

**CHAPTER 3
ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE
RESOLUTION (ADR)**

ADR Policy Statement. The San Diego Superior Court discourages any unnecessary delay in civil actions; therefore, continuances are discouraged and timely resolution of all actions, including matters submitted to any form of Alternative Dispute Resolution (“ADR”), are encouraged. The court strongly supports and promotes the use of ADR. The court has long recognized the value of early case management intervention and the use of ADR options for amenable and eligible cases. The use of ADR will be discussed at all Case Management Conferences. It is the court’s expectation that litigants will utilize some form of ADR – i.e., the court’s mediation, voluntary settlement, and arbitration programs or other available private ADR options as a mechanism for case settlement before trial.
(Rev. 1/1/2021)

Rule 2.3.1

Voluntary Settlement Conferences

Settlement conferences may be requested if the parties represent that:

- A. Settlement negotiations between the parties have been pursued, demands and offers have been exchanged, and resolution has failed;
- B. A judicially supervised settlement conference presents a substantial opportunity for settlement; and
- C. The case has developed to a point where all parties are legally and factually prepared to present the issues for settlement consideration and further discovery for settlement purposes is not required.

If a request for a voluntary settlement conference has been accepted by the court and a settlement conference has been scheduled, all parties must comply with the provisions of rules 2.3.1.1, 2.3.1.2, and 2.3.1.3 unless otherwise ordered.

(Adopted 1/1/1998; Rev. 1/1/2000; Renum. 7/1/2001; Renum. 1/1/2006; Rev. 1/1/2012; Rev. 1/1/2013; Renum. 1/1/2019)

Rule 2.3.1.1

Mandatory Appearance

A. The provisions of rules 2.3.1.1, 2.3.1.2, and 2.3.1.3 apply to both voluntary and mandatory settlement conferences unless otherwise ordered.

B. All parties, attorneys of record, and others whose authority is required to fully settle the case (including but not limited to insurance adjusters and right-of-way agents) must attend the settlement conference in person unless excused or permitted to attend by telephone as provided in section D below. If a party is not a natural person, a representative of that party with authority to resolve the dispute or, in the case of a governmental entity that requires an agreement to be approved by an elected official or a legislative body, a representative with authority to recommend such agreement, must attend the settlement conference in person, unless excused or permitted to attend by telephone as provided below.

C. If any party is insured under a policy of insurance that provides or may provide coverage for a claim that is a subject of this action, a representative of the insurer with authority to settle or recommend settlement of the claim must attend the settlement conference in person, unless excused or permitted to attend by telephone as provided in section D below. The party must notify each insurance carrier of the date, time and place of the settlement conference and of the carrier's duty to attend with full settlement authority.

D. A party or participant may submit to the court a written request to be excused from personal attendance at a settlement conference provided that the party or participant will be available by telephone for the duration of the settlement conference. Such requests must be served on all parties at least five court days prior to the settlement conference. If the settlement conference is to be heard by a temporary judge, such requests must be submitted to the independent calendar department to which the case is assigned.

E. If a party is excused from personal attendance at the settlement conference, counsel appearing on behalf of the party must be completely familiar with the case and must have authority to make an initial demand or counteroffer in a specific amount.

F. If a party or participant fails to appear, is not fully prepared, or fails to participate in good faith, the court may continue the hearing and/or impose sanctions against the offending party or counsel. If the settlement conference proceeds as scheduled, the orders made will not be subject to reconsideration due to counsel's unfamiliarity with the case at the time of the hearing.

(Adopted 1/1/1998; Rev. 1/1/2000; Renum. 7/1/2001; Rev. 1/1/2005; Renum. 1/1/2006; Rev. 1/1/2013; Renum. 1/1/2019)

Rule 2.3.1.2

Settlement Statements/Briefs

In all cases except unlawful detainer proceedings in which a party is represented by counsel under the Sargent Shriver Civil Counsel Act, written statements of the position of each party must be lodged with the settlement conference judge and served on other parties five court days prior to the settlement conference, unless otherwise ordered. If service is by mail, all papers must be mailed not less than 10 days before the court date. Settlement conference statements do not become a part of the file and will be discarded. If the settlement conference is to be heard by a temporary judge, settlement conference statements must be submitted to the independent calendar department to which the case is assigned. In cases in which a party is represented by counsel under the Sargent Shriver Civil Counsel Act, the parties may provide their positions orally on the date of the settlement conference.

