

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA**

**STANDING ORDER RE CIVIL BENCH TRIALS  
JUDGE BETH LABSON FREEMAN**

**I. MEET AND CONFER**

At least 21 days before the final Pretrial Conference, lead counsel who will try the case shall meet and confer with respect to:

- (1) Settlement of the Case;
- (2) Preparation of the Joint Pretrial Statement and Order;
- (3) Preparation and exchange of pretrial materials to be filed pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 26(a)(3); and
- (4) Clarification and narrowing of the contested issues for trial.

**II. JOINT PRETRIAL STATEMENT AND ORDER**

At least 14 days before the final Pretrial Conference, unless otherwise ordered, the parties shall file a Joint Pretrial Statement and Order containing the following information:

**A. The Action**

**1. The Parties**

A list of the parties who have been served and have appeared. Any parties not identified in the Joint Pretrial Statement and Order will be deemed to have been dismissed.

**2. Substance of the Action**

A concise statement identifying the claims and defenses that remain to be decided; the elements of each claim and defense; and the pleading in which each claim and defense is pled. Parties will be precluded from presenting claims or defenses not set forth in the Joint Pretrial Statement and Order.

**3. Relief Sought**

A statement of all relief sought, itemizing all elements of damages claimed.

**4. Federal Jurisdiction and Venue**

A statement of the bases for federal jurisdiction and venue.

**B. Factual Basis of the Action**

**1. Undisputed Facts**

A concise statement of all facts that may be incorporated into the trial record by stipulation of the parties.

**2. Disputed Facts**

A concise statement of all disputed facts to be litigated at trial.

**C. Disputed Legal Issues**

A concise statement of each disputed point of law, citing relevant statutes and decisions.

**D. Estimate of Trial Time**

An estimate of the total number of hours or days needed for trial.

**E. Trial Alternatives and Options**

**1. Settlement Discussion**

A statement summarizing the status of the settlement negotiations and indicating whether further negotiations are likely to be productive.

**2. Amendments or Dismissals**

A statement of proposed amendments to the pleadings or dismissals of parties, claims, or defenses.

**3. Bifurcation or Separate Trial of Issues**

A statement whether bifurcation or a separate trial of specific issues is feasible and desired.

**F. Binding Effect of the Joint Pretrial Statement and Order**

The Joint Pretrial Statement and Order shall recite, directly above the signature lines of the parties, the following:

*The foregoing admissions having been made by the parties, and the parties having specified the foregoing issues of fact and law remaining to be litigated, this order shall supplement the pleadings and govern the course of trial of this action, unless modified to prevent manifest injustice.*

Date and signature lines for the Court shall appear immediately following the signature lines of the parties.

### **III. PREPARATION FOR TRIAL**

#### **A. Witnesses**

##### **1. Appendix**

*The following information shall be provided as an appendix to the Joint Pretrial Statement and Order.* For each party, a list of all witnesses likely to be called at trial, including those appearing by deposition. For each witness, there should be a short statement of the substance of his or her testimony and an estimate regarding the length of testimony (including direct and cross-examination). If the witness is an expert witness, please state the expert's theories and conclusions and the bases therefor. Attach the expert's curriculum vitae and report (if any).

##### **2. Consequences of Nondisclosure**

No party shall be permitted to call a witness in its case in chief who is not disclosed in the Joint Pretrial Statement and Order without leave of the Court for good cause shown.

#### **B. Exhibits**

##### **1. Appendix**

*The following information shall be provided as an appendix to the Joint Pretrial Statement and Order.* A joint list of exhibits, discovery responses, and deposition excerpts to be offered at trial, in tabular form with (a) a column identifying the exhibit number consistent with the pre-marking requirement below; (b) a column briefly describing the exhibit; (c) a column describing the purpose for which the exhibit is offered and identifying its sponsoring witness; (d) a column stating any objections to the exhibit; and (e) a column responding to the objections. The Court will not rule on these objections before trial and any remaining objections must be asserted at trial. Before this list is filed with the Court, counsel shall meet and confer, in person, to consider exhibit numbers, eliminate duplicate exhibits and confusion over exhibits, and make a good faith effort to stipulate to admissibility. If stipulation is not possible, the parties shall make every effort to stipulate to authenticity and foundation absent a legitimate (not tactical) objection.

