

INFORMAL DISCOVERY CONFERENCES

Judge Guasco conducts Informal Discovery Conferences ("IDC"s) in unlimited civil cases pursuant to Code of Civil Procedure section 2016.080. The purpose of an IDC is to permit the parties, with the assistance of the Court, to resolve a discovery dispute by mutual agreement and avoid the delay, expense, and uncertainty of litigation.

Pursuant to Code of Civil Procedure sections 128 and 187, Judge Guasco conducts an IDC upon the request of a party or the stipulation of the parties or on the Court's own motion, but only after the parties have met and conferred in a good faith attempt to resolve the discovery dispute. Judge Guasco expects that a good faith attempt to resolve the discovery dispute involves more than a cursory phone call, email, or letter exchange. The parties should diligently attempt an informal resolution of the discovery dispute to the fullest extent possible before requesting an IDC, including demonstrating a willingness to compromise to the extent consistent with the rights and duties of the parties.

The request for an IDC and any response thereto must provide the following information in specific factual detail:

1. The precise nature of the discovery dispute, including but not limited to the category of information sought, the interrogatory or request or demand number associated therewith, the response thereto, the relevance and importance of the information sought, the reasons for any objection to providing the information, the existence and scope of any privilege asserted, and the burden or expense, if any, of compliance.
2. A concise summary of all efforts made by the parties demonstrating a diligent and good faith attempt to resolve the discovery dispute in whole or in part, including any offers or proposals for resolution of the discovery dispute which have been exchanged.
3. Any issues of timing concerning the disputed discovery.
4. The extent of any willingness on the part of the parties to modify the discovery request or response to accommodate the concerns raised by the parties in the course of the discovery dispute.

Judge Guasco conducts IDCs remotely by Zoom or Court Call. Follow the remote appearance guidelines set forth on Judge Guasco's section of the Court's website.

To request an IDC, contact Judge Guasco's secretary at (805) 289-8705. The requesting papers must be emailed, with a simultaneous email copy to all other counsel/self-represented parties, to Courtroom20@ventura.courts.ca.gov. If Judge Guasco grants the request for an IDC, he will issue an order to that effect and his Judicial Assistant, Miriam Hernandez, will contact the parties accordingly and advise them of available dates and times for the IDC. Any responding papers must be emailed to Courtroom20@ventura.courts.ca.gov not later than five (5) days after the date the responding party receives the email request. Requesting and responding papers shall not exceed five (5) pages in length. Do not include declarations or exhibits; a concise summary of the discovery dispute will suffice.

If a request for an IDC is granted, the Court will enter an order tolling the deadline for filing a discovery motion pending the completion of the IDC.

The IDC will be conducted on a date not later than 30 days after the date the request is received by the Court. The time allotted to IDCs is as follows: 15 minutes for non-complex disputes; 30 minutes for complex disputes.

Any agreement reached by the parties in the course of the IDC will be memorialized in a written stipulation to be signed by counsel/self-represented parties or by an email confirmation between counsel/self-represented parties. If the parties wish, Judge Guasco may enter an order on any such discovery stipulation.

In the event the IDC does not produce an agreement resolving a discovery dispute, the occurrence or outcome of an IDC does not bar a party from timely filing a discovery motion or prejudice the disposition of such a discovery motion.

Only counsel who are primarily responsible for advising the parties and have full authority to resolve the discovery dispute shall participate in the IDC. Self-represented parties are required to participate in the IDC.

The responsibility to make the necessary arrangements with Court Call for the IDC shall be assigned as follows: (a) counsel of record for the requesting party; (b) if the requesting party is self-represented, then counsel of record for the responding party; or (c) if both parties are self-represented, then the requesting party. The parties are solely responsible for the fees charged by Court Call in relation to the IDC. For any party who has received a fee waiver from the Court, contact Court Call to determine if it will waive its fee accordingly.

Judge Guasco's Zoom guidelines and orders are located at the following web address:
http://www.ventura.courts.ca.gov/covid19/Courtroom20_Zoom-Appearance_Flyer_2022.pdf.