Unless otherwise instructed by the court, settlement conference statements must not exceed five pages and must include the necessary information to concisely support issues of liability and damages, including a settlement demand and offer, as well as an itemization of special and general damages, and the last offer.

(Adopted 1/1/1998; Rev. 1/1/2000; Renum. 7/1/2001; Rev. 1/1/2005; Renum. 1/1/2006; Rev. 1/1/2012; Rev. 1/1/2013; Rev. 1/1/2016; Renum. 1/1/2019)

Rule 2.3.1.3

Notifications of Settlement or Continuances

A. Settlement. In accordance with the California Rules of Court, if a case is settled, the plaintiff must immediately give the court written notice. The plaintiff must also immediately notify the court by phone or in person if a hearing, conference, or trial date is imminent. The only time a hearing set by the court may be taken off calendar is when the plaintiff advises the court that the case has been settled. In that event, a show cause hearing regarding dismissal will be conducted in 45 days. The show cause hearing will be taken off calendar if a dismissal of all complaints and cross-complaints, or a judgment as to all complaints and cross-complaints, is filed with the court no later than five court days prior to the hearing. If such documentation has not been received by the date set for the show cause hearing, the court will immediately order appropriate sanctions and/or dismiss the entire action.

Failure to advise the court at least five court days before the settlement conference that it will not proceed as scheduled, for any reason other than the settlement of the case in its entirety within the five court day period, may be deemed by the court to be a violation of an order of the court, punishable by monetary sanctions payable to the court under Code of Civil Procedure section 177.5, as well as any other sanction provided by law. In addition to monetary sanctions, any party or attorney who fails to attend a settlement conference risks having their complaint dismissed or their answer stricken and default entered.

B. Continuances. Any party requesting a continuance must appear ex parte and show good cause why the settlement conference should be continued. At the ex parte hearing, a stipulation may be presented to the court, signed by all parties, accompanied by a declaration showing good cause.

(Adopted 1/1/1998; Rev. 1/1/2000; Renum. 7/1/2001; Rev. 1/1/2003; Rev. 1/1/2005; Renum. 1/1/2006; Rev. 1/1/2010; Rev. 1/1/2012; Renum. 1/1/2019)

Rule 2.3.2

Civil Mediation Program

All general civil independent calendar cases, including construction defect, complex and eminent domain cases are eligible to participate in the Civil Mediation Program.

A. Stipulation to Mediation. At any time prior to the Case Management Conference, parties may stipulate to mediation. The stipulation must include the name, address and phone number of the mediator and one alternate mediator, or parties may utilize the Stipulation to Use ADR (SDSC Form CIV-359). If the stipulation is granted, Assignment of Mediator notices will be issued.

B. Case Management Conference. If parties do not stipulate to mediation prior to the Case Management Conference, the judge will encourage all parties to consider mediation or other ADR options. If the court determines a mediator would assist in the resolution of a case, parties will be asked to stipulate to mediation which will be reflected on the Case Management Conference's Minute Order.

C. Panel of Mediators. Parties may select any mediator to mediate their matter. The court maintains a panel of court-approved mediators who have satisfied training and experience requirements established by the court and who

must adhere to minimum standards of practice pursuant to California Rules of Court, rule 3.850 et seq., and other program policies and procedures.

D. Payment of Mediators. Mediators must be compensated directly by the parties. The fees and expenses of mediators must be shared equally between the parties, unless otherwise agreed. Mediators on the court's approved panel have agreed to charge \$150 per hour for each of the first two hours in a limited civil action, or \$250 per hour for each of the first two hours in an unlimited civil action, and their regular hourly rate thereafter for court-referred mediation.

Mediators on the court's approved panel may not charge parties for preparation or administrative time, but may require that fees be deposited in advance of the mediation session and may have cancellation fees and policies.

Parties may also utilize the services of mediators who are not on the court's approved panel. They will be charged the mediator's regular hourly rate and any other fees in accordance with the mediator's policies.

E. Selection of Mediators. Parties are encouraged to make their selection at or before the time of the Case Management Conference. Parties may utilize the on-line mediator search and submit their Mediator Selection Form (SDSC CIV-005) via e-mail within five court days of the Case Management Conference. If they are unable to make a selection, the case may be referred back to the court for the setting of a future hearing. If parties agree on a mediator and alternate and notify the court before the hearing, the hearing will be vacated.

