

UNLIMITED JURISDICTION

Civil Actions

PACKET

What you will find in this packet:

- **Interpreter Request** (MC-300e&s)
- **Notice To Plaintiffs** (CV-655a-INFO)
- **Notice To Defendants** (CV-655d-INFO)
- **ADR Case Management Stipulation and Order** (CV-655b)
- **Case Management Statement** (CM-110)
- **Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Information** (CV-655c-INFO)

You Can Get Court Forms FREE at: www.cc-courts.org/forms

Superior Court of California, County of Contra Costa

Interpreter Request

If you need an interpreter, please complete the form below and submit it to any Filing Window or courtroom.

Case Number: _____

Case Type:

<input type="checkbox"/> Criminal	<input type="checkbox"/> Small Claims – (\$12,500 or less)
<input type="checkbox"/> Traffic	<input type="checkbox"/> Civil - <input type="checkbox"/> \$25,000 <input type="checkbox"/> over \$25,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Civil Harassment	<input type="checkbox"/> Civil – Other _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservatorship	<input type="checkbox"/> Family Law
<input type="checkbox"/> Proceedings to terminate parental rights	<input type="checkbox"/> Unlawful Detainer
<input type="checkbox"/> Dependent Adult Abuse	<input type="checkbox"/> Guardianship
<input type="checkbox"/> Juvenile	<input type="checkbox"/> Elder Abuse

Party Requesting Interpreter: _____

Is interpreter for a witness? Yes No

Phone Number(s) where party can be reached: _____

Date of Hearing: _____ Time of Hearing: _____

Department: _____ Location: Martinez Pittsburg Richmond Walnut Creek

Language Needed: Spanish Mandarin Cantonese Vietnamese

Other: _____

To avoid the risk that your hearing will have to be postponed, please submit this form a minimum of one week in advance.

Current information about this program is available at our website:
www.cc-courts.org/interpreter

Superior Court of California, County of Contra Costa

Solicitud Para Intérprete

Si necesita un intérprete, favor completar este formulario y presentarlo en cualquier ventanilla para archivar documentos o con la secretaría del tribunal.

Número de Caso: _____

Tipo de Caso:

<input type="checkbox"/> Criminal	<input type="checkbox"/> Demanda Civil – (\$12,500 o menos)
<input type="checkbox"/> Tráfico	<input type="checkbox"/> Demanda Civil -
<input type="checkbox"/> Acoso Civil	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25,000 <input type="checkbox"/> más de \$25,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservador	<input type="checkbox"/> Civil – otro tipo _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Casos para Terminar Derechos de Madre o Padre	<input type="checkbox"/> Casos de Familia
<input type="checkbox"/> Abuso de Adultos Incapacitados	<input type="checkbox"/> Juicio de Desalojo
<input type="checkbox"/> Tribunal de Menores	<input type="checkbox"/> Tutela
	<input type="checkbox"/> Abuso de Personas Mayores

Persona que Necesita Intérprete: _____

Marque aquí si esta persona es un testigo

Número Telefónico: _____

Fecha de la Audiencia Judicial: _____ Hora: _____

Departamento: _____ Ciudad: Martinez Pittsburg Richmond Walnut Creek

Idioma Solicitado: Español Mandarín Cantonés Vietnamita

Otro Idioma: _____

Para evitar la posibilidad que su audiencia sea aplazada, favor de presentar este formulario al menos una semana antes de la fecha de su audiencia.

Información actualizada acerca de este servicio se encuentra en nuestra página web:
www.cc-courts.org/interpreter

Superior Court of California, County of Contra Costa

NOTICE TO PLAINTIFFS

In Unlimited Jurisdiction Civil Actions

AFTER YOU FILE YOUR COURT CASE:

