

Department N-18

Hon. Renee N.G. Stackhouse

As of June 7, 2024

For Reference:

[California Rules of Court](#)

[Superior Court of California, County of San Diego Local Rules \(Family Law\)](#)

[Family Law Forms](#)

[Family Court Services Family](#)

[Law Facilitator](#)

**Administrative:**

- a. All stipulations must be in writing. Blank forms are available in the Department.
- b. Copies of the Minute Order or any other documents in the file are available in the Family Law Business Office.
- c. All filings should be filed in the Family Law Business Office unless the Court gave specific instructions to file documents in the Department.
- d. For any inquiries regarding continuances contact the calendar clerk at 760-201-8232 or submit a *Notice of Continuance Request/Settlement* online webform.

**Child Testimony:** If you would like to call a child as a witness, you must first review California Rule of Court, Rule 5.250(d)(3). Calling children to testify (whether at an RFO (motion), Evidentiary Hearing, or Trial) is not usually in their best interest, particularly when a child is there to testify against a parent or express a preference in favor of one parent over another.

Advise the court as soon as possible as to whether a child wishes to address the Court. The Court will consider all pertinent factors, including those set forth in California Rule of Court, Rule 5.250(c) and (d). If the Court does not permit the child's testimony, it may utilize an alternative, such as an FCS interview or appointing Minor's Counsel.

**Court Reporters:** Effective November 30, 2021, official court reporters are not normally available in family law matters (with the exception of Family Support Division [FSD] matters and Contempt Hearings). A party who has been granted a waiver of court fees and costs may request the services of an official court reporter, free of charge, for a proceeding for which a reporter is not normally available and for which electronic recording is not provided. More information is available [here](#).

**Ex Parte matters:** Ex parte appearances are set by reservation Monday through Friday at 08:30 a.m. or at such other time as the court may designate. Papers are due before noon the day prior to the hearing, with the appropriate fee. All papers must be served on all parties by 2:00 p.m. the court day before the hearing. All ex parte applications must comply with [California Rule of Court 1.51](#), and Local Rule 5.3.1(B).

**Family Court Services:** The parties may ask to reschedule an FCS session one time by notifying FCS directly of their joint agreement to reschedule, no later than 4:00 p.m. on the court business day before the session. PLEASE NOTE: Doing so may impact your ability to move forward on the date of your Request for Order.

Failures to Appear at FCS will be sanctioned by the Court. The first failure to appear will be sanctioned at \$250. The second at \$500. The third at \$1,000.

**Family Resolution Conference (FRC):** Parties are required to file an FRC Statement (SDSC-D-314) or Supplement FRC Statement (SDSC-D-315) at least 5 days before the hearing.

Parties seeking MSCs or Trials at the FRC should look at the specific requirements for each below.

**Flash Drives:** The court will not insert flash drives into the computer system. If you want to show a video or other evidence on a flash drive (or CD), bring a computer with you or have an alternate method to show the court available.

**Mandatory Settlement Conferences (MSCs):** Please refer to Local Rule 5.8.1. These may not be taken off calendar unless by the court. If a pro tem is not available, the parties are still obligated to meet and make a good faith effort to settle the case.

**Restraining Orders:**

- a. Dismissals by the protected party require providing a valid identification card.
- b. No DVTROs will be extended longer than six months via stipulation between the parties.

**Requests for Orders/Motion Hearings:**

- a. This is a court hearing. You may not appear while walking around, driving, or engaging in any other activity other than appearing for court.
- b. The parties, whether represented or not, are expected to meet and confer prior to filing an RFO and prior to appearing at an RFO hearing, absent a legal restraint such as a Criminal Protective Order, Military Protective Order, Emergency Protective Order, or Temporary/Restraining Order.
- c. RFO hearings are set for a default of 20 minutes unless additional time is requested at the time of filing per Local Rule 5.5.1(A).
- d. Move-Away hearings, specifically, should be set for at least 40 minutes, if a longer Evidentiary Hearing is not required. All the La Musga move-away factors must be addressed in advance of the hearing for the court.
- e. The Court prepares for every RFO hearing in advance. It will read all relevant, timely filed pleadings and may review anything else in the Court file. The Court will begin each hearing by advising what it has reviewed in order for the parties to advise if there have been any timely filings which the court does not have.
- f. Lodgments are not read in advance of the RFO hearing. These are subject to evidentiary objections and may not be admitted into evidence. Lodgments will be available for reference and ruling on objections during the hearing.
- g. Late filed pleadings are not read.

- h. Joint proposed DissoMaster print outs are encouraged to be submitted for temporary spousal support and child support hearings. When the parties are unable to agree, proposed DissoMaster print outs from each party are encouraged.
- i. Professional and nonprofessional supervisors must fill out and file forms FL-324P (professional) or FL-324NP (nonprofessional) prior to any visitations taking place.

**Trials in Department 18 (2 days or less):**

- a. TRC will be set for one month prior to trial call on Tuesdays at 9:00 a.m.
- b. The parties will confirm time estimate, witnesses, issues, and appearances (remote or in person) at the TRC. Any issues of which the parties are aware that may preclude trial from moving forward must be brought to the court's attention at this time.
- c. Discovery dates apply to first trial date provided unless reopened by the Court specifically when/if a trial is continued.
- d. Attorneys and parties may appear remotely with the expectation that it will not hinder or delay the trial in any way and that all parties and witnesses will have the ability to access all exhibits.
- e. Absent extremely good cause, the Court will not continue a hearing solely on the ground that a witness has not appeared because the party did not timely or properly service that witness with a subpoena.
- f. Parties are encouraged to stipulate to the admissibility of exhibits where possible.
- g. The court will not receive exhibits *en masse*.
- h. Exhibits should be provided to the court in a binder and tabbed for ease of reference.
- i. Avoid speaking objections. State only the legal ground(s) for your objection unless asked by the court to elaborate. If there are multiple counsel, no tag teaming of objections will be permitted. Only the attorney presenting argument or examining the witness may object.
- j. Trial/Long RFO requirements can be found [here](#).

**Trial Setting (More than 2 days):**

- a. Trial Setting Conferences are set in Dept. 603 (Central).
- b. If the parties are asking for a TSC, they must submit a joint statement (preferred) or separate statements on their trial plans, including time estimate, the issues expected to be tried, the number of witnesses, whether the witnesses will be remote or in person, and whether there will be expert witnesses.
- c. The information above in (b) should be submitted to Department 18 directly (or if filed, with a courtesy copy to ensure timely receipt) in advance of any FRC where a Trial Setting will be requested.