



# **San Diego Superior Court Services Available During COVID-19**

**Effective September 10, 2020**





# Court Services During COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in proclamations of states of emergency by federal, state, and local officials. The associated health and safety concerns, along with public health orders, have caused substantial operational changes for the San Diego Superior Court.

On March 17, 2020, the San Diego Superior Court closed for all non-emergency services to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. The emergency closure was extended through April 30 and then again through May 22, though many additional services were added throughout the closure time period. Under the leadership of Presiding Judge Lorna Alksne, the San Diego Superior Court resumed most business operations on May 26 and continues to increase the services available to the public with the safety of all in mind.

The San Diego Superior Court is committed to protecting the health and safety of our community while performing our constitutional duties. The health and welfare of each judicial officer, employee, attorney, contractor, and member of the public that enters our facilities is paramount in the decisions that are made as the San Diego Superior Court provides services throughout the pandemic.

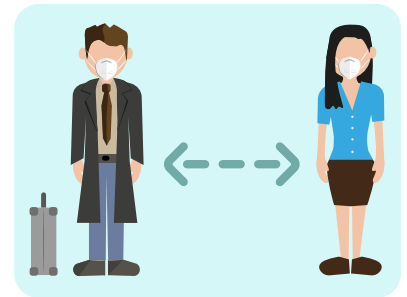
The San Diego Superior Court is closely monitoring federal, state, and local public health directives related to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines, and will continue to adjust procedures as needed. The available services detailed in this guide largely depend on policy-setting and guidance from the Judicial Council of California, and federal, state, and local officials. Information regarding public access, court facilities, and court services will be updated and further refined as plans are solidified.



# Safety Precautions

The San Diego County Public Health Officer has provided the Superior Court guidance related to safety protocols. In response, the Superior Court has instituted a range of measures to comply with the current health directives issued by federal, state, and local officials. These measures include:

- Everyone entering the courthouses will have their temperature taken and be screened for symptoms, conducted by the Sheriff's Department in accordance with San Diego County public health orders.
- Strict social distancing is enforced between employee work stations.
- Floor stickers and signage provide visible markers of 6-foot distances for customer lines in business offices and lobbies. Plexiglas screens have been installed in business offices and other public areas.
- Each employee must wear a face covering in accordance with state and local health orders and whenever they are within six feet of another person who is not a member of their family or household. Court visitors are also required to wear face coverings at all times when in court facilities.
- The public is required to wait outside the courthouses in a socially distanced queue. Court staff members will determine the needs of those in line. Individuals who cannot be assisted via leaving paperwork in the Court's drop boxes or information provided outside the courthouse, and who have essential business to conduct, are permitted to enter with masks and social distancing.
- Video-remote technology has been implemented in many courtrooms, with the parties participating remotely.
- As many processes as possible have, or will be, converted to online, telephone, or video services to the public.
- The number of persons in elevators at any one time is limited.
- The Court has implemented increased cleaning of all high-touch areas in the courthouses, including door handles and elevator buttons.
- Hand sanitizer is widely available in public spaces within the courthouses.
- Children's Waiting Rooms located within court facilities remain closed until further notice.



## Jury Trials to Resume October 13

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, several statewide and local emergency orders suspended all jury trials in San Diego County. The San Diego Superior Court plans to resume jury trials beginning on October 13 with jurors summoned beginning on October 9. Several additional precautions have been built into welcoming prospective jurors as jury trials resume. For example, significantly fewer jurors are being summoned and the Court will use telephone standby and a new online portal to assist in not calling in more people than necessary. Find additional details on the resumption of jury trials on [page 21](#) or in the news release posted to [sdcourt.ca.gov/coronavirus](https://sdcourt.ca.gov/coronavirus).

## Court Appearances

Most hearings are currently conducted remotely via video or telephone conference. This is to protect the health and safety of the public, including court users, both in-custody and out-of-custody defendants, witnesses, court personnel, judicial officers, and litigants. Notices are mailed to participants and indicate how hearings will be conducted. Learn more about the courtrooms currently in operation for virtual hearings on [pages 23-24](#) or visit the Court's website at [sdcourt.ca.gov](https://sdcourt.ca.gov).





# Public Access

**Services Available Beginning September 10**



**Business Office Hours:**  
**8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.**



**Phone Hours:**  
**8:30 – 11:30 a.m.**

(contact numbers listed at [sdcourt.ca.gov](https://sdcourt.ca.gov))

Persons with Court business are able to access the following locations for certain in-person services:

- Central Courthouse: *1st through 4th Floors (Business Offices) and 14th Floor (Central Records)*
- Hall of Justice: *1st and 2nd Floors (Business Offices)*
- Kearny Mesa Traffic Court
- East County Regional Center: *Ground and 1st Floors (Business Offices)*
- North County Regional Center: *South Building Lobby, North Building and Annex (Business Offices)*
- South County Regional Center: *1st through 3rd Floors (Business Offices)*
- Juvenile Court: *1st and 2nd Floors (Business Offices)*

**Drop boxes are available for your convenience.**

**Come to the appropriate location to have your files  
time-stamped and dropped off for processing. No need to wait!**



Central Courthouse Drop Boxes  
(located in the lobby)

- Criminal
- Family Law
- Probate

Hall of Justice Drop Boxes  
(located in the lobby)

- Civil, including Small Claims

Kearny Mesa Traffic Facility Drop Box  
• Traffic Cases & Minor Offenses only

East County Regional Center Drop Boxes  
(located on the ground floor)

- Civil (Restraining Orders only)
- Criminal
- Family Law
- Juvenile Dependency
- Traffic & Minor Offenses

North County Regional Center Drop Boxes  
(located at the North & South buildings)

- Civil
- Criminal
- Family Law
- Juvenile Dependency & Adoptions
- Probate
- Traffic & Minor Offenses

South County Regional Center Drop Boxes  
(located on the first floor)

- Civil (Restraining Orders only)
- Criminal
- Family Law
- Traffic & Minor Offenses

Juvenile Court Drop Boxes

- Juvenile Cases only, including Adoptions
- Appeals for Juvenile Cases



### Access to Court Records

#### *Research, including Background/Records Checks:*

Dedicated phone lines have been established for researchers which has reduced wait times for the general public for research requests and other inquiries. Phone hours are 8:30-11:30 a.m.