- 1. Have the forms the clerk gives you served on all defendants in this case:**
 - a. The Complaint
 - b. The Summons
 - c. The Notice of Case Management Conference (shows hearing date and time)
 - d. The Notice to Defendants (Local Court Form CV-655d-INFO)
 - e. Blank: Case Management Statement (Judicial Council Form CM-110)
 - f. Blank: Stipulation and Order to Attend ADR and Delay First Case Management Conference 90 Days (Local Court Form CV-655b)
 - g. Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Information (Local Court Form CV-655c-INFO)
- 2. Within 60 days of the date you filed the complaint **you must prove that the forms have been served on (delivered to) the defendants correctly** by filing the Proof of Service form (POS-010) (completed by the person who did the service) with the court.**
- 3. Go to the case management conference on the date indicated on The Notice of Case Management Conference.**
- 4. Consider using mediation, arbitration, or neutral case evaluation (ADR) to resolve the dispute.** All parties must answer questions about ADR on the *Case Management Statement* form. For more information, see the enclosed ADR information, visit www.cc-courts.org/adr, or email adrweb@contracosta.courts.ca.gov
- 5. You may delay the first case management conference while you try to resolve the dispute in ADR.** If all parties agree to use ADR, complete and file the Stipulation and Order to Attend ADR and Continue First Case Management Conference 90 Days form to tell the court you want to use this option.

All civil actions (*except juvenile, probate, family, unlawful detainer, extraordinary writ, and asset forfeiture*¹) and personal injury cases where a party is claiming damages² must meet the Civil Trial Delay Reduction time limits for filing documents and moving their cases forward. These time limits are listed in California Rule of Court 3.110 and Local Court Rules; Title Three. If parties miss these deadlines, a judge might issue an order (*Order to Show Cause*) for them to explain in court why they should not have to pay a fine or have their case dismissed.

VIEW LOCAL COURT RULES AT: (WWW.CC-COURTS.ORG/RULES)

¹ *Health and Safety Code §11470 et seq.*

² *Including claims for emotional distress and/or wrongful death.*

Superior Court of California, County of Contra Costa

NOTICE TO DEFENDANTS
In Unlimited Jurisdiction Civil Actions

YOU ARE BEING SUED. The packet you have been served should contain:

- a. The Summons
- b. The Complaint
- c. The Notice of Case Management (shows hearing date and time)
- d. Blank: Case Management Statement (Judicial Council Form CM-110)
- e. Blank: Stipulation and Order to Attend ADR and Delay First Case Management Conference 90 Days (Local Court Form CV-655b)
- f. Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Information (Local Court Form CV-655c-INFO)

WHAT DO I DO NOW?

You must:

1. **Prepare your response** YOU COULD LOSE YOUR CASE—even before it is heard by a judge or before you can defend yourself, if you do not prepare and file a response on time. See the other side of this page for types of responses you can prepare.
2. **Complete the *Case Management Statement* (CM-110)**
3. **File and serve your court papers on time** Once your court forms are complete, you must file 1 original and 2 copies of the forms at court. An adult who is NOT involved in your case must serve one set of forms on the Plaintiff. If you were served in person you must file your response in 30 days. If the server left a copy of the papers with an adult living at your home or an adult in charge at your work or you received a copy by mail you must file your response in 40 days.
4. **Prove you served your court papers on time** by having your server complete a *Proof of Service*, (*Judicial Council form POS-040*), that must be filed at the court within 60 days.
5. **Go to court** on the date and time given in the *Notice of Case Management Conference*.
6. **Consider trying to settle your case before trial** If you and the other party to the case can agree to use mediation, arbitration or neutral case evaluation, the *Stipulation and Order to Attend ADR and Delay First Case Management Conference 90 Days* can be filed with your other papers. For more information read the enclosed ADR information, visit www.cc-courts.org/adr, or email adrweb@contracosta.courts.ca.gov.

IMPORTANT! The court recommends consulting an attorney for all or part of your case. While you may represent yourself, lawsuits can be complicated, and the court cannot give you legal advice.

COURT FEES: You must pay court fees the first time you file your papers. If you also file a motion, you must pay another fee. If you cannot afford the fees, you may ask the court to waive (allow you not to pay) fees. Use Judicial Council forms FW-001-INFO [information sheet]; FW-001 [application]; and FW-003 [order].

COURT FORMS: Buy forms at the Law Library (1020 Ward Street, Martinez, CA) or download them for free at: www.courtinfo.ca.gov/forms/

WHAT KIND OF RESPONSES CAN I FILE?

1. If you disagree with some or all of what the plaintiff says in the complaint because you believe, or know it is not true, you can file an ANSWER.
2. If you have a claim in the same case against the plaintiff, you may file a CROSS-COMPLAINT.
3. If you want to ask the court to do something on your behalf, you may file a MOTION (See *TYPES OF MOTIONS* below)

HOW DO I PREPARE AN ANSWER?

There are two kinds of Answers you can use, depending on whether the Complaint was verified. You can tell if a Complaint is verified because it says "Verified Complaint" and/or has a signed oath on the last page.

