SUPERIOR COURT of CALIFORNIA, COUNTY of VENTURA
DEPARTMENT 21 RULES & PROCEDURES
(Revised July 1, 2026)

The California Rules of Court are referred to herein as the "CRC". The Ventura County Superior Court Local Rules are referred to herein as "LR". The Code of Civil Procedure is referred to herein as "CCP". The CCP, CRC, LR, and these local rules and procedures are updated from time to time. Parties and counsel are responsible to follow the current statutes, rules, and procedures.

I. Case Management

Purpose: One of the Court's primary objectives in managing its caseload is to ensure each case is at issue so that a trial date can be set. If all parties have not been served and filed answers as of the Case Management Conference ("CMC"), the conference will be continued. If the continuance is due to a failure to adhere to applicable deadlines, the Court is likely to set an OSC re: the imposition of sanctions. (CRC 3.110(i).)

Common Issues to Avoid and may result in the setting of OSC hearings re: imposition of sanctions against counsel are:

1. Appearance counsel's failure to be properly informed about the case and/or failure to file a meaningful CMC Statement at least 15 days before the hearing.
2. Delay in service, delay in filing proof thereof with the court, or both. (CRC 3.110(a)-(f) & 3.740; Gov't Code. § 68616(a).) Litigants should move promptly to comply with applicable service deadlines, including by seeking authorization to employ alternative methods of service if appropriate.
3. Delay in requesting entry of default and/or default judgment. (CRC 3.110(g)- (h).)
4. Discrepancies between how a defendant is named in the complaint and the name used in the answer. Such issues can be avoided by answering the pleading with the defendant's correct name and indicating the name under which defendant was erroneously sued.
5. Failure to timely post jury fees. (Code Civ. Proc. § 631.)

Case Dates: If a case is at issue, the Court may set, as appropriate, a mediation completion deadline, an ADR Status Conference, and a trial date. All other deadlines are set per CCP and CRC. Trial dates are firm. Requests for continuances are disfavored and any such requests must adhere to CRC 3.1332.

Ex-Parte Applications (See also CRC 3.1200 et seq. & LR 15.00 et seq.): Ex-parte Applications are heard each court day at 8:30 a.m. with a limit of 2 per day. Parties shall reserve their ex-parte application with the Judicial Secretary by calling (805) 289-8705. Moving papers

are to be filed no later than noon the court day prior to the hearing. If the documents are received after the filing deadline, your hearing may be continued to the next available date**.**

II. <u>Remote Appearances</u> (CCP 375.75, CRC 3.670 & 2.672 & LR 7.06)

Attorneys, parties, self-represented parties, and witnesses may appear remotely by Zoom in accordance with statute, court rules, and these procedures. The Court allows Zoom appearances as a courtesy. Effective July 1, 2026, the Civil Department will no longer accommodate Court Call appearances.

No remote appearances are permitted for trials or evidentiary hearings, to include default prove-up hearings, unless authorized by the Court.

ADVANCE NOTICE REQUIREMENT: Advance notice is required to appear remotely via Zoom. No advance notice is required to make an in-person appearance. **If you fail to register timely, you will be denied remote entry to the hearing.** Court staff does not monitor Department e-mails concerning remote appearances.

Registration must be accomplished through the Ventura Superior Court website by **3:00 p.m**. the court day before the hearing. Registrants will receive a confirmation email by 5:00 p.m.

On the date of your hearing, all parties and counsel appearing via Zoom ***must*** check in at least 15 minutes ***prior*** to the scheduled hearing time (i.e., check in at 8:15 a.m. for an 8:30 a.m. hearing).

All persons appearing remotely shall:

1. Conduct yourself as though appearing in court in person, to include court-appropriate demeanor, dress, and conduct. You will be required to turn your camera on during your appearance.
2. Ensure you have sufficient technical capability, including a reliable internet connection.
3. Eliminate background noise and distractions.
4. Identify yourself by name and title (e.g., John Brown, Counsel for Plaintiff, OR John Brown, Plaintiff (if self-represented), and NOT "John's iPhone" or "Samsung 3475.").
5. Not record any part of the proceedings. (CRC 1.150 & Pen. Code § 632)
6. Mute yourself until your case is called.

No Remote Appearance at Evidentiary Hearings or Trials without Court Authorization. Unless otherwise authorized by the Court, all parties, counsel, and witnesses are required to appear in person for evidentiary hearings or trials. An evidentiary hearing is any hearing at which sworn oral testimony is provided, to include judgment-debtor examinations and default prove-up hearings. To the extent witnesses appear remotely via Zoom, the party for whom the Remote Appearance is made is responsible to ensure that:

1. Remote proceedings do not delay court proceedings.
2. There are no technical problems.

3. No other persons shall be in the room with the witness.
4. The witness has access to all documents relevant to that witness, and
5. All parties have sufficient notice of the remote appearance.