- Phone number for researchers: 619-844-2024
- Phone numbers for public requests:
  - Central Division – 619-844-2400
  - North County Division: 760-201-8600
  - East County Division: 619-456-4100
  - South County Division: 619-746-6200
- Research may also be requested through the mail.

#### *Copies of Court Records:*

The Court is working to develop an information technology solution to allow requests for copies (both certified and non-certified) to be made and paid for online. In the meantime, customers may [mail requests or come in person to the business offices](#). Large copy requests may be required to be dropped off.



#### *Research Kiosks:*

- Register of Actions kiosks (Civil, Probate, and Small Claims cases) are available at the Hall of Justice, Central Courthouse, and the East County, North County, and South County Regional Centers
- Odyssey kiosks (Family and Traffic cases) are available at the Central Courthouse, and the East County, North County, and South County Regional Centers

### Access to Exhibits

To request access to exhibits for any Superior Court location, contact the Superior Court's Exhibits Department to **make an appointment**:

- Central Courthouse: 619-844-2574
- North County Regional Center: 760-201-8285
- East County Regional Center: 619-456-4240
- South County Regional Center: 619-746-6198
- Juvenile Court: 858-634-1608

More  
information by  
case type:

**Civil**

**Criminal**

**Family**

**Juvenile**

**Probate**

**Traffic  
& Minor  
Offenses**

**Appeals**

### Locations

- Restraining Orders – Hall of Justice, and the East County, North County, and South County Regional Centers
- Limited and Unlimited – Hall of Justice and North County Regional Center
- Small Claims – Hall of Justice
- Unlawful Detainer – Hall of Justice
- Name or Gender Change – Hall of Justice and North County Regional Center



### **DID YOU KNOW:**

- An **unlimited civil case** is a general civil case asking for money above \$25,000.
- A **limited civil case** is a general civil case asking for money up to \$25,000.
- A **small claims case** is a limited general civil case asking for \$10,000 or less.
- Unlawful detainer cases, also called **evictions**, are lawsuits in which a landlord tries to evict a tenant because, according to the landlord, the tenant no longer has the right to live on the property.

## **Restraining Orders**

Civil Restraining Order hearings are being held remotely at this time. Find more information about Civil Harassment virtual hearings on the Court's website at [sdcourt.ca.gov/Civil](https://sdcourt.ca.gov/Civil).

Civil Temporary Restraining Orders (TROs) include Harassment, Elder Abuse, Workplace Violence, Private Postsecondary School Violence, Transitional Housing Misconduct, Gun Violence TROs, and Gun Violence Emergency Protective Orders.

Civil TROs are accepted in person and can be filed in the Civil Division in the Hall of Justice and North County Regional Center and in Family Court at the East and South County Regional Centers.

### *Process to Request a TRO:*

To have a Request for Temporary Restraining Order filed and heard by a judge on the same day, the petitioner must be in line with completed paperwork by 3 p.m., in accordance with [Code of Civil Procedure § 527.6\(e\)](#). ("Completed" is defined as meaning all names and information must be completed and match across all documents and be written in a clear, legible manner so that the Judicial Officer may consider the request.)

[Code of Civil Procedure § 527.6\(e\)](#) states: "A request for the issuance of a temporary restraining order without notice under this section shall be granted or denied on the same day that the petition is submitted to the court, unless the petition is filed too late in the day to permit effective review, in which case the order shall be granted or denied on the next day of judicial business in sufficient time for the order to be filed that day with the clerk of the court."

Once you obtain your initial Temporary Restraining Order, it is the responsibility of the petitioner to have the respondent personally served with all necessary documents as instructed by the clerk. Proof of service for the respondent must be filed with the Court prior to or at the time of the hearing on the restraining order. The party can be served by:

- The Sheriff's Department of the county where the respondent lives or works
- Anyone over the age of 18 years old and not a party named in the case

During the Court's temporary closure, if you used someone over the age of 18, who is not a named party in the case, to serve the respondent, you must also submit a copy of your Proof of Service to the Sheriff's Civil Office. There is a Sheriff's Civil Office located at each Court location. You are also responsible for submitting your original Proof of Service to the Court.

If a restraining order was filed against you, you may respond by completing and filing the appropriate forms included in the response packets found on the Court's website at [sdcourt.ca.gov/Civil](https://sdcourt.ca.gov/Civil).



### Types of Restraining Orders

#### Civil Harassment:

Under California law ([Code of Civil Procedure § 527.6](#)), a person who has suffered harassment may seek a temporary restraining order and an injunction prohibiting harassment.