F. Timing of Mediation and Trial Dates. Cases will be referred to mediation for up to 120 days. At the time of the Case Management Conference, trial dates will also be given. If the mediation has ended in non-agreement, the court will confirm the trial dates given. If parties request an extension of time for mediation, they must file a stipulation indicating the date of the future mediation session. Alternatively, they may contact the mediator to request an extension in 30-day increments which will be subject to approval by the court. In all cases, the court will generate a Reappointment of Mediator notice if the extension is approved.

G. Attendance at Mediation. All parties, their counsel and persons with full authority to settle the case must personally attend the mediation, unless excused by the court or the mediator for good cause. If any consent to settle is required for any reason, the party with the consent authority must be personally present at the mediation.

H. Filing of Completed ADR-100. The mediator shall complete, serve, and file form ADR-100 with the court within 10 days after the mediation session is concluded. (Code Civ. Proc. § 1775 et seq.) If the mediator fails to do so, plaintiff shall, within 15 days after the mediation is concluded, file a completed form ADR-100 with the court and serve a copy thereof on all parties.

(Adopted 2/28/2000; Rev. 1/1/2001; Renum. 7/1/2001; Rev. 1/1/2003; Rev. 7/1/2003; Rev. 1/1/2005; Renum. 1/1/2006; Rev. 1/1/2008; Rev. 1/1/2009; Rev. 1/1/2013; Rev. 1/1/2014; Rev. and Renum. 1/1/2019)

Rule 2.3.2.1

Mediator Complaint Procedure

Pursuant to California Rules of Court, rule 3.865 et seq., the San Diego Superior Court maintains the following Mediator Complaint Procedure:

A. All grievances, complaints or issues concerning the conduct of a mediator on the San Diego Superior Court's Civil Mediation Panel must be referred initially to the ADR Administrator, who has been designated as the Complaint Coordinator. Contact information for the ADR Administrator can be obtained by calling the court's Mediation Program Office at (619) 450-7478 and/or by accessing the court's ADR webpage at the following link: <http://www.sdcourt.ca.gov/adr>.

B. After sending the complainant a written acknowledgment that the court has received the complaint, the ADR Administrator will conduct a preliminary review of the complaint to determine whether or not the complaint can be resolved informally and closed. If the complaint is resolved informally or closed after preliminary review, the ADR Administrator will send the complainant written notification that the complaint has been informally resolved and/or closed.

C. If the ADR Administrator initiates a complaint against a mediator on the Court's Panel, the complaint will be referred to the Chair(s) of the Bench ADR Committee, who will determine if the complaint can be summarily resolved and closed or if the complaint must be further investigated.

D. If it is determined that further investigation is warranted, the ADR Administrator will send the mediator written notice of the complaint, and the mediator will have 20 days from the mailing of said notice to provide the court with a written response. The Chair(s) of the ADR Committee will designate an individual who has experience as a mediator and who is familiar with the rules of conduct for mediators set forth in California Rules of Court, rule 3.850 et seq., or will establish a complaint committee that has at least one such individual as a member, to conduct the investigation and prepare a written recommendation concerning court action on the complaint. The Chair(s) of the

ADR Committee and/or their designee may determine that the mediator will be removed from the active/eligible list pending the final decision on the complaint.

E. The final decision on the complaint will be made by the Presiding Judge or his or her designee, who did not conduct the investigation, and the final decision will be communicated to both the complainant and the mediator in writing. The final decision-maker may take one or more of the following action(s): direct that no action be taken on the complaint; counsel, admonish, or reprimand the mediator; impose additional training requirements as a condition of the mediator remaining on the court's panel; temporarily suspend the mediator from the court's panel or otherwise temporarily prohibit the mediator from receiving future mediation referrals from the court; and/or permanently remove the mediator from the court's panel or otherwise permanently prohibit the mediator from receiving future mediation referrals from the court.

The final decision is in the sole discretion of the final decision-maker and is not subject to any subsequent review or appeal. Ultimately, mediators on the court's Civil Mediation Panel may be temporarily or permanently removed from the panel at any time at the sole discretion of the court without cause.

