570 and JV-571 and a blank JV-572. If the person filing the request does not know the identity or address of any of the parties, the person should check the appropriate boxes in item 2 on the JV-569, and the clerk will complete the service. The completed JV-569, JV-570, and JV-571 forms must be filed with the court. If information is requested regarding a person who has both a dependency and a delinquency record, two separate requests must be filed and served.

DELINQUENCY:

- 1) The person who is the subject of the record.
- 2) The attorney of record for the person who is the subject of the record if that person is still a ward of the court.
- 3) The parent(s) or guardian(s) of the person who is the subject of the record if that person is under 18 years of age.
- 4) The Indian tribe, if any.
- 5) District Attorney - Juvenile Division
2851 Meadow Lark Drive
San Diego, CA 92123
- 6) Juvenile Probation Department
Attn: Probation Support Manager
2901 Meadow Lark Drive
San Diego, CA 92123

DEPENDENCY:

- 1) The person who is the subject of the record.
- 2) The attorney of record for the person who is the subject of the record if that person is still a dependent of the court.
- 3) The parent(s) or guardian(s) of the person who is the subject of the record.
- 4) The attorney of record for the parent(s) or guardian(s) if there is an open dependency case.

- 5) The CASA volunteer, if any.
- 6) The Indian tribe, if any.
- 7) County Counsel
5530 Overland Avenue, Suite 170
San Diego, CA 92123
- 8) Health and Human Services Agency/CWS
Attn: Legal Unit
8965 Balboa Avenue
San Diego, CA 92123

NONMINOR DEPENDENCY:

- 1) The nonminor dependent.
- 2) The attorney of record for the nonminor dependent.
- 3) The District Attorney, if the nonminor dependent is also a delinquent ward.
- 4) The CASA volunteer, if any.
- 5) The Indian tribe, if any.
- 6) County Counsel
5530 Overland Avenue, Suite 170
San Diego, CA 92123
- 7) Health and Human Services Agency/CWS
Attn: Legal Unit
8965 Balboa Avenue
San Diego, CA 92123

If the records are sought for use in a legal action which is not a juvenile court proceeding, the petitioner must also give notice to all parties in that action and must attach a copy of the complaint or petition from that action to the request for disclosure.

- D. DISCOVERABLE MATERIAL:** If the prosecutor has inspected or obtained copies of juvenile case file documents and finds that they contain discoverable material, the prosecutor must turn the discoverable material over to the defense. If the documents are to be turned over to the subject of the juvenile case file or to that person's attorney, the documents may be turned over without a court order. If the documents are to be turned over to someone not listed in WIC § 827(a)(1), the prosecutor must first obtain a court order. The prosecutor will file a request for disclosure (JV-570), specifying what documents in the file s/he believes are discoverable and attaching those documents to the request. The prosecutor will also attach a protective order signed by the defense counsel to whom the documents will be turned over. If no objection is filed within fifteen calendar days from the latest date stated in the proof of service, the court will grant the request without requiring a hearing.
- E. TESTIMONY:** If any person seeks permission for a social worker or probation officer to testify in any criminal case, the person will file a request for disclosure (JV-570) and a protective order. If no objection is filed within fifteen calendar days from the latest date stated in the proof of service, the court will grant the request without requiring a hearing. The person who intends to use the testimony will serve the social worker or probation officer with a subpoena and a copy of the juvenile court's protective order.

- F. SPECIFICITY OF REQUEST:** Any person filing a request for disclosure (JV-570) must state specifically what is requested and why. The request must specify whether it seeks court records, HHSA records, Probation records, or some specified combination of records. It also must specify what documents or what types of documents or information are sought. HHSA and/or the Probation Department need to know whether to send their file to the court for review, and the judge reviewing the file needs to know what to look for. Simply stating, "I would like documents helpful to my client in his defense," or failing to provide adequate guidance to the court for review, will result in a denial for lack of specificity.
- G. CROSS-DESIGNATION:** A request for disclosure of a juvenile case file may be heard and decided only by the juvenile court presiding judge or a judicial officer of the juvenile court. (CRC 5.552(b)(3).) In a special case, a judge in another division of the court may be designated to be a juvenile court judge for the purpose of hearing and deciding a request for disclosure. This will be done only if the judge to be cross-designated is in a better position to do the balancing test provided in rule 5.552(e)(4) and has been trained on how to handle such a petition.

V. DOCUMENTS FOR FAMILY LAW AND PROBATE PROCEEDINGS

The persons specified in WIC § 827.10(a)(1)-(6) may inspect and receive copies of HHSA files and records relating to a child who is the subject of a family law or a probate guardianship case involving custody or visitation issues, or both, if the person seeking the records is actively participating in the family law or probate case. Requests for these records should be submitted to:

Health and Human Services Agency/CWS
Attn: Legal Unit
8965 Balboa Avenue
San Diego, CA 92123
Phone: (858) 616-5950
Fax: (858) 616-5833

Family law judicial officers and court staff will use the form developed for WIC § 827.10 requests when submitting a request to HHSA by fax. Requests will be handled in the order received.

Information that is privileged or confidential pursuant to any other state law (except WIC § 827) or federal law or regulation will be redacted. The person(s) requesting copies (other than judicial officers and court staff) will pay all copying fees at the time of production.