Civil Harassment Restraining Orders differ from *Family Law Domestic Violence Restraining Orders* in that the person doing the harassing has no close family or domestic relationship with the victim. For example, a Civil Harassment Restraining Order applies to a neighbor, roommate, or stranger. A [Domestic Violence Restraining Order](#) is filed in the **Family Court** and applies to a current or former husband, wife, boyfriend, girlfriend, or certain other relatives.

You may seek protection if you are worried about your safety because you are being stalked, threatened, harassed, or sexually assaulted. Pursuant to [California Code of Civil Procedure § 527.6\(b\)](#), the course of conduct must be such as would cause a reasonable person to suffer substantial emotional distress and must actually cause substantial emotional distress to the victim. The restraining order can be used to prevent personal conduct by the harasser, order the harasser to stay away from the victim, the victim's family, the victim's home/work and/or children's school, and provide for other miscellaneous orders.

#### Elder and Dependent Adult Abuse:

An elder/dependent adult abuse restraining order applies to a person seeking a protective order who falls within the definition of elder or dependent adult. Under California law ([Welfare & Institutions Code § 15657.03](#)), a person who is 65 years of age or older (elder) OR a person who is between 18 and 64 years of age and who has mental or physical limitations that prevent them from carrying out their normal activities (dependent adult), who has been a victim of one or more of the following:

- Physical, financial, mental, or emotional abuse;
- Neglect, abandonment, abduction, or isolation;
- Treatment that has caused physical harm, pain, or mental suffering; OR
- Deprivation by a caregiver of goods or services needed to avoid harm or suffering.

#### Workplace Violence:

A Workplace Violence TRO is filed by an EMPLOYER to protect an employee (or employees) from unlawful violence, or credible threats of violence, that have or reasonably could take place at the workplace.

#### Private Postsecondary School Violence:

A Private Postsecondary School Violence TRO is filed by a Chief Administrative Officer (or designee) of a private postsecondary school (i.e., private college or vocational school), to protect a current or potential student (or students) from unlawful violence, or credible threats of violence, that have or reasonably could take place at the school.

#### Transitional Housing Misconduct:

A Transitional Housing Misconduct TRO is filed by a program operator who is operating a transitional housing program to prohibit abuse or misconduct by a participant.

#### Gun Violence:

A Gun Violence Restraining Order requires that a person surrender, and prohibits him or her from possessing or purchasing firearms, ammunition, or magazines. Under California law (Pen. Code § 18100 et seq.), upon the showing that a person poses a significant danger, in the near future, of causing personal injury to the subject of the petition or another by having in their custody or control, owning, purchasing, possessing, or receiving a firearm, a law enforcement officer or immediate family member (as defined in Pen. Code § 422.4(b)(3)) may request an order requiring a person to surrender and prohibiting him or her from possessing or purchasing firearms, ammunition, or magazines. A Gun Violence TRO can be filed by an immediate family member as defined by Penal Code § 422.4(b)(3) or a law enforcement officer.

#### Gun Violence Emergency Protective Order:

A Gun Violence Emergency Protective Order (GV-EPO) is a type of restraining order that only law enforcement can ask for by calling a judge. Judges are available to issue GV-EPOs 24 hours a day. A police officer who answers an emergency call may ask a judge for a GV-EPO at any time of the day or night. After a law enforcement officer obtains a GV-EPO, either during business hours or after hours, and once it is served on the restrained person, he or she must file a copy of the GV-EPO form (JC Form #EPO-002) in the business office that processes civil harassment restraining orders at the division where the restrained person resides. A hearing will be scheduled 21 days after issuance of the GV-EPO to determine if a GV-EPO should be issued for one year.

**Need help with filing a restraining order?  
See the Self-Help Services available on the next page**

### Self-Help Services for Restraining Orders

Court-based legal service providers, Legal Aid Society of San Diego and San Diego Volunteer Lawyer Program, offer remote assistance by phone, email, and video conference during the pandemic. **You are encouraged to seek assistance from a legal service provider before visiting the courthouse.** Providers are attorneys and legal professionals who can explain procedures, prepare your forms and write your declaration. Services are provided at no cost.

#### Legal Aid Society of San Diego (LASSD)

- Remote assistance is available by phone and video conference
- LASSD will prepare your forms and email them to you or to the courthouse for pick up and filing
- 877-534-2524, Ext. 2844

#### San Diego Volunteer Lawyer Program (SDVLP)

- Remote assistance is available by phone and video conference
- SDVLP will prepare your forms and email them to you or to the courthouse for pick up and filing
- Apply for assistance online by filling out the Restraining Order Screening Form at [sdvlp.org](https://sdvlp.org)
- English: 619-235-5656, Ext. 118
- Spanish: 619-235-5656, Ext. 102

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### Limited & Unlimited Civil Cases

A limited civil case is a general civil case asking for money up to \$25,000.

An unlimited civil case is a general civil case asking for money above \$25,000.

E-Filing is available for Civil matters. Find more details at [sdcourt.ca.gov/Civil](https://sdcourt.ca.gov/Civil).