Revocation of Remote Appearance: Notwithstanding any of the above requirements related to remote appearances, the Court may require an in-person court appearance consistent with CCP 367.75(b) and CRC 3.672(d).

III. Alternative Dispute Resolution Status Conferences ("ADR Status Conference").

The Court may set status conferences regarding an ADR Status Conference. ADR Status Conferences must be attended by counsel of record who will be trying the case and all self-represented parties. The parties must meet in advance of the ADR Status conference for the purpose of preparing a joint ADR Status Conference Statement. The Joint ADR Status Conference Statement shall be filed and served at least 5 court days before the ADR Status Conference and shall contain the following information:

1. A brief summary of the nature of the case; the causes of action asserted in the complaint/cross-complaint, the primary damages or relief sought, and primary defenses asserted.
2. A summary of all resolution efforts by the parties to date, and any discovery that remains to be accomplished.
3. Additional steps the parties plan to take to resolve the case, and whether the Court can assist in those efforts.
4. The parties' readiness for trial and identification of issues that may require court involvement, such as bifurcation, consolidation, or particularly complicated evidentiary issues that should be decided before trial.

IV. Informal Discovery Conferences ("IDC")

Before requesting an IDC, the parties should diligently attempt an informal resolution of the discovery dispute to the fullest extent possible, including a willingness to compromise to the extent consistent with the rights and duties of the parties. The Court encourages the parties to request an IDC in accordance with Local Rule 8.10, which may obviate the need for a formal discovery motion. All requests for an IDC must be made **jointly** by the parties in writing. To request an IDC, requesting papers with the subject line "REQUEST FOR IDC" must be emailed to Courtroom 21 at Courtroom21@ventura.courts.ca.gov and copied to all attorneys and self-represented litigants. Requesting papers shall not exceed 5 pages in length, excluding exhibits, and exhibits shall include only such information as is necessary to explain the discovery dispute. If both parties do not agree to participate, the court will not grant the request for an IDC. If the

request is granted, court staff will contact the parties to schedule the IDC. IDCs are limited to 15 minutes for basic discovery disputes and 30 minutes for complex disputes.

Requests for an IDC should include the following:

1. The nature of the discovery dispute, including the interrogatory or request number at issue, the response and objections thereto, the significance of the information sought, and the burden or expense of compliance.
2. A summary of efforts made by the parties to resolve the discovery dispute, including any proposals for resolution.
3. Any issues of timing concerning the disputed discovery.
4. The willingness of the parties to modify the discovery requests or response to address the discovery dispute.

V. Law & Motion Procedures

Law and motion matters are heard Monday through Friday at 8:30 am. The Court adheres strictly to the motion practice statutes and rules set forth in the Code of Civil Procedure and the Rules of Court, including the format and content of pleadings, page limitations, and required notice. Exhibits submitted in support of or in opposition to a motion must consecutively numbered at the bottom of the page and references to exhibits in briefs or declarations should include the page number. Exhibits should be tabbed at the bottom of the pleadings. Exhibits must be identified and authenticated by a supporting declaration. Parties should limit exhibits to only those relevant and necessary to the motion. If an exhibit is more than five (5) pages, please highlight the relevant portions of the exhibit.

The Court hears no more than two motions for summary judgment each week, which are set on Thursdays at 8:30 a.m. The Court requires courtesy copies of all papers filed in support of and in opposition to a motion for summary judgment. All courtesy copies must be delivered to Courtroom 21 at 8:30 a.m. at least two weeks in advance of the hearing date.

The Court may issue written tentative decisions, time permitting. Tentative decisions are published prior to the hearing on the Ventura County Superior Court website. Parties appearing for oral argument should address the tentative decision. Parties may submit on the tentative decision by email, with a copy to all other parties in the matter, to courtroom21@ventura.courts.ca.gov before 8:00 a.m. on the day set for the hearing, with a subject line that includes "SUBMISSION ON TENTATIVE", Case Number, Title and Party. If fewer than all parties submit on the tentative, the hearing will proceed, and the tentative ruling is subject to change. The clerk cannot advise if you should still appear or not. The decision of whether to appear for a hearing is to be made by the parties and their counsel.

VI. Trial Rules & Procedures

1. **No E-Delivery of Trial Documents:** The court does not accept e-delivery of trial documents. Once trial documents are received by the Court, they do not need to be resubmitted if the trial trails.