For complaints that are NOT verified:

Use Judicial Council form PLD-050 – General Denial

For complaints that ARE verified:

- a. For personal injury, property damage, and wrongful death claims, use Judicial Council PLD-PI-003 (do not check number 2).
- b. For contract claims, use Judicial Council PLD-C-010 (do not check number 3a).
- c. Be sure to deny every claim with which you disagree. For example, you might write: "*I believe, or know, that the information in paragraph #__ is untrue/incorrect.*" Continue your list until you have addressed each paragraph in the Complaint.

NOTE: The Judicial Council Answer forms have spaces for your affirmative defenses. Be sure to include them or you may not be able to use them later. To find out what your affirmative defenses might be, go to the law library and ask the librarian to help you find the information you need.

If you want to file a Cross-Complaint, you must do so at the same time you file the Answer.

- a. For a personal injury, property damage, and/or wrongful death Cross-Complaint, use Judicial Council form PLD-PI-002.
- b. For a contract Cross-Complaint, use Judicial Council PLD-C-001.

TYPES OF MOTIONS

Written motions are documents that ask the court to do something. You may have to file an *Answer* at the same time. At this point in the case, you can only make Motions from the following list:

1. Demurrer (*the facts stated in the complaint are wrong, or the deadline to file the lawsuit has passed*);
2. Motion to Strike (*the complaint is unclear; does not follow the law, "doesn't matter", etc.*);
3. Motion to Transfer (*the complaint is in the wrong court or there's a more appropriate court*);
4. Motion to Quash Service of Summons (*you were not legally served*);
5. Motion to Stay (*put the case on hold*); or
6. Motion to Dismiss (*stops the case*).

NOTE: Motions are very complicated and you may want to hire a lawyer to help you.

WHERE CAN I GET MORE HELP?

- **Lawyer Referral Service:** (925) 825-5700
- **Bay Area Legal Aid:** (800) 551-5554
- **Contra Costa County Law Library** Martinez: (925) 646-2783 Richmond: (510) 374-3019
- **Ask the Law Librarian:** www.247ref.org/portal/access_law3.cfm

**SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF CONTRA COSTA**

Plaintiff(s) / Cross Plaintiff(s)

vs.

ADR Case Management Stipulation and Order
(Unlimited Jurisdiction Civil Cases)

Defendant(s) / Cross Defendant(s)

CASE NO: _____

- ▶ ALL PARTIES STIPULATING TO ADR AND DELAYING THEIR CASE MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE 90 DAYS MUST **SUBMIT THE ORDER FOR THE JUDGE'S SIGNATURE AND FILE THIS FORM AT LEAST 15 DAYS BEFORE THEIR CASE MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE.** (NOT AVAILABLE IN COMPLEX LITIGATION CASES.)
- ▶ PARTIES MUST ALSO **SEND A COPY OF THIS FILED STIPULATION AND ORDER TO THE ADR OFFICE: EMAIL adrweb@contracosta.courts.ca.gov FAX: (925) 608-2109 MAIL: P.O. BOX 911, MARTINEZ, CA 94553**

Counsel and all parties agree to delay their case management conference 90 days to attend ADR and complete pre-ADR discovery as follows:

1. Selection and scheduling for Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR):

- a. The parties have agreed to ADR as follows:
 - i. Mediation (Court-connected Private)
 - ii. Arbitration (Judicial Arbitration (non-binding) Private (non-binding) Private (binding))
 - iii. Neutral case evaluation
- b. The ADR neutral shall be selected by (date): _____ (*no more than 14 days after filing this form*)
- c. ADR shall be completed by (date): _____ (*no more than 90 days after filing this form*)

2. The parties will complete the following discovery plan:

- a. Written discovery: (Additional page(s) attached)
 - i. Interrogatories to:
 - ii. Request for Production of Documents to:
 - iii. Request for Admissions to:
 - iv. Independent Medical Evaluation of:
 - v. Other:
- b. Deposition of the following parties or witnesses: (Additional page(s) attached)
 - i. _____
 - ii. _____
 - iii. _____
- c. No Pre-ADR discovery needed

3. The parties also agree: _____

4. Counsel and self-represented parties represent they are familiar with and will fully comply with all local court rules related to ADR as provided in Title Three; Chapter 5, will pay the fees associated with these services, and understand that if they do not, without good cause, comply with this stipulation and all relevant local court rules, they may be subject to sanctions.