#### In-person services currently available at the Hall of Justice:

The following filings are accepted at the counter:

- Temporary Restraining Orders (Civil Harassment, Elder Abuse, Workplace Violence, Emergency Protective Order, etc.) and related filings
- Claims of Right to Possession or Third Party Claims of Right to Possession
- Ex parte papers for Department 60 (Central Division only)
- Abatement Warrants
- Writ of Election
- All other documents to be time-stamped and dropped in a Drop Box

Viewing of case files, including copies and certifications

Attorney Service messenger pick up and drop off in lockers



#### In-person services currently available at the North County Courthouse:

The following filings are accepted at the counter:

- Temporary Restraining Orders (Civil Harassment, Elder Abuse, Workplace Violence, Emergency Protective Order, etc.) and related filings
- Abatement Warrants
- All other documents to be time-stamped and dropped in a Drop Box

Viewing of case files, including copies and certifications

Attorney Service messengers pick up and drop off in lockers



# Services Available Beginning September 10

## Limited & Unlimited Civil Cases

*continued*

### Process for Scheduling an Ex Parte Hearing

For cases assigned to a Civil Independent Calendar (IC) department, you must call the calendar clerk for the department in which your case is assigned. Please refer to the [Court's website for department calendar clerk phone numbers](#). Independent Calendar departments include:

- Hall of Justice: Departments 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, and 75
- North County Regional Center: Departments N-27, N-28, N-29, and N-31

For Non-Independent Calendar departments, you must call the Civil Business Office in the location to which your case is assigned. For Central, the phone number is 619-450-7275. For North County, the phone number is 760-201-8243. Ex parte hearings for cases assigned to the Central Division will be available only on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Ex parte hearings for cases assigned to the North County Division will be available only on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

All ex parte hearings will be held remotely/telephonically using CourtCall. Once you have received confirmation from the Court that your ex parte date has been scheduled, you may contact [CourtCall](#) to make arrangements.



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### Informal Discovery

If you want to have an informal discovery conference related to an ongoing discovery dispute either for a motion that was previously set on calendar, or for a new discovery dispute, you should contact the independent calendar clerk for the department to which your case is assigned to set an ex parte hearing to discuss your discovery matter and obtain a referral.

Please note: All informal discovery conference requests require approval from the independent calendar judge to whom your case is assigned. The independent calendar judge to whom your case is assigned can hear your informal discovery conference, or you may ask and/or be referred to one of the overflow Civil judges assigned to informal discovery conferences. The overflow judges who will be hearing the conferences are Hon. Jeffrey B. Barton, Hon. Carolyn M. Caietti, Hon. Kevin A. Enright, Hon. Frederic L. Link, and Hon. Pamela M. Parker.

In preparation for an informal discovery conference, the parties shall each electronically file a brief no more than five pages in length, outlining the areas in dispute at least five days before the informal discovery conference. If the discovery dispute does not resolve informally, the parties' attorneys may stipulate to a dispositive hearing following the informal discovery conference by using the Stipulation for Discovery Determination Following Informal Discovery Conference Form ([SDSC Form #CIV-405](#)).

It is anticipated that this hearing will be scheduled promptly, thus resolving the discovery issue. If there is no stipulation and the discovery matter is not resolved, the case is referred back to the independent calendar department for a noticed motion hearing in due course.

Limited Civil matters in Central Department 61 and North County Department 26 are being heard remotely at this time. Find more information about limited civil virtual hearings at [sdcourt.ca.gov/Civil](https://sdcourt.ca.gov/Civil).

# Civil

## Services Available Beginning September 10

### Small Claims Cases

A small claims case is a general civil case asking for \$10,000 or less.

Small claims cases may be filed at the Hall of Justice, where the following services are available:

- The following filings are accepted at the counter:
  - Dismissals
  - Notice of Change of Address
  - Satisfaction of Judgment
- All other documents are to be time-stamped and dropped in the Drop Box
- Payment of Judgment to the Court
- Viewing of case files, including copies and certifications

All hearing dates in small claims cases have been vacated and will be re-scheduled by the Court. Parties will receive a notice from the Court with the date and time of the re-scheduled hearing, along with information regarding how to appear at the hearing.

Small claims hearings (motions and trials) that were scheduled during the Court's COVID-19 closure will be re-scheduled.

Hearings for small claims matters that were filed on and after May 26, 2020, will be scheduled for future dates.

Small claims hearings are being held remotely at this time. Find more information about small claims virtual hearings at [sdcourt.ca.gov/Civil](https://sdcourt.ca.gov/Civil).

The Small Claims Legal Advisory is preparing to expand its remote services to include live chat and video appointment offerings. In-person self-help services at court facilities will resume at a later date.

### Self-Help Services for Small Claims cases

The Small Claims Legal Advisory offers remote assistance by phone and email during the pandemic. **You are encouraged to seek assistance from the Small Claims Legal Advisory before filing paperwork and/or visiting the courthouse.** Services are provided at no cost.

#### Small Claims Legal Advisory

- Speak to an attorney or paralegal who can explain procedures and assist you with preparing your forms.
- SCLA will transmit your completed forms to you by email
- 858-634-1777
  - Phone Hours: Monday – Friday
  - 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
  - 1:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
- Help is available in English & Spanish





### Unlawful Detainer Cases

Unlawful detainer cases, also called evictions, involve a lawsuit in which a landlord tries to evict a tenant because, according to the landlord, the tenant no longer has the right to live on the property.

Unlawful detainer cases may be filed at the Hall of Justice.

All hearing dates in unlawful detainer cases that were scheduled during the Court's closure have been vacated and will be re-scheduled by the Court. Parties will receive a notice from the Court with the date and time of the re-scheduled hearing, along with information regarding how to appear at the hearing.

Due to the COVID-19 emergency, government directives and orders are rapidly changing. For the most current information regarding the moratorium on evictions enacted by local governments, please consult your city's website or the County of San Diego website if you live in an unincorporated area of the county.

The Governor's Executive Order, Emergency Rules, and the City and County Emergency Moratoriums on Evictions do not relieve a tenant from the obligation to pay rent. In addition, the orders do not restrict a landlord's ability to recover rent due.

