

1 SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF ORANGE

2 COSTA MESA JUSTICE COMPLEX

3
4 **TRIAL EXPECTATIONS AND PRETRIAL ORDERS**

5 Judge Erin Rowe

6 Department CM03

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8
9 **TO ALL ATTORNEYS AND SELF-REPRESENTED PARTIES ASSIGNED FOR TRIAL IN**
10 **DEPARTMENT CM03**

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12 The trial court has inherent and statutory discretion to control the proceedings to ensure the
13 effective administration of justice. (*People v. Gonzalez* (2006) 38 Cal.4th 932, 951.) This includes the
14 duty to keep the trial within the bounds of the issues, see that both sides receive a fair trial, and that
15 justice is done. (*People v. Alfaro* (1976) 61 Cal.App.3rd 414, 421–424, 427; *People v. Williams*
16 (2009) 170 Cal.App.4th 587, 615.) The following orders are to inform attorneys and self-represented
17 parties of the court’s expectations in presenting their cases in Department CM03.

18 **1. Expectations of Counsel and Self-Represented Parties.**

19 The court expects all attorneys and self-represented parties to act in a professional manner,
20 and to follow the Orange County Bar Association Civility Guidelines, which may be found at
21 <https://www.ocbar.org/>.

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23 **2. Pre-Trial Responsibilities of Attorneys and Self-Represented Parties.**

24 All pretrial documents are to be filed at least five court days before trial. Attorneys and/or
25 self-represented parties are ordered to comply with Civil Local Rule 317 and all Probate Hearing and
26 Trial Guidelines. Civil Local Rule 317 is posted on the Orange County Superior Court’s Public
27 Website at <https://www.occourts.org/> under Local and State Rules of Court, Division 3, Chapter 4.
28 The Probate Hearing and Trial Guidelines are also posted on the Orange County Superior Court’s

1 Public Website under Probate Courtroom Schedule & Requirements, at
2 <https://www.occourts.org/divisions/probate/probate-courtroom-schedule-requirements>.

3 Attorneys and/or self-represented parties shall also deliver to the clerk in Department CM03,
4 **no later than the Monday before the first day of trial**, one physical paper copy of the following
5 documents:

6 a. Joint Trial Exhibit List.

7 b. Joint Trial Witness List.

8 c. Joint Trial List of Stipulated Facts.

9 d. Joint Trial List of Controverted Issues for all issues that are to be determined by the Court.

10 **3. Motions in Limine**

11 Motions *in limine* must be exchanged and discussed no later than the Issue Conference
12 required under Local Rule 317. The attorneys and/or self-represented parties must meet and confer in
13 a good faith effort to resolve motions *in limine* before trial. The law requires that attorneys attempt to
14 talk the matter over, compare their views, consult, and deliberate. There must be a serious effort at
15 informal resolution of the issues raised in the motions *in limine*. (*Townsend v. Superior Court* (1998)
16 61 Cal.App.4th 1431; *Clement v. Alegre* (2009) 177 Cal.App.4th 1277.)

17 **4. In-Person Trial**

18 All trials in Department CM03 are conducted in person. All attorneys and self-represented
19 parties are ordered to be personally present in Department CM03 throughout the trial. All witnesses
20 must be present in court in person during their testimony, unless good cause is shown, and the court
21 authorizes a witness to testify remotely. Any request for a witness to testify remotely must be
22 submitted to the court in writing, in advance of the trial date, and should include good legal cause as
23 to why the witness should not be ordered to testify in person.

24 **5. Witnesses**

25 Witnesses must be ready to testify to avoid delays. Attorneys and self-represented parties shall
26 promptly advise the court and opposing parties of any additions to their witness list, or issues with
27 witness availability. Attorneys and self-represented parties may agree to take witnesses out of order
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1 with advisement to the court. Attorneys and self-represented parties must advise their witnesses of
2 rulings that apply to, or affect, their testimony. If a witness or a party needs an interpreter, the
3 attorneys and/or self-represented parties should bring this to the court's attention as soon as possible
4 prior to the commencement of trial.

5 **6. Objections**

6 Speaking objections are **not** permitted. When objecting, attorneys should state "Objection"
7 along with the legal basis for the objection (e.g., "Objection, Hearsay.") If any side wishes to be heard
8 regarding the objection, a request to be heard should be made to the court. Attorneys and self-
9 represented parties may not interrupt each other or the court while the court is in session, other than
10 for objections as stated above.

11 **7. Exhibits**

12 Attorneys and/or self-represented parties are ordered to upload all exhibits they intend to use
13 at trial to the Orange County Superior Court Electronic Evidence Portal. Information and instructions
14 can be found at <https://www.occourts.org/online-services/electronic-evidence-portal>. Attorneys
15 and/or self-represented parties can log into the system and upload exhibits using the following link:

16 <https://occourts.quetelcloud.com/TraQ7/account/login?returnurl=%2FTraQ7%2F>.

17 The requirement to upload exhibits before trial does not apply to impeachment exhibits.

18 If a witness is testifying remotely, attorneys and self-represented parties must meet and confer
19 to ensure that the exhibits to be shown to such witness are consistent with the evidence pre-marked
20 and uploaded to the Orange County Superior Court Electronic Evidence Portal.

21 Prior to trial, attorneys and self-represented parties are expected to attempt to reach a
22 stipulation, if reasonably possible, to the admissibility and/or foundation for all trial exhibits. Such
23 stipulations should be reflected on the Joint Trial Exhibit List.

24 **8. Transcripts**

25 Transcripts must be submitted to the court, and provided to the opposing parties, of any audio
26 recording or sound-and-video recording played during the trial, consistent with California Rules of
27 Court, Rule 2.1040.

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1 **9. Deposition Transcripts**

2 The parties shall meet and confer and bring to the court certified copies of deposition
3 transcripts the parties intend to use at trial .

4 **10. Trial Schedule and Trial Time Estimate**

5 CM03 conducts trials all day Wednesday, all day Thursday, and Friday morning through June
6 2026. Beginning July 2026, the court conducts trials all day Monday, all day Wednesday, and Friday
7 morning. The morning session is from 9:00 a.m. to 12 p.m., with a mid-morning break. The afternoon
8 session is from 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., with a mid-afternoon break. Attorneys and/or self-represented
9 parties are expected to be available continuously from the first day of trial until the trial concludes.
10 The court will make every effort to accommodate reasonable requests for a break during the trial.

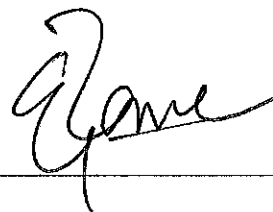
11 Pursuant to *California Crane School, Inc. et all v. National Commission for Certification of*
12 *Crane Operators et all* (2014) 226 Cal.App.4th 12, the court retains authority and discretion
13 regarding unreasonable trial time estimates and the unreasonable extension of trial time.

14 **11. Failure to Comply with Standing Order**

15 Any violation of, and/or failure to comply with these orders may result in a continuance of the
16 matter or issuance of sanctions pursuant to Code of Civil Procedures sections 128.5 and/or 177.5.

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19 **IT IS SO ORDERED.**

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21 Date: 4/7/26

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