ORANGE COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT
DEPARTMENT C31

"Civility allows for zealous representation, reduces clients' costs, better advances clients' interests, reduces stress, increases professional satisfaction, and promotes effective conflict resolution. These guidelines foster the civility and professionalism that are hallmarks of the best traditions of the legal profession."
OCBA Civility Guidelines

Judge: Kimberly A. Knill
Phone: 657-622-5231

Clerk: Kimberly Wilson
Attendant: Jorge Almaraz

Schedule	Trial Days	M-T-W 9-4:30	MSCs	Fri 9 am
	Ex Partes	M-T-W-Th 1:30 pm	Motions	Fri 10:00 am
	CMCs	Th 1:30 pm	Trial Call	Fri 11:30 am

Motions Use the online reservation system to reserve dates. To expedite a ruling, stipulate to file your briefs early and submit on the papers.

No court reporter is provided unless you have a fee waiver.

The court endeavors to post a tentative rulings the day before the hearing by 4 pm.

Consider calling the other side – if ***everyone*** submits to the tentative ruling, call the clerk. Otherwise, the court may make a different ruling at the hearing. (*Lewis v. Fletcher Jones Motor Cars, Inc*. (2012) 205 Cal.App.4th 436, 442, fn. 1.)

Discovery Motions ***Meet and confer before filing*** any discovery motion. (See Code Civ. Proc., § 2016.040; *Clement v. Alegre* (2009) 177 Cal.App.4th 1277, 1293 [Discovery Act requires moving party to declare he or she has made a serious attempt to obtain an informal resolution of each issue; rule designed to encourage parties to work out their differences informally to avoid necessity for formal order, which lessens burden on court and reduces unnecessary expenditure of resources by litigants]; *Sinaiko Healthcare Consulting, Inc. v. Pacific Healthcare Consultants* (2007) 148 Cal.App.4th 390, 402 [central precept of Discovery Act that discovery be self-executing; discovery intended to operate with a minimum of judicial intervention].)

Accordingly, the court ***strongly encourages*** the parties to work out their differences informally. The moving and responding parties are expected to engage in ***meaningful*** meet and confer conversations ***in person, telephonically or over remote videoconference, not through email***, prior to filing any discovery motion.

Ex Partes Give notice to all parties by 10 am the court day before the hearing. File the application by 12 pm the court day before the hearing.

If the ex parte application does not address California Rules of Court, rule 3.1202(c) requiring a showing of irreparable harm, immediate danger or other statutory basis for granting relief ex parte, it will likely be denied.

Opposition should be in writing and e-filed unless you are self-represented (Local Rule 352). File the opposition as soon as you can. The court may decide the ex parte on the papers. (Code Civ. Proc., § 166, subd. (a)(1).)

Before applying ex parte to advance a motion hearing date, ***file your motion first***.

Stipulations Please file a ***single*** document containing ***both the parties' stipulation and the proposed order***. Please leave space for the court to add appropriate terms.

[SEE NEXT PAGES FOR COURT'S PRETRIAL ORDER AND COURT'S STANDING ORDER RE: ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE]

DEPARTMENT C31 PRETRIAL ORDER

Remember your statutory duty: "all parties shall cooperate in bringing the action to trial or other disposition." (Code Civ. Proc., § 583.130; accord *Lasalle v. Vogel* (2019) 36 Cal.App.5th 127, 130.)

Jury Trials Consider stipulating to taking a verdict from 6 of 8 jurors.

Pretrial Checklist (Please follow all statutes, Rules of Court, and local rules.)

- **As soon as possible**
  - □ Pay any outstanding jury fees.
  - □ Agree with opposing counsel to an exhibit numbering system -- numbers only
  - □ Contact Dept. C31 to confirm procedures, anticipate technological needs, etc.
  - □ Arrange for court reporter. None is provided unless you have a fee waiver.

- **10 or more days before trial** (Local Rule 317-A)
  - □ Conduct an issue conference.
  - □ Exchange all exhibits. Make sure each page is numbered.
  - □ Exchange all motions in limine.
  - □ Prepare joint trial documents: case statement, witness list, exhibit lists, etc. "Joint" means ***all*** sides agree. Do ***not*** make your own. Witness lists must have time commitments for direct and cross examination.