### Self-Help Services for Unlawful Detainer (Landlord-Tenant) cases

Court-based legal service providers, Legal Aid Society of San Diego and San Diego Volunteer Lawyer Program, offers remote assistance by phone, email, and video conference during the pandemic. **You are encouraged to seek assistance from a legal service provider before visiting the courthouse.** Providers are attorneys and legal professionals who can explain procedures and prepare your forms. Services are provided at no cost.

#### Legal Aid Society of San Diego (LASSD)

- Remote assistance is available by phone and video conference
- LASSD will prepare and email your completed forms to you for filing
- 877-534-2524, Ext. 2844

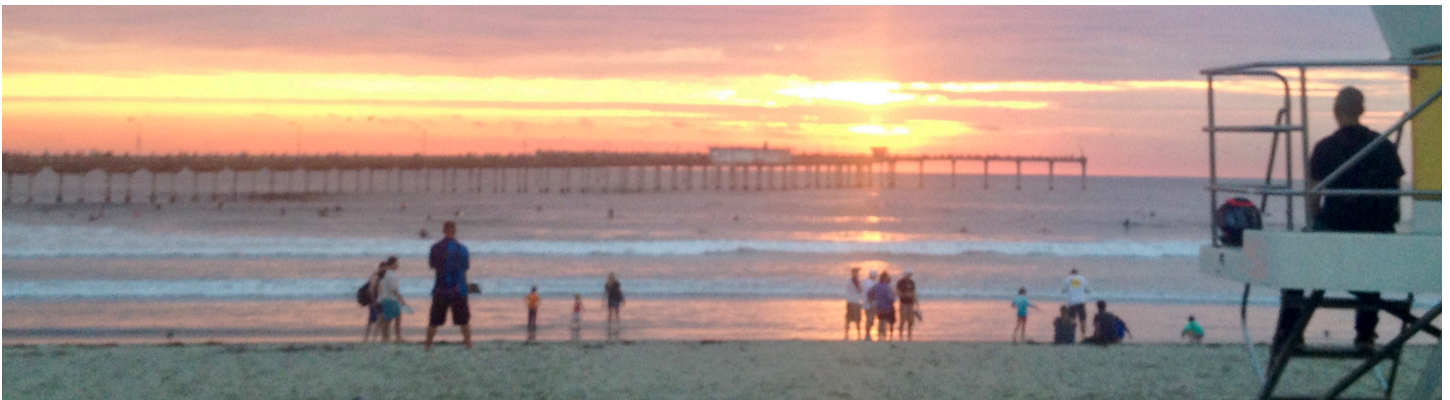
#### San Diego Volunteer Lawyer Program (SDVLP)

- Remote assistance is available by phone and video conference
- SDVLP will prepare your forms and email them to you for filing
- Apply for assistance online by filling out the Landlord/Tenant Help Request Form at [sdvlp.org](https://sdvlp.org)
- 619-235-5656, Ext. 127

Unlawful detainer motion hearings are being held remotely at this time.

Find more information about unlawful detainer remote hearings on the Court's website at [sdcourt.ca.gov/Civil](https://sdcourt.ca.gov/Civil).

In-person self-help services at court facilities will resume at a later date.



### Name or Gender Changes

Requests for change of name or gender can be filed at the Hall of Justice and the North County Regional Center.

### Self-Help Services for Name or Gender Changes

Court-based legal service provider Legal Aid of Society of San Diego offers remote assistance by phone and video conference during the pandemic. **You are encouraged to seek assistance from Legal Aid before visiting the courthouse.** Providers are attorneys and legal professionals who can explain procedures and prepare your forms. Services are provided at no cost.

#### Legal Aid Society of San Diego (LASSD)

- Remote assistance is available by phone and video conference
- LASSD will prepare your forms and email them to you for filing
- 877-534-2524, Ext. 2844

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### Habeas Corpus

#### Process for Bringing a Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus regarding Quarantine Detention

To challenge an Order from the Public Health Officer to Isolate or Quarantine, a party must file a Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus re Quarantine Detention ([Form SDSC #CIV-401](#)). All such Petitions will be filed and heard in the Central Division of the San Diego Superior Court, Presiding Department. The process is temporary, and has been implemented solely to address the current health and safety issues caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. For additional details, please refer to the [Civil Habeas Corpus FAQ document](#) found on the Court's website at [sdcourt.ca.gov/coronavirus](http://sdcourt.ca.gov/coronavirus).





# Criminal

## Services Available Beginning September 10

### Locations

- Central Courthouse
- East County Regional Center
- North County Regional Center
- South County Regional Center



Out-of-custody criminal hearings and jury trials are currently being re-scheduled.

Notices of court hearings are being mailed.

Please contact the Court if you have questions on a pending criminal matter.

### Criminal Business Office in-person services:

- Fine payments
- Program reassignments/extensions
- Background/Records checks (for non-researchers; limit one per visit)
- Copy requests (for non-researchers)
- Verification of appearance
- Assist customers at the counter with inquiries
- Kiosk access to research cases
- Address warrants/license holds
- Order files upon request
- Accept felony motions and petitions\*

### Drop Box Only:

- Proof of completion of court-ordered programs
- Motions to be filed and responsive pleadings\*
- Habeas corpus petitions, and responsive pleadings
- Accept Petition for Dismissal and expungement filings (misdemeanor or felony)
- Accept probation and parole recalls and warrant requests
- Accept and process correspondence and mail
- Accept and route probation reports
- Misdemeanor motions and petitions\*
- Counter/fax arraignments

*\* Only select filings will be scheduled for hearings at this time. Anything else will be accepted and held until services are expanded.*



# Services Available Beginning September 10

## Family & Family Support Division

### Locations

- Central Courthouse
- East County Regional Center
- North County Regional Center
- South County Regional Center



E-Filing for Family Law matters is available.