2. **COURTESY COPIES OF ALL TRIAL DOCUMENTS:** The Court requires courtesy paper copies of all trial documents (i.e., witness lists, exhibit lists, trial briefs, motions in limine, any proposed jury questionnaires). All courtesy copies must be delivered to Courtroom 21 by 8:30 a.m. on the court day after they are emailed to the Court.

3. **JOINT Witness & Exhibit Lists:** The parties shall exchange witness and exhibit lists at least 14 days prior to trial. Thereafter, the parties shall compile a master exhibit list that removes duplicate exhibits, provides a brief description of each exhibit and indicates whether there will be any objection to admissibility. The parties shall also compile a master witness list that describes the witness's relationship to the case, the general subject matter of his/her testimony, and includes time estimates for direct and cross-examinations. The master witness and exhibit list shall be emailed to courtroom21@ventura.courts.ca.gov three (3) court days before the trial is set to commence.

4. **Trial Briefs**: Trial briefs shall be no more than 5 pages and shall be served on all parties and emailed to courtroom21@ventura.courts.ca.gov at least three (3) court days before trial.

5. **Motions in Limine:** The parties shall meet and confer on the necessity of any motions in limine and are encouraged to stipulate to any undisputed matters to avoid the need for motions. Motions that seek orders compelling compliance with existing law should generally not be asserted. The parties should agree on an acceptable schedule for the service of the motions, oppositions thereto and any reply briefs in support of the motion (if necessary) such that the briefing on the entirety of the motions in limine will be completed at least 3 days before trial. All motions in limine shall be emailed to courtroom21@ventura.courts.ca.gov 3 days before trial. Motions in limine shall not exceed 5 pages. No party shall bring more than 5 motions in limine without leave of court.

6. **Jury Fees:** All jury fees must be posted as required by the CCP, CRC and Ventura Superior Court Local Rules. When your case is called for trial, the parties shall be prepared to confirm whether the case will proceed as a jury or court trial. Where the parties choose to proceed with a jury trial, a check shall be remitted to the judicial assistant on the first day of trial by any parties who have agreed to pay jury fees.

7. **Court Reporter:** A court reporter will be present at trial only if arranged and paid for by the parties except as provided herein. If the parties waive a court reporter, challenges to the sufficiency of the evidence to support the verdict or any ruling by the Court will be deemed waived on appeal. (*Aguilar v. Avis Rent-A-Car System, Inc.* (1999) 21 Cal.4th 121, 132.) Indigent parties who have received a fee waiver are entitled to a court reporter without charge upon timely written request in compliance with Ventura County Superior Court Administrative Order No. 18.06, which is available on the court's website and in the clerk's office.

8. **Parties, Attorneys, Witnesses, and Zoom Appearances:** Counsel and all parties must be present in person in the courtroom at trial, unless otherwise ordered by the Court. The parties are responsible for following all applicable rules and protocols to secure the presence of witnesses at trial so as not to cause delay in the proceedings. The next day's witnesses are to be disclosed by counsel at least one day prior. If the parties agree, Zoom may be used to allow witnesses to appear remotely at trials. The Court can host; parties should contact the Judicial Assistant for login information. If the parties choose to utilize remote technology for a trial, they must meet and confer to determine how exhibits will be authenticated and shown to witnesses appearing remotely, *including impeachment materials.* The parties shall also discuss how remote appearances impact the Court's ability to order witnesses to appear. It is the responsibility of counsel or the party calling the witness to advise remote witnesses that they must be available when called to testify, must have strong internet connection, and must testify from a location where the door can be closed so there are no disruptions. Parties must advise the Court on the first day of trial if there are to be any remote appearances.

9. **Exhibits**: All exhibits, *including impeachment materials*, shall be pre-marked using numbers, with each party assigned a unique number range to avoid duplication. The parties shall agree on a master set of exhibits, *excluding impeachment materials*, and shall place such exhibits into numerically tabbed binders. The binders shall not be more than two inches, and the spine of the binder shall be labeled to indicate the number range of the exhibits contained in each binder. The parties are responsible to ensure that each party has a complete set of exhibits. On the first day of trial, the parties shall also provide two copies of all exhibits: one copy to the judicial assistant for marking and for use by the Court, and one copy shall be placed on or adjacent to the witness stand for use by testifying witnesses.

   Multipage exhibits shall be numbered at the bottom of the page by exhibit number and page number of the exhibit (e.g., Exh. 1-001 or Exh. 1 p. 1). The Court will not admit standalone pages from an exhibit; to the extent a party wishes to admit only portions of an exhibit, the excerpts shall be marked as a separately numbered and tabbed exhibit.