Counsel for Plaintiff (*print*) _____ | Fax _____

Counsel for Defendant (*print*) _____ | Fax _____

Signature _____

Signature _____

Counsel for Plaintiff (*print*) _____ | Fax _____

Counsel for Defendant (*print*) _____ | Fax _____

Signature _____

Signature _____

Pursuant to the Stipulation of the parties, and subject to the *Case Management Order* to be filed, **IT IS SO ORDERED** that the Case Management Conference set for _____ is vacated and rescheduled for _____ at (8:30 a.m. / _____) **Plaintiff / Plaintiff's counsel must notify all parties of the new case management conference.**

Dated: _____

Judge of the Superior Court

ATTORNEY OR PARTY WITHOUT ATTORNEY		STATE BAR NUMBER:		FOR COURT USE ONLY
NAME:				
FIRM NAME:				
STREET ADDRESS:				
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP CODE:	
TELEPHONE NO.:		FAX NO.:		
EMAIL ADDRESS:				
ATTORNEY FOR (name):				
SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF				
STREET ADDRESS:				
MAILING ADDRESS:				
CITY AND ZIP CODE:				
BRANCH NAME:				
PLAINTIFF/PETITIONER:				
DEFENDANT/RESPONDENT:				
CASE MANAGEMENT STATEMENT				CASE NUMBER:
(Check one): <input type="checkbox"/> UNLIMITED CASE		<input type="checkbox"/> LIMITED CASE		
(Amount demanded exceeds \$35,000)		(Amount demanded is \$35,000 or less)		
A CASE MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE is scheduled as follows:				
Date:	Time:	Dept.:	Div.:	Room:
Address of court (if different from the address above):				
<input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Intent to Appear by Telephone, by (name):				

INSTRUCTIONS: All applicable boxes must be checked, and the specified information must be provided.

1. **Party or parties (answer one):**
 - a. This statement is submitted by party (name):
 - b. This statement is submitted **jointly** by parties (names):
2. **Complaint and cross-complaint (to be answered by plaintiffs and cross-complainants only)**
 - a. The complaint was filed on (date):
 - b. The cross-complaint, if any, was filed on (date):
3. **Service (to be answered by plaintiffs and cross-complainants only)**
 - a. All parties named in the complaint and cross-complaint have been served, have appeared, or have been dismissed.
 - b. The following parties named in the complaint or cross-complaint
 - (1) have not been served (specify names and explain why not):
 - (2) have been served but have not appeared and have not been dismissed (specify names):
 - (3) have had a default entered against them (specify names):
 - c. The following additional parties may be added (specify names, nature of involvement in case, and date by which they may be served):
4. **Description of case**
 - a. Type of case in complaint cross-complaint (Describe, including causes of action):

PLAINTIFF/PETITIONER:	CASE NUMBER:
DEFENDANT/RESPONDENT:	

4. b. Provide a brief statement of the case, including any damages (*if personal injury damages are sought, specify the injury and damages claimed, including medical expenses to date [indicate source and amount], estimated future medical expenses, lost earnings to date, and estimated future lost earnings; if equitable relief is sought, describe the nature of the relief*):

(*If more space is needed, check this box and attach a page designated as Attachment 4b.*)

5. Jury or nonjury trial

The party or parties request a jury trial a nonjury trial. (*If more than one party, provide the name of each party requesting a jury trial*):

6. Trial date

- The trial has been set for (*date*):
- No trial date has been set. This case will be ready for trial within 12 months of the date of the filing of the complaint (*if not, explain*):
- Dates on which parties or attorneys will not be available for trial (*specify dates and explain reasons for unavailability*):

7. Estimated length of trial

The party or parties estimate that the trial will take (*check one*)

- days (*specify number*):
- hours (short causes) (*specify*):

8. Trial representation (*to be answered for each party*)

The party or parties will be represented at trial by the attorney or party listed in the caption by the following:

- Attorney:
- Firm:
- Address:
- Telephone number:
- Fax number:
- Email address:
- Party represented:

Additional representation is described in Attachment 8.

9. Preference

This case is entitled to preference (*specify code section*):

10. Alternative dispute resolution (ADR)

- ADR information package.** Please note that different ADR processes are available in different courts and communities; read the ADR information package provided by the court under rule 3.221 of the California Rules of Court for information about the processes available through the court and community programs in this case.