Documents may be filed electronically in actions for divorce, legal separation, annulment, parentage, child custody, visitation, support (child and spousal), and family-related issues.

Find more information at the Family Law e-Filing link at [sdcourt.ca.gov/Family](https://sdcourt.ca.gov/Family).

Family Law hearings are being held remotely at this time. Find more information about Family Law virtual hearings at [sdcourt.ca.gov/Family](https://sdcourt.ca.gov/Family).

### Family Business Office in-person services:

- Accept requests for Domestic Violence Temporary Restraining Orders (DVTRO), proof of service, and responses to temporary restraining orders (TROs)
- Accept emergency ex parte requests
- Cashier services – payments/purchase forms/copies
- Copy requests (25 pages or less; over 25 pages must use the drop box)
- Viewing physical case files or viewing imaged cases on the kiosks
- Elisor Appointments
- Process Changes of Address
- Process Requests for Fee Waiver (time sensitive)
- Notice of Lodgment of Exhibits (within 10 days of hearing)
- Accept Trial Briefs
- Request for Orders
- Responsive Declaration to Request for Order
- Substitution of Attorney
- Withdrawal of Attorney
- Notice of Limited Scope of Attorney
- Purchase forms

### Drop Box Only:

- New petitions
- Orders/Findings and Order After Hearing
- Family Support Filings
- Income Withholding Order
- Qualified Domestic Relations Order
- Judgments
- Stipulations
- Declarations
- Declarations regarding Service of Declarations of Disclosure and Income & Expense Declaration
- Income & Expense Declaration
- Notice and Acknowledgment of Receipt
- Notice of Continuance
- Proof of Service of Summons
- Property Declaration
- Request for Dismissal
- Responses to Petitions
- Request for Joinder
- Restoration of Former Name
- Abstracts
- Application and Order for Posting/Publication Declaration/Order for Attorney Fees and Costs
- Earnings Assignment Order
- Peremptory Challenge
- Request to Continue a Request for Order
- Request to Enter Default
- Registration of out-of-state custody order
- Transfers/change of venue
- Writ of Execution
- [Family Law forms](#) not listed above

### Requesting an Emergency Family Ex Parte Order

If a person needs to request an emergency family ex parte order, they should submit their Ex Parte Application and Order – Family Law Form (SDSC Form [#D-046](#)) and supporting ex parte paperwork including a Request for Order Form (JC Form [#FL-300](#)), if applicable, and a Credit Card Payment Form (SDSC Form [#ADM-253](#)) to the Family Business Office at the appropriate location. Check payments will also be accepted, but there should be two separate checks submitted at time of filing the ex parte paperwork if accompanied by a Request for Order (one check for the Ex Parte Application and one check for the Request for Order and Court Reporter Fee).

Upon receipt of the paperwork, the clerk will set the matter for a hearing date and time. Paperwork received by noon will be scheduled for the following day. Notice must be provided by the moving party to the responding party in the case 24 hours prior to the scheduled hearing date and time. Ex parte hearings will be set for 1:30 p.m. the following day (Monday through Friday) for each Department including the Family Support Division. Opposition paperwork may be filed at the designated Family Business Office at the appropriate location no later than 10 a.m. on the day of the designated hearing date. Parties will be instructed to return to the designated Family Business Office or courthouse lobby to pick up their paperwork after 3:30 p.m. Effective September 14, ex parte hearings will be conducted via MS Teams. Please see the Court's website for MS Team information. No in-person hearings will be conducted.

### Family Law Facilitator Services

The Court's Family Law Facilitator's Office (FLF) helps unrepresented parents and parties who have questions about family law issues at no cost.

Services available in person at the courthouse locations:

- Assist with forms to request domestic violence, civil harassment and elder abuse restraining orders

Services available remotely:

- Ex parte assistance: assist public with completing paperwork to request an emergency order
- Document review for litigants: FLF staff to review paperwork before the documents are filed. Paperwork would be dropped or mailed similar to the procedure for filings.
- Self-Represented Family Case Resolution (SFRC) calendars are being conducted daily by telephone. Whenever possible, courtesy calls are being made a day ahead to parties to explain the procedure.
- Workshops:
  - Divorce workshops are being conducted by video conference (Zoom) every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, scheduled through the Central Division only.
  - Spanish divorce workshops are being conducted by video conference (Zoom) every Monday, scheduled through the Central Division only.
  - Guardianship workshops are being conducted by video conference (Zoom) twice weekly (Tuesdays and Thursdays).
  - Online Workshop Registration: [iflow.sdcourt.ca.gov](http://iflow.sdcourt.ca.gov)
- Answer questions received via email, phone and Google questionnaire, including ex parte requests, workshop follow-up, new petitions, responses, Requests for Orders, judgments, and more. These are all being handled by phone or a video conference (Zoom) appointment, if needed.
- Findings and Order After Hearing (FOAH) and judgments from virtual hearings are mailed to the parties after approval by the judge.
- Review and correct, if possible, pro per judgments received from courtroom before they are rejected (Central Courthouse only).
- Request help:
  - Online Questionnaire: [sdcourt.ca.gov/Family](http://sdcourt.ca.gov/Family)
  - Voicemail: 619-844-2249





### Self-Help Services for Domestic Violence Restraining Orders

Court-based legal service providers offer remote assistance by phone, email, and/or video conference during the pandemic. **You are encouraged to seek assistance from a legal service provider before visiting the courthouse.** Providers are attorneys and legal professionals who can explain procedures and prepare your forms. Services are provided at no cost.