F. All court communications and/or proceedings relative to complaints against mediators on the court's Civil Mediation Panel will occur in private and be kept confidential except as required by law and except for authorized disclosures as follows: after the decision on a complaint against a mediator has been made, the Presiding Judge or his or her designee may authorize the disclosure of information or records concerning the complaint proceeding that do not reveal any mediation communications. The disclosures that may be authorized include the name of the mediator against whom action is being taken, the action taken and the general basis on which the action was taken.

G. A person who has participated in a complaint proceeding or otherwise received information that is publicly disclosed will not subsequently hear or determine any contested issue of law, fact, or procedure concerning the dispute that was the subject of the underlying mediation or any other dispute that arises from the mediation as a judge, arbitrator, referee, or juror, or in any other adjudicative capacity, in any court action or proceeding.
(Adopted 1/1/2010; Rev. 1/1/2012; Renum. 1/1/2019)

Rule 2.3.3

Judicial Arbitration

A. Submission to Arbitration. The court elects to come within the provisions of Code of Civil Procedure section 1141.11 et seq. regarding judicial arbitration of all civil actions which are not exempt. All actions submitted to arbitration pursuant to these sections will be subject to the provisions contained therein, as well as rules of procedure set forth in the California Rules of Court, rule 3.810 et seq., and in these rules.

B. Order to Attend Arbitration. At the Case Management Conference, the court may order a case to judicial arbitration. Counsel must be prepared to discuss whether the arbitration will be binding or non-binding, and to select an arbitrator. Dismissal of all unserved, non-appearing, and fictitiously named parties will also be addressed. The court will propose dates to exchange information concerning expert witnesses and their discoverable reports and writings in accordance with rule 2.3.3. Although the demand requirement under Code of Civil Procedure section 2034.210, et seq. may be dispensed with at this hearing, all other provisions of section 2034.210 et seq. and rule 2.3.3 will be strictly enforced.

C. Exemption from Arbitration. Matters which are exempt from judicial arbitration are set forth in the California Rules of Court, rule 3.811, and Code of Civil Procedure section 1141.11.

Unless otherwise ordered by the court, the following categories of actions are also exempt from arbitration, as provided by the California Rules of Court, rule 3.811, and will be set directly for trial:

1. Civil actions in which no jury trial is demanded and the estimated time for trial is one day or less;
2. Civil actions in which any party is not represented by counsel;
3. Civil actions for which there will be an expedited jury trial;
4. Civil actions in which the parties stipulate to attend mediation;
5. Civil actions in which the parties stipulate to attend a settlement conference; and
6. Collection Cases as defined by California Rules of Court, rule 3.740.

(Adopted 1/1/1998; Rev. 1/1/2000; Renum. 7/1/2001; Renum. 1/1/2006; Rev. 1/1/2012; Rev. 1/1/2013; Renum. 1/1/2019; Rev. 1/1/2020; Rev. 1/1/2021)

Rule 2.3.3.1

Arbitration Procedures

Arbitration rules of procedure are set forth in the California Rules of Court, rule 3.810 et seq., and in these rules.

A. Appointment of Arbitrator. At the Case Management Conference, the parties must stipulate to the appointment of any arbitrator on the list of superior court arbitrators. If the parties do not stipulate, the judge who

ordered the case to judicial arbitration will appoint the arbitrator. The appointment of an arbitrator will be effective immediately and will extend for 90 days. Before any person may be appointed as an arbitrator, that person must provide a statement on a form provided by the court that they have read and will comply with the provisions of rule 2.3.3, subdivision A.

B. Continuances. The court discourages continuances. Rules regarding continuances of arbitration hearings are set forth in the California Rules of Court. Rules regarding the completion of cases within 90 days and the reappointment of an arbitrator for good cause are set forth in the California Rules of Court. If a continuance is denied or 90 days have elapsed from the time of appointment, it is mandatory that all parties appear before the judge who ordered the case to judicial arbitration. If it appears to the court that a request for continuance is not made with good cause, the court may impose monetary sanctions upon the requesting party.