(1) For parties represented by counsel: Counsel has has not provided the ADR information package identified in rule 3.221 to the client and reviewed ADR options with the client.

(2) For self-represented parties: Party has has not reviewed the ADR information package identified in rule 3.221.

- Referral to judicial arbitration or civil action mediation (if available).**

(1) This matter is subject to mandatory judicial arbitration under Code of Civil Procedure section 1141.11 or to civil action mediation under Code of Civil Procedure section 1775.3 because the amount in controversy does not exceed the statutory limit.

(2) Plaintiff elects to refer this case to judicial arbitration and agrees to limit recovery to the amount specified in Code of Civil Procedure section 1141.11.

(3) This case is exempt from judicial arbitration under rule 3.811 of the California Rules of Court or from civil action mediation under Code of Civil Procedure section 1775 et seq. (*specify exemption*):

PLAINTIFF/PETITIONER: DEFENDANT/RESPONDENT:	CASE NUMBER:
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10. c. In the table below, indicate the ADR process or processes that the party or parties are willing to participate in, have agreed to participate in, or have already participated in (*check all that apply and provide the specified information*):

	The party or parties completing this form are willing to participate in the following ADR processes (<i>check all that apply</i>):	If the party or parties completing this form in the case have agreed to participate in or have already completed an ADR process or processes, indicate the status of the processes (<i>attach a copy of the parties' ADR stipulation</i>):
(1) Mediation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Mediation session not yet scheduled <input type="checkbox"/> Mediation session scheduled for (date): <input type="checkbox"/> Agreed to complete mediation by (date): <input type="checkbox"/> Mediation completed on (date):
(2) Settlement conference	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Settlement conference not yet scheduled <input type="checkbox"/> Settlement conference scheduled for (date): <input type="checkbox"/> Agreed to complete settlement conference by (date): <input type="checkbox"/> Settlement conference completed on (date):
(3) Neutral evaluation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Neutral evaluation not yet scheduled <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral evaluation scheduled for (date): <input type="checkbox"/> Agreed to complete neutral evaluation by (date): <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral evaluation completed on (date):
(4) Nonbinding judicial arbitration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Judicial arbitration not yet scheduled <input type="checkbox"/> Judicial arbitration scheduled for (date): <input type="checkbox"/> Agreed to complete judicial arbitration by (date): <input type="checkbox"/> Judicial arbitration completed on (date):
(5) Binding private arbitration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Private arbitration not yet scheduled <input type="checkbox"/> Private arbitration scheduled for (date): <input type="checkbox"/> Agreed to complete private arbitration by (date): <input type="checkbox"/> Private arbitration completed on (date):
(6) Other (<i>specify</i>):	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> ADR session not yet scheduled <input type="checkbox"/> ADR session scheduled for (date): <input type="checkbox"/> Agreed to complete ADR session by (date): <input type="checkbox"/> ADR completed on (date):

PLAINTIFF/PETITIONER: DEFENDANT/RESPONDENT:	CASE NUMBER:
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11. Insurance

- Insurance carrier, if any, for party filing this statement (*name*):
- Reservation of rights: Yes No
- Coverage issues will significantly affect resolution of this case (*explain*):

12. Jurisdiction

Indicate any matters that may affect the court's jurisdiction or processing of this case and describe the status.

Bankruptcy Other (*specify*):

Status:

13. Related cases, consolidation, and coordination

- There are companion, underlying, or related cases.
 - Name of case:
 - Name of court:
 - Case number:
 - Status:

Additional cases are described in Attachment 13a.
- A motion to consolidate coordinate will be filed by (*name party*):

14. Bifurcation

The party or parties intend to file a motion for an order bifurcating, severing, or coordinating the following issues or causes of action (*specify moving party, type of motion, and reasons*):

15. Other motions

The party or parties expect to file the following motions before trial (*specify moving party, type of motion, and issues*):

16. Discovery

- The party or parties have completed all discovery.
- The following discovery will be completed by the date specified (*describe all anticipated discovery*):

Party

Description

Date

- The following discovery issues, including issues regarding the discovery of electronically stored information, are anticipated (*specify*):

PLAINTIFF/PETITIONER:	CASE NUMBER:
DEFENDANT/RESPONDENT:	