10. **Deposition Transcripts**: Deposition transcripts on which the parties intend to refer to or read during trial must be lodged with the Court on the first day of trial. A notice of lodging shall be prepared for all lodged deposition transcripts.

11. **Jury Instructions:** Counsel shall meet and confer as to jury instructions and verdict forms. A joint set of agreed-upon jury instructions and verdict forms shall be lodged with the judicial assistant no later than the first day of trial. To the extent possible, CACI-approved instructions and CACI-approved verdict forms shall be used. Unless otherwise agreed, the plaintiff shall prepare, serve, and lodge the final set of instructions and verdict forms. Special jury instructions may be prepared, served, and lodged by the party seeking the special instruction(s).

12. **Jury Questionnaires:** If either party intends to request the use of a jury questionnaire, the requesting party(ies) shall first meet and confer with other parties and attempt to reach an agreement as to the questions, any sharing of costs, and the logistics of completing, copying, and distributing copies to the parties and Court. The requesting party(ies) shall serve and lodge with the judicial assistant the joint proposed jury questionnaire (including all written instructions to jurors) by the date of the trial call. The parties shall specify whether they are requesting that jury questionnaires be used to pre-screen prospective jurors or as a set of questions to be asked by the Court during jury selection. The Court will not prepare or copy questionnaires. For pre-screening, at least 80 copies of the approved questionnaire shall be lodged with the court on the first day of trial.

13. **Abbreviated Opening Statements:** Any party may request court approval to provide abbreviated opening statements in accordance with CCP 222.5(d). Abbreviated statements shall not exceed 2 minutes per party and shall include only neutral non-argumentative descriptions of each party's claims and defenses.

14. **Jury Selection:** The Court uses a "six-pack" jury-selection method. The Court shall conduct *voir dire* of the prospective jurors first. Thereafter, the attorneys are permitted *voir dire* of the jurors. No personal stories or pre-conditioning as to the theories of the case are permitted. The Court does not permit comments or questions of the prospective jurors on statements of law or jury instructions without prior leave of court. After *voir dire*, challenges for cause can be made as to any of the 18 prospective jurors and must be made outside the presence of the jury.

    After cause challenges are heard, the remaining twelve lowest numbered prospective jurors from the numerical list will be considered the presumptive panel and subject to peremptory challenges. Peremptory challenges may be exercised only as to the twelve lowest number prospective jurors from the numerical list and shall be made from counsel table. For each prospective juror removed by the exercise of a peremptory challenge, the next-lowest number prospective juror will be added to the presumptive panel prior to the exercise of the next peremptory challenge such that there will always be twelve jurors for whom challenges can be exercised. A group of seven new prospective jurors will be seated once the presumptive panel is reduced to eleven prospective jurors. At that time, *voir dire* may continue only as to the new group of seven.

15. **Acceptance of Panel and Selection of Alternate Jurors:** When all parties 'pass" on the exercise of peremptory challenges as to the twelve prospective jurors on the presumptive panel, the parties will be deemed to have accepted the panel. The clerk will swear in the twelve jurors and the Court will proceed to the selection of alternate jurors. The Court will determine the number of alternate jurors to be selected with input from the parties. Each party will have one (1) peremptory challenge for each prospective alternate juror.

16. **Bench Conferences:** The Court discourages bench conferences except by invitation of the Court. The parties should make every effort to address all anticipated evidentiary or legal issues affecting the presentation of evidence *in limine* or at the pre-trial conference. Bench conferences are not reported.

17. **Audio/Visual:** Parties are responsible for their own audio/visual needs at trial. All equipment must be tested in advance to avoid delay, and the Court will not provide technical support. Any party showing a PowerPoint or similar presentation to the jury in opening statements or closing arguments shall provide a printed hardcopy of the slides to all other parties and the Court clerk at least 15 minutes prior to the presentation. The clerk shall mark the presentation as a special court exhibit for purposes of appellate review. Any objections to a presentation shall be made outside the presence of the jury.

18. **Trial Schedule:** Schedule permitting, trial hours are Tuesday through Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. with a 10-minute break in the morning session and a 15-minute break during the afternoon session. The Court expect the parties, counsel, witnesses, and court reporter to be on time. Requests or discussions that take place outside the presence of the jury should take place outside of trial hours so that jurors are not kept waiting.

19. **Entry of Judgment:** The Court will direct the prevailing party(ies) to serve and file a proposed judgment consistent with the jury's verdict and in conformity with the California Rules of Court and the Code of Civil Procedure.