C. Conduct of the Arbitration Hearing. The arbitration hearing must be conducted as follows:

1. The arbitrator must administer the oath;
2. Counsel and the arbitrator are to be formally addressed as Mr., Mrs., Miss, or Ms. during the hearing;
3. At the time of the arbitration hearing, or at any other time designated by the arbitrator, each attorney must submit to the arbitrator (not the court) the following, unless excused from doing so by the arbitrator:
 - a. Copies of any offered pleading, arranged chronologically and appropriately highlighted;
 - b. Copies of any offered deposition transcript or record appropriately highlighted;
 - c. An arbitration brief consisting of:
 - (1) A concise statement of facts;
 - (2) Legal and factual contentions of each party;
 - (3) A statement of damages sought to be awarded including the amount claimed, medical expenses, and property damage;
 - (4) Copies of medical reports and bills;
 - (5) Copies of appraisals/repair estimates; and
 - (6) Copies of repair bills.
 - d. If the arbitration award is not filed within 10 days after the arbitration hearing, or an extension of 20 days is not granted pursuant to the California Rules of Court, rule 3.825(b), either party may notify the arbitration department. The arbitrator will then be requested to submit the award or appear before the judge who ordered the case to judicial arbitration to show cause why rule 3.825(b) of the California Rules of Court was not satisfied. (Adopted 1/1/1998; Renum. 7/1/2001; Renum. 1/1/2006; Rev. 1/1/2008; Renum. 1/1/2019)

Rule 2.3.3.2

Exchange of Experts After Arbitration

Failure to comply with this rule may result in a party's inability to call one or more expert witnesses at trial, or subject the noncomplying party to monetary sanctions.

Pursuant to the stipulation of the parties at the Case Management Conference, exchange of experts after arbitration must be made according to the following schedule:

A. Initial Exchange. Within 15 days of the date of any method of service of a trial de novo request, pursuant to Code of Civil Procedure sections 2034.260 and 2034.270 each party must personally serve on all other parties a designation of expert witnesses who will be relied upon at the trial de novo, along with all discoverable reports and writings, if any, of those experts. However, service by mail of the above designation is permitted if made within 10 days of service of the trial de novo request. Parties will be permitted to designate only those experts they in fact intend to call at trial. It is the policy of the courts that parties are limited to one expert per side per field of expertise, pursuant to Evidence Code section 723 and rule 2.1.11, absent a court order to the contrary.

B. Supplemental Exchange. Any supplemental designation of experts must be personally served within five days of any personal service of the opponent's initial list, or within 10 days of any mail service of the opponent's initial list.

(Adopted 1/1/1998; Rev. 1/1/2000; Renum. 7/1/2001; Rev. 1/1/2005; Renum. 1/1/2006; Rev. 1/1/2010; Renum. 1/1/2019)

Rule 2.3.3.4

Request for Trial De Novo

A request for trial de novo must be filed in the civil business office pursuant to Code of Civil Procedure section 1141.20 and the case will be set for trial.

Withdrawal of Trial de Novo Requests. If a party has requested trial de novo, the request may be withdrawn by a written stipulation, signed by counsel for all parties appearing in the case, that the award may be ordered as a judgment.

(Adopted 1/1/1998; Rev. 1/1/2001; Renum. 7/1/2001; Rev. 1/1/2003; Renum. 1/1/2006; Rev. 1/1/2010; Renum. 1/1/2019)

Rule 2.3.3.5

Prohibition Against Post Arbitration Discovery

Stipulations for post arbitration discovery pursuant to Code of Civil Procedure section 1141.24 will be recognized by the court, provided that no such stipulation modifies, extends, or avoids any procedure or deadline established by these rules or order of the court. Expert discovery is not within the prohibition of post arbitration discovery codified under Code of Civil Procedure section 1141.24, but is subject to the applicable rules and orders of the court.

(Adopted 1/1/1998; Renum. 7/1/2001; Renum. 1/1/2006; Rev. 1/1/2010; Renum. 1/1/2019)

Rule 2.3.3.6

Monetary Sanctions

In addition to the provisions of the California Rules of Court, rule 3.829, regarding notification of settlement, failure of the parties to notify the arbitrator and the court of a continuance or their inability to proceed at least two court days prior to the time set for the arbitration hearing may, upon written notice given by the court, result in an order to show cause why the parties should not pay \$150 or other sanctions.

(Adopted 1/1/1998; Renum. 7/1/2001; Renum. 1/1/2006; Rev. 1/1/2008; Renum. 1/1/2019)