#### San Diego Volunteer Lawyer Program (SDVLP)

Remote assistance with petitions is available by phone and video conference. SDVLP will prepare and email your completed forms to you, or to the courthouse, for pick up and filing. Apply for assistance online by filling out the Restraining Order Screening Form at [sdvlp.org](http://sdvlp.org)

- North, Central, and South County Residents:
  - English: 619-235-5656, Ext. 118
  - Spanish: 619-235-5656, Ext. 102
- East County Residents
  - English & Spanish: 619-235-5656, Ext. 122
  - Phone Hours:
    - Monday/Tuesday: 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.
    - Wednesday: 8:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.

For those who have already filed a Domestic Violence Temporary Restraining Order, SDVLP holds weekly virtual workshops to prepare petitioners for their virtual court hearings. To obtain the link to the workshop, contact:

- English: 619-235-5656, Ext. 118
- Spanish: 619-235-5656, Ext. 102
- Apply for assistance online by filling out the Restraining Order Screening Form at [sdvlp.org](http://sdvlp.org)

#### Legal Aid Society of San Diego (LASSD)

Remote assistance is available by phone and video conference. LASSD will prepare and email your forms to you, or to the courthouse, for pick up and filing

- Phone hours: Monday – Friday: 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
- 877-534-2524, Ext. 2844

#### Center for Community Solutions (CCS)

Remote assistance is available by phone and video conference. CCS will prepare your initial DVRO paperwork and email this paperwork to you, or to the courthouse, for pick up and filing

- CCS DVRO Clinic Helpline – East San Diego County Residents  
Clinic Phone Hours: Wednesday: 1 p.m. – 5 p.m. and Thursday & Friday: 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.
  - 619-314-5714
  - If they are busy with another caller, please leave your name, a safe contact number (please state if it is “safe” to leave a voicemail), and a brief message and they will return your call during the clinic phone hours above.
- CCS Legal Intake Line (Appointment-based services only)
  - 858-272-5777, Ext. 7100
  - Please leave your name, a safe contact number (please state if it is “safe” to leave a voicemail), and a brief message and they will return your call as quickly as possible during CCS Business Hours (Monday – Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.).

### Family Court Services

Services currently available:

- Conduct Lanterman Petris Short (LPS) mental health hearings by telephone
- Conduct child custody mediations and guardianship investigations by telephone

Drop Box Only

- Data sheets
- Separate interview requests
- Complaints
- Subpoenas

**Prior to a Family Court Services session, parties are to review the orientation video available online at [sdcourt.ca.gov/Family](http://sdcourt.ca.gov/Family) under the Custody & Visitation link and review the Family Court Services' Child Custody Recommending Counseling Information Sheet (FCS-022).**

In-person interviews for minor marriage petitions from Juvenile are to be conducted at the Central Courthouse at a later date.

# Juvenile

## Services Available Beginning September 10

### Locations

- Juvenile Court
- East County Regional Center
- North County Regional Center



All hearings are being conducted via MS Teams. There are no in person hearings at this time.

### Juvenile Business Office in-person services:

- Accept Notices of Appeal
- Accept Notices of Intent
- Accept Petitions to View Records
- Adoptions (only at Juvenile Court and North County Regional Center)
- Background checks
- Copy requests
- Juvenile marriage requests

### Drop Box Only:

- Disclosure requests
- Reports from social workers
- Emancipations
- Name change requests



# Probate

## Services Available Beginning September 10

### Locations

- Central Courthouse
- North County Regional Center



In-person services previously available, including in-person hearings and in-person investigations in guardianship and conservatorships, will resume at a later date.

Probate hearings are currently heard via CourtCall. Effective November 2, 2020, probate hearings will be heard via Microsoft Teams.

Visit [sdcourt.ca.gov/Probate](https://sdcourt.ca.gov/Probate) for more information.

E-Filing for Probate matters is available. Find more information at the Probate e-Filing link at [sdcourt.ca.gov/Probate](https://sdcourt.ca.gov/Probate).

General services available:

- Remote investigations (telephone/video) in guardianship and conservatorship cases
- Setting ex parte matters per the standard department guidelines
- Examining and posting Probate Notes to the San Diego Superior Court website for matters with a future hearing date
- All regularly scheduled hearings (guardianships, conservatorships, decedent's estates, trusts, etc.)
- All hearings are currently conducted via telephone/video using [CourtCall](#), including trials and contested hearings. Effective Nov. 2, 2020, all Probate matters will be conducted via Microsoft Teams telephone/video conference. *No personal appearances are allowed until further notice*

Probate Business Office in-person services:

- Process copy requests and certifications. Exemplifications must be dropped in the Drop Box or mailed only
- Accept and file ex parte petitions/applications and set hearings
- Answer questions and provide forms over the counter
- All other items to be filed should be submitted via the Drop Box, mail or e-Filing

## Self-Help Services for Guardianship and Conservatorship Cases

Court-based legal service providers including the Family Law Facilitator (FLF) and Legal Aid Society of San Diego (LASSD) offer remote assistance by phone and video conference during the pandemic. **You are encouraged to seek assistance from a legal service provider before visiting the courthouse.** Providers are attorneys and legal professionals who can explain procedures and prepare your forms. Services are provided at no cost.

