

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

**STANDING ORDER ON CIVILITY AND PROFESSIONALISM**

To preserve and promote the fair administration of justice, this Court adopts the following Standing Order on Civility and Professionalism. All counsel and parties appearing before this Court must adhere to the standards outlined herein.

**I. PURPOSE**

This Standing Order reinforces the Court's commitment to civility, integrity, professionalism, and respect in all proceedings. The Court expects that all participants in the legal process—judges, lawyers, parties, and witnesses—will conduct themselves with dignity, courtesy, and mutual respect, regardless of the nature of the dispute or the identity of the participants.

**II. AUTHORITY**

This Order is issued pursuant to the inherent powers of the Court, Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 83, ABA Model Rules of Professional Conduct, California Rules of Professional Conduct ("CRPC"), California Rules of Court, and Rule 9.7 and Standard of Judicial Administration 10.20, which incorporate the California Attorney Guidelines of Civility and Professionalism.

**III. APPLICABILITY**

This Order applies to:

1. All attorneys admitted or appearing pro hac vice in the Northern District of California.

2. All parties, including self-represented litigants.
3. Law firm personnel, including paralegals and support staff.
4. Court-appointed neutrals and experts.

#### **IV. GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

All participants shall:

1. Act with Integrity and Respect: Treat all persons involved in the legal process—including opposing counsel, parties, court personnel, and witnesses—with fairness, respect, and courtesy, even when in disagreement. *See* ABA Model Rule 3.4; CRPC 3.4.
2. Avoid Hostility and Derogatory Conduct: Abstain from conduct that demeans the dignity of the Court, the opposing party, or the profession. Personal attacks, inflammatory language, discriminatory statements, or abusive tactics will not be tolerated. *See* ABA Model Rule 8.4(d); CRPC 8.4(d).
3. Communicate Professionally: Be civil and respectful in all communications, written and oral. Written submissions should not contain sarcastic or disrespectful language or unnecessary vitriol. *See* ABA Model Rule 8.4(d); CRPC 8.4(d). Emails and letters between counsel should be professional and focused on resolving disputes in good faith. *See* ABA Model Rule 3.1; CRPC 3.1.
4. Respect Scheduling and Time: Make reasonable efforts to accommodate the schedules of opposing counsel, parties, witnesses, and the Court. Requests for extensions or continuances should be made only when necessary and never for improper advantage. *See* ABA Model Rule 3.4; CRPC 3.4.
5. Promote Efficient Resolution: Engage in reasonable efforts to resolve disputes informally before filing motions. Meet and confer obligations must be taken seriously and approached with a genuine intention to resolve issues without judicial intervention. *See* ABA Model Rule 3.1; CRPC 3.1.
6. Uphold Professional Responsibilities: Fulfill duties of candor to the Court and abide by applicable ethical rules. *See* ABA Model Rule 3.3; CRPC 3.3.

7. Educate and Mentor: Encourage and model civility and professionalism, especially with respect to junior lawyers, clerks, and law students. Senior lawyers are expected to lead by example. *See* ABA Model Rule 5.1; CRPC 5.1.

## **V. INTEGRITY**

In accordance with the ABA Model Rules of Professional Conduct, California Rules of Professional Conduct, and the ethical obligations to this Court, all parties, counsel, and participants must adhere to the following principles of integrity:

1. Truthfulness in Representations: All submissions to the Court—whether oral, written, or evidentiary—must be accurate and made in good faith. *See* ABA Model Rule 3.3; CRPC 3.3, 5-200.
2. Professional Decorum: Counsel and litigants shall engage in civil and respectful conduct, refraining from frivolous claims, ad hominem attacks, or obstructive tactics. *See* ABA Model Rule 3.1, 8.4(d); CRPC 3.1, 8.4(d).
3. Duty of Fairness: The Court expects all parties to act without malice or improper advantage, ensuring proceedings remain just and efficient. *See* ABA Model Rule 3.4; CRPC 3.4.
4. Compliance with Orders: Strict adherence to court directives is required; failure to comply may result in sanctions under the Court’s inherent authority or applicable procedural rules. *See* ABA Model Rule 3.4(c); CRPC 3.4(f).

## **VI. COURTROOM CONDUCT**

When appearing before the Court, counsel and parties shall:

1. Be punctual and prepared for all hearings, conferences, and proceedings.
2. Stand when addressing the Court (unless physically unable).
3. Refrain from interrupting the Court or opposing counsel.
4. Address all arguments to the Court, not to opposing counsel.
5. Follow all procedural and evidentiary rules and raise objections respectfully.

**VII. USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (“AI”)**

The use of AI tools may result misrepresentation and fabricated caselaw. Counsel is responsible for providing the Court with complete and accurate representations of the record, procedural history, and cited legal authorities. Use of ChatGPT or other such AI tools is not prohibited, but counsel must personally confirm for themselves the accuracy of any research conducted by these means, and counsel alone bears ethical responsibility for all statements made in filings. *See* ABA Resolution 604 (2024) (encouraging use of AI in a manner consistent with professional responsibility, including maintaining client confidentiality and supervising technology). Failure to exercise due care in reviewing and filing work product created with the assistance of AI tools may result in sanctions under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 11 or expose counsel to disciplinary action.

Any billing statements submitted for review of the Court must indicate AI usage when applicable. *See* ABA Model Rule 1.5; ABA Formal Opinion 512 (2024); CRCP 1.5.

**VIII. ENFORCEMENT AND REMEDIES**

The Court may impose appropriate sanctions for violations of this Standing Order, including but not limited to:

1. Admonishment on the record.
2. Monetary sanctions under Rule 11 or the Court’s inherent powers.
3. Revocation of pro hac vice status.
4. Referral to the Court’s Standing Committee on Professional Conduct.

Persistent incivility, even if not rising to the level of a formal ethics violation, may result in judicial notice and appropriate remedial action.

**IX. RESOURCES**

The following are incorporated by reference and may guide interpretation of this Order:

1. [ABA Model Rules of Professional Conduct](#)
2. [California Attorney Guidelines of Civility and Professionalism](#)

3. [California Rules of Court, Rule 9.7](#)


4. [California Standards of Judicial Administration, Standard 10.20](#)

**X. CONCLUSION**

Civility is not a matter of courtesy alone, but of institutional integrity and public trust. The Court expects all participants to uphold these standards. Zealous advocacy and professionalism are not mutually exclusive. This Standing Order is intended to ensure that both remain central to the practice of law in this District.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

Dated: August 18, 2025

  
TRINA L. THOMPSON  
United States District Judge