17. Economic litigation

- a. This is a limited civil case (i.e., the amount demanded is \$35,000 or less) and the economic litigation procedures in Code of Civil Procedure sections 90-98 will apply to this case.
- b. This is a limited civil case and a motion to withdraw the case from the economic litigation procedures or for additional discovery will be filed (*if checked, explain specifically why economic litigation procedures relating to discovery or trial should not apply to this case*):

18. Other issues

- The party or parties request that the following additional matters be considered or determined at the case management conference (*specify*):

19. Meet and confer

- a. The party or parties have met and conferred with all parties on all subjects required by rule 3.724 of the California Rules of Court (*if not, explain*):
- b. After meeting and conferring as required by rule 3.724 of the California Rules of Court, the parties agree on the following (*specify*):

20. Total number of pages attached (*if any*): _____

I am completely familiar with this case and will be fully prepared to discuss the status of discovery and alternative dispute resolution, as well as other issues raised by this statement, and will possess the authority to enter into stipulations on these issues at the time of the case management conference, including the written authority of the party where required.

Date:

(TYPE OR PRINT NAME)



(SIGNATURE OF PARTY OR ATTORNEY)

(TYPE OR PRINT NAME)



(SIGNATURE OF PARTY OR ATTORNEY)

Additional signatures are attached.



CONTRA COSTA COUNTY SUPERIOR COURT ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION (ADR) INFORMATION

All judges in the Civil Trial Delay Reduction Program agree that parties should consider using Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) to settle their cases. To tell the court you will use ADR:

- Choose ADR on the *Case Management Form* (CM-110);
- File a *Stipulation and Order to Attend ADR and Continue First Case Management Conference 90-Days* (local court form); or
- Agree to ADR at your first court appearance.

Questions? Email adrweb@contracosta.courts.ca.gov or call (925) 608-2075

MEDIATION

Mediation is often faster and less expensive than going to trial. Mediators help people who have a dispute talk about ways they can settle their case. Parties email, fax or visit the ADR Programs office to get a list of mediators. After parties have agreed on a mediator, they must write a summary (5 pages or less) explaining the facts, legal arguments, and legal authority for their position. They must send this summary to the other parties and the mediator at least 5 court days before mediation starts.

ALL parties and attorneys must go to mediation. Mediation can be held whenever and wherever the parties and the mediator want, as long as they finish before the court deadline. In some kinds of court cases, parties have the chance to mediate in the courthouse on their trial day.

Most mediators begin by talking with the parties together, helping them focus on the important issues. The mediator may also meet with each party alone. Mediators often ask parties for their ideas about how to settle the case. Some mediators tell the parties how much money they think a case is worth, or tell them what they think might happen if the case went to trial. Other mediators help the parties decide these things for themselves. No matter what approach a mediator takes, decisions about settling a case can only be made when all the parties agree.

If the parties go through the court ADR program, mediators do not charge fees for the first half hour spent scheduling or preparing for mediation. They also do not charge fees for the first two hours of mediation. If parties need more time, they must pay the mediators regular fees. Some mediators ask for a deposit before mediation starts. Mediators who do this must give back whatever is left after counting the time he or she spent preparing for or doing the mediation. A party whose court fees have been waived (cancelled) may ask if their mediation fees or deposit can be waived.

If parties agree about how they will settle their case, they can choose to keep it private, write it up as a contract, or ask the judge to make it a court order. What parties say and agree to in mediation is confidential (private).

PRIVATE MEDIATION

Private mediation works in the same way as judicial mediation, but the parties do not go through the ADR Programs office. Parties choose a mediator on their own, and pay the mediator's normal fees.

JUDICIAL ARBITRATION (non-binding)

In judicial arbitration, an independent attorney (arbitrator) looks at the evidence, listens to the parties and their witnesses, and decides how the case will be settled. Judicial arbitration is less formal than court. Parties email, fax or visit the ADR Programs office to get a list of arbitrators. If they cannot agree on an arbitrator, the court will assign one. The judge can send cases to arbitration if there is less than \$50,000 in dispute. The person who started the court case can make sure the case goes to arbitration if they agree to limit the amount they are asking for to \$50,000. Parties can also agree they want to use judicial arbitration. The arbitrator must send their decision (award) to the court within 10 days of the last hearing. The award becomes a court judgment unless a party asks the court to review the case within 60 days. Parties must use the ADR-102 form to ask for a new court hearing (called a trial de novo.) Judicial arbitrators charge \$150 per case or per day.