**2. Pre-Marked**

All exhibits shall be pre-marked for identification with numbers (not letters) by means of exhibit tags affixed to the back of the last page of each exhibit. Sample tags are attached hereto.

**3. Delivery to Court**

Unless otherwise ordered, on the Thursday before commencement of trial, the parties shall deliver to Tiffany Salinas-Harwell, Courtroom Deputy to Judge Freeman, 1 original set of exhibits and 1 complete copy of the original set. The copy set of exhibits need not be tagged, but the exhibits contained therein must be labeled clearly. Both sets of exhibits – the original and the copy – shall be in three-ring binders with the exhibits separated by tabs denoting the exhibit numbers.

**4. Consequences of Nondisclosure**

No party shall be permitted to offer any exhibit at trial that is not disclosed in the Joint Pretrial Statement and Order without leave of the Court for good cause shown, unless it is offered solely for impeachment or rebuttal.

**C. Motions *in Limine***

**1. Timing**

Unless otherwise ordered, the parties shall file and serve any motions *in limine* at least 14 days before the final Pretrial Conference, and any opposition thereto at least 7 days before the final Pretrial Conference. Reply briefs are not permitted. The Court will hear argument on motions *in limine* at the final Pretrial Conference.

**2. Contents**

Each motion shall be presented in a separate document and shall be numbered as, for example, “Plaintiff’s Motion *in Limine* No. 1 to Exclude. . . .” Each side is limited to 5 motions *in limine*. Each motion *in limine* is limited to 5 pages and may address only one issue. If a party raises a *Daubert* motion as a motion *in limine*, the party must file a separate motion for each expert to which the party raises a *Daubert* challenge. Each *Daubert* motion is included in the 5 motion maximum for motions *in limine*.

**D. Proposed Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law**

At least 7 days before the final Pretrial Conference, each party shall file and serve proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law. The findings of fact shall set forth in simple declarative sentences, separately numbered, all factual contentions relied upon by a party in support of its claims or defenses and shall be free of pejorative language and argument. Conclusions of law shall be supported by appropriate citation to legal authority. The proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law shall be submitted in hard copy as well as in word processing format via e-mail to BLFpo@cand.uscourts.gov.

**E. Trial Briefs**

Each party shall submit a trial brief, not to exceed 15 pages, at least 7 days before commencement of trial. A trial brief is most helpful to the Court when it summarizes the party's theory of the case, identifies key evidence, and provides summary briefing on any controlling issues of law.

**F. Stipulations**

A statement of proposed stipulations that will expedite the presentation of evidence. Any stipulations submitted before or during trial shall be in writing and signed by all parties.

**G. Time Limits**

Ordinarily, the Court will set fixed trial time limits at the final Pretrial Conference. Each party may allocate its time as it wishes, but all of a party's examination time (whether direct, cross, re-direct, or re-cross) for all witnesses must fit within its time limit. Opening and closing time limits are in addition to examination time.

**IV. TRIAL SCHEDULE**

Trial is conducted on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and on Tuesdays from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Thursdays typically are dark.

**V. MISCELLANEOUS**

**A. 12-Point Type and Double-Spaced**

All written text, including footnotes and quotations, shall be no less than 12-point type and shall be double-spaced.

**B. Footnotes**

Footnotes shall be no less than 12-point type and shall be double-spaced. Footnotes shall not be used to cite to legal authorities or evidence. All citations to legal authorities or evidence shall be in the body of the brief. Excessive footnotes will be disregarded.

Dated: September 9, 2024

  
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BETH LABSON FREEMAN  
United States District Judge

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