

COMPLEX FACT SHEET



WHAT IS THE CIVIL COMPLEX CENTER?

It is a 36,000 square foot, five-courtroom facility that is the first of its kind in Southern California. It was specially designed to manage complex civil litigation.

WHAT IS A CIVIL COMPLEX CASE?

A "complex case," as defined by Rule 3.400 of the California Rules of Court, is an action that requires exceptional judicial management to avoid placing unnecessary burdens on the court or the litigants and to expedite the case, keep costs reasonable, and promote effective decision making by the court, the parties and counsel.

CHARACTERISTICS OF COMPLEX CIVIL CASES:

- ANTITRUST OR TRADE REGULATION CLAIMS
 - CONSTRUCTION DEFECT CLAIMS INVOLVING MANY PARTIES OR STRUCTURES
 - SECURITIES CLAIMS OR INVESTMENT LOSSES INVOLVING MANY PARTIES
 - ENVIRONMENTAL OR TOXIC TORT CLAIMS INVOLVING MANY PARTIES
 - CLAIMS INVOLVING MASS TORTS
 - CLAIMS INVOLVING CLASS ACTIONS
 - INSURANCE COVERAGE CLAIMS INVOLVING TRADE REGULATIONS OR CLASS ACTIONS
- OTHER CASES WHICH INVOLVE:
 - NUMEROUS PRETRIAL MOTIONS RAISING DIFFICULT OR NOVEL LEGAL ISSUES THAT WILL BE TIME-CONSUMING TO RESOLVE
 - MANAGEMENT OF A LARGE NUMBER OF WITNESSES OR A SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNT OF DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE
 - MANAGEMENT OF A LARGE NUMBER OF SEPARATELY REPRESENTED PARTIES
 - COORDINATION WITH RELATED ACTIONS PENDING IN ONE OR MORE COURTS IN OTHER COUNTIES, STATES, OR COUNTRIES, OR IN FEDERAL COURT.

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HOW DOES THE CENTER BENEFIT THE COURT?

The Superior Court of the State of California, County of Orange was able to accomplish two objectives in establishing the Civil Complex Center.

1. The court has integrated technological innovations into the design of the courtrooms to accommodate laptops and information processing systems which are needed to make more efficient use of court time and reduce trial length. Complex civil cases often involve full boxes of documents and storerooms of evidence which can be difficult to access and time-consuming at trial without the assistance and speed of automation and electronic displays.
2. The court and county are now able to complete a needed floor by floor renovation of the Central Justice Center (CJC) without leasing space for the five courtrooms which formerly occupied space on the 11th floor of the CJC.

COMPLEX LITIGATION PILOT PROGRAM

Orange County Superior Court is one of only six courts in the state, selected by the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), to participate in the Complex Civil Litigation Pilot Program. Other participating courts are Alameda, Contra Costa, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Santa Clara. Partially funded by the Judicial Administration Efficiency and Modernization Fund in the 1999 Budget Act, the goal of the program is to identify successful programs or procedures that can be replicated by other courts to provide prompt, cost-effective, and fair resolutions of complex cases.

Additionally, the information learned during the complex pilot program will be included in the "Deskbook on the Management of Complex Civil Litigation", a manual that is used by state court judges and litigators to help them identify and handle complex cases more efficiently.

DETAILS ON TECHNOLOGY:

In the past, litigants would bring heavy boxes loaded with paper documents to court and often would take court time to sift throughout the information while presenting their case. Those with information stored electronically would bring their own projector and other bulky equipment that would create safety hazards with dangling cords and wires, often creating an electronic circus.

Today, the Civil Complex Center courtrooms can be described as "plug and play". Litigants just need to bring their laptop and information on a CD-ROM. The necessary infrastructure (wiring, conduit, floor receptacles and connectors) is provided.

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Effective September 1, 2007, attorneys have the option of providing, or partnering with a vendor of their choice to provide, necessary computer equipment for any courtroom at the Civil Complex Center.

Monitors are provided at the counsel tables, the judge's bench and the witness box. There are 46-inch LCD panels for the jury to view exhibits and presentations. The judge's bench has a kill switch to make the screens blank if information is presented that should not be seen by the jury.