- **By 12 pm on the Wednesday before trial** (Local Rule 317-B)
  - □ E-file all joint trial documents and motions in limine.

Motions in Limine ***Meet and confer before filing*** any motion in limine. Motions should identify the ***exhibit number*** or ***specific words*** of testimony to be excluded. (*Kelly v. New West Federal Savings* (1996) 49 Cal.App.4th 659, 670-671.) Motions to exclude "any evidence" are often improper.

Coordinate numbering with opposing counsel. There should be only ***one*** Motion #1, ***one*** Motion #2, etc. Do ***not*** offer both "Plaintiff's Motion #1" and "Defendant's Motion #1."

Exhibit Notebooks Number each page of every exhibit. Attach a numbered exhibit tag to the front of each original exhibit. Notebooks should be ***2" thick or less*** (Local Rule 317-C).

Jury Selection The court uses a 6-pack and recommends choosing alternates randomly after closing argument.

Jury Instructions These are due up front. (Code Civ. Proc., § 607a.) CACI instructions "are the official instructions for use in the state of California." (Cal. Rules of Court, rule 2.1050(a).)

"Language in an appellate court opinion which may be a good statement of law . . . does not necessarily make a good jury instruction." (*People v. Adams* (1987) 196 Cal.App.3d 201, 204-205.)

At Friday Trial Call

- Lead trial counsel must appear. Zoom appearances are allowed.
- Be prepared to schedule all witnesses and resolve all evidentiary issues.
- For complex issues, the court may set a pretrial conference.

At Monday Trial

- Deliver a Joint Trial Notebook to Dept. C31. The Notebook must contain 12 things (check the rule) -- including jury instructions and a verdict form.
- Deliver the Motion in Limine binder to Dept. C31 (Local Rule 317-C).
- Deliver the original, tagged exhibits to Dept. C31 (Local Rule 317-C).
- Deliver deposition transcripts to Dept. C31 and e-file a notice of lodging.

Courtroom Expectations

- Be nice. ***The OCBA Civility Guidelines are a preface to the Superior Court local rules.***
- Avoid surprising the court. Raise issues as soon as possible.
- Sidebars are rarely granted. Raise issues before trial or wait until a break.
- Have witnesses available for the full day. (See *Midwest Television, Inc. v. Scott, Lancaster, Mills & Atha, Inc*. (1988) 205 Cal.App.3d 442, 456.)
- Prepare junior attorneys to examine a witness or argue a motion. Courtroom experience is hard to get. Our next generation needs it.
- Be nice. Someday trial will end, and all that will remain is your reputation.

For good cause, it is so ordered.
August 10, 2026

Kimberly A. Knill

Hon. Kimberly A. Knill
Orange County Superior Court

Revised 8/10/2026

DEPARTMENT C31 STANDING ORDER RE: ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

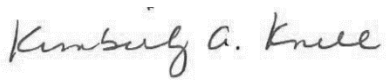
Generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools that supply natural language answers to user prompts, such as ChatGPT, Harvey, CoCounsel, Claude, Grok, and Google Gemini, are now in wide use.

Counsel and self-represented parties are responsible for providing the court with complete and accurate representations of the record, procedural history, and cited legal authorities. Use of generative AI is not prohibited, but counsel or the self-represented party must personally confirm for themselves the accuracy of any research conducted by these means, and counsel or the self-represented party alone bears ethical responsibility for all statements made in filings. The signature or listing of counsel or a self-represented party on a filing containing AI-generated content, including citations generated by AI, constitutes a certification the signer (and any attorney or other self-represented party listed on the filing) has personally verified the content's accuracy. The court will impute any errors by such AI tools to the signer and any other attorney or self-represented party listed on the filing.

Counsel for a party, or a self-represented party, choosing to use generative AI or other automated tools shall fully comply with any applicable protective order and all applicable ethical/legal obligations in their use, disclosure to, submission to, or other interaction with any such AI tools.

Failure to verify the accuracy of submissions, particularly the accuracy of citations to law and evidence, may be grounds for sanctions or disciplinary action before the State Bar.

For good cause, it is so ordered.
August 10, 2026



Hon. Kimberly A. Knill
Orange County Superior Court