PRIVATE ARBITRATION (non-binding and binding)

Private, non-binding arbitration is the same as judicial arbitration, except that the parties do not go through the ADR Programs office to choose an arbitrator, and the arbitrator's award will not become a judgment of the court unless all parties agree. Parties must pay the arbitrator's normal fees.

Binding arbitration is different from judicial or private non-binding arbitration because the arbitrator's decision is final. Parties give up their right to have a judge review their case later (except for reasons listed in California Code of Civil Procedure, Section 1286.2.) Binding arbitration rules are listed in California Code of Civil Procedure, Sections 1280-1288.8. Parties may also agree any time before the judge has made a decision that ends the case to switch to binding arbitration. Parties choose the arbitrator on their own, and must pay the arbitrator's normal (not \$150) fees.

SETTLEMENT MENTOR CONFERENCE

Settlement mentors are independent, experienced trial attorneys that a judge has assigned to help parties look for ways to settle their case. The conference is free and is held in the courthouse. It is often held on the morning of trial, but it can be scheduled anytime. These conferences usually last two or three hours. Parties do not present evidence and do not call witnesses. Parties can ask the settlement mentor to keep some information confidential (private) from the other party, but not from the judge. The settlement mentor can share any information with the judge, or involve the judge in settlement discussions. All principals, clients, and claims representatives must attend the settlement mentor conference.

NEUTRAL CASE EVALUATION

In neutral case evaluation, an independent attorney (evaluator) reviews documents and listens to each party's side of the case. The evaluator then tells the parties what they think could happen if the case went to trial. Many people use the evaluator's opinion to reach an agreement on their own, or use this information later in mediation or arbitration to settle their case.

Parties email, fax or visit the ADR Programs office to get a list of evaluators. After parties have agreed on an evaluator, they must write a summary (5 pages or less) explaining the facts, legal arguments, and legal authority for their position. They must send this summary to the other parties and the evaluator at least 5 court days before evaluation starts. ALL parties and their attorneys must go to neutral case evaluation. The evaluation can be held whenever and wherever the parties and the evaluator want, as long as they finish before the court deadline. If the parties go through the court's ADR program, evaluators do not charge any fees for the first half hour spent scheduling or preparing for the evaluation conference. They also do not charge fees for the first two hours of the evaluation. If parties need more time, they must pay that evaluators regular fees. Some evaluators ask for a deposit before evaluation starts. Evaluators who do this must give back whatever is left after counting the time he or she spent preparing for or doing the evaluation. A party whose court fees have been waived (cancelled) may ask if their evaluation fees or deposit can be waived.

TEMPORARY JUDGE

Some parties want a trial, but want to choose who will decide the case and when the trial will take place. Parties can agree on an attorney that they want the court to appoint as a temporary judge for their case. (See Article 6, Section 21 of the State Constitution and Rule 2.830 of the California Rules of Court.) Temporary judges have nearly the same authority as a superior court judge to conduct a trial and make decisions. As long as the parties meet the court deadline, they can schedule the trial at their own and the temporary judge's convenience.

Each of the temporary judges on the court's panel has agreed to serve at no charge for up to 5 court days. If the parties need more time, they must pay that person's regular fees. All parties and their lawyers must attend the trial, and provide a copy of all briefs or other court documents to the temporary judge at least two weeks before the trial. These trials are similar to other civil trials, but are usually held outside the court. The temporary judge's decision can be appealed to the superior court. There is no option for a jury trial. The parties must provide their own court reporter.

SPECIAL MASTER

A special master is a private lawyer, retired judge, or other expert appointed by the court to help make day-to-day decisions in a court case. The special master's role can vary, but often includes making decisions that help the discovery (information exchange) process go more smoothly. He or she can make decisions about the facts in the case. Special masters can be especially helpful in complex cases. The trial judge defines what the special master can and cannot do in a court order.

Special masters often issue both interim recommendations and a final report to the parties and the court. If a party objects to what the special master decides or reports to the court, that party can ask the judge to review the matter. In general, the parties choose (by stipulation) whom they want the court to appoint as the special master, but there are times (see California Code of Civil Procedure Section 639), when the court may appoint a special master or referee without the parties' agreement. The parties are responsible to pay the special master's regular fees.

COMMUNITY MEDIATION SERVICES

Mediation Services are available through non-profit community organizations. These low-cost services are provided by trained volunteer mediators. For more information about these programs contact the ADR Program at adrweb@contracosta.courts.ca.gov