### Family Law Facilitator – Guardianship Cases

Guardianship workshops are being conducted by video conference (Zoom) twice weekly (Tuesdays and Thursdays).

- Register Online: [iflow.sdcourt.ca.gov](https://iflow.sdcourt.ca.gov)
- Register by Phone: 619-844-2869

### Legal Aid Society of San Diego (LASSD) – Conservatorship Cases

Remote assistance is available by phone and video conference. LASSD will prepare your forms and email them to you for filing

- 877-534-2524, Ext. 2844

## Legal Services for Probate Guardianship of the Person:

If you are seeking or objecting to guardianship, seeking to terminate a guardianship, or seeking visitation or other orders in a guardianship, and are low income, you may qualify for assistance through the San Diego Volunteer Lawyer Program.

### San Diego Volunteer Lawyer Program (SDVLP)

Remote assistance is available by phone and video conference. SDVLP will prepare your forms and mail or email them to you to print at home, or SDVLP can e-file your forms with the court

- 619-235-5656, Ext. 111
- Apply for assistance online by filling out the Guardianship Legal Assistance Request Form at [sdvlp.org](https://sdvlp.org)



# Traffic & Minor Offenses

## Locations

- Kearny Mesa Traffic Court
- East County Regional Center
- North County Regional Center
- South County Regional Center



## Financial Hardship and Inability to Pay

If you have a financial hardship and can show that you are unable to pay the full amount for the offenses on your traffic ticket, find more information on the options available to you on the Court's website at [sdcourt.ca.gov/Traffic](https://sdcourt.ca.gov/Traffic).

If your case is in collections or your license is suspended for failing to appear, you have two options:

- If you want to plead guilty, consider submitting completed [MO-041](#) and [ADM-283](#) forms to the Court. If these forms are received, the Court will release the hold on your license (if applicable) and you will be notified by mail of the Court's decision.
- If you want to plead not guilty, consider submitting completed [MO-012](#) and [ADM-283](#) forms to the Court. Bail will not be required. If these forms are received, the Court will release the hold on your license (if applicable) and you will be notified within 90 days of a trial date.

## Online Services:

**[sdcourt.ca.gov/Traffic](https://sdcourt.ca.gov/Traffic)**

[Pay your bail or fine online](#)

[Request a 30-day extension](#)

[Request traffic school](#)

[Set up a payment plan or make a payment](#)



*If you receive a "time out" error when trying to process a payment online and are using Google Chrome as your web browser, that may be the problem. Try using a different web browser and see if that corrects the issue. If the problem persists, you can mail your payment to the address indicated on your citation.*

Services available in person at all Traffic Court locations (business offices/payment windows):

- Fine or bail payments (All payment types accepted. Non-cash payment types can also be dropped in the secure Drop Box)
- Program reassignments/extensions
- Background/Records checks
- Process copy requests
- Establish payment plans
- Issue verifications of appearance
- Assist customers at the counter with inquiries
- Accept and process correspondence and mail
- Receive fax arraignments and recall warrants
- Order files upon request
- Accept guilty/not guilty plea at counter in the same manner as those mailed in or dropped
- Process bail forfeitures

Drop Box Options:

- Payments (check, money order, credit card; no cash)
- Proof of completion of court-ordered programs
- Proof of correction with payment of applicable fee (no cash)
- Motions to be filed, and responsive pleadings
- Correspondence not mailed

In-person hearings are not being held. Vacated hearings are being re-scheduled and held remotely. Find more information about virtual Traffic hearings at [sdcourt.ca.gov/Traffic](https://sdcourt.ca.gov/Traffic).

# Appeals

## Services Available Beginning September 10

### Location

- Central Courthouse



All Appeals documents can be filed at the Appeals Business Office in the Central Courthouse

Notices of Appeals can be filed at the Central Courthouse or can be dropped off at the courthouse where the case was originally heard and the documents will be routed to the Central Courthouse for processing.

E-Filing is available for Appeals matters in Unlimited Civil, Limited Civil (including Unlawful Detainer appeals), and Probate case types.

The Court of Appeal issued numerous Orders during the Court's closure, some of which may serve to extend time periods specified by the California Rules of Court. However, the deadline may not be extended:

- [4/16/20 Court of Appeal Misc. Order 041620 In Re: Extensions Due to Court Closure](#)
- [4/15/20 Court of Appeal Implementation Order for the Renewed Order Pursuant to Rule 8.66 of the California Rules of Court](#)
- [4/9/20 Court of Appeal Implementation Order for Order Authorizing Retroactive Application of Amended Rule 8.66 of the California Rules of Court](#)

These orders are also posted online at [sdcourt.ca.gov/coronavirus](https://sdcourt.ca.gov/coronavirus)

In-person hearings are not being scheduled yet. Appellate Division virtual oral arguments are being heard in misdemeanor, limited civil, traffic and infraction appeals cases.

Find more information about virtual oral arguments at [sdcourt.ca.gov/Appeals](https://sdcourt.ca.gov/Appeals).





# Jury Duty

## Locations

- Central Courthouse
- East County Regional Center
- North County Regional Center
- South County Regional Center



**Jury trials are planned to resume beginning on October 13, 2020.**

**Jury service for people who previously deferred their service through October 8 is considered complete. Those who deferred their service for a date after October 8 will receive a new summons in the mail with their reporting instructions.**

We are committed to the safety of our jurors. We are closely following the guidelines issued by the CDC, and state and local health authorities. In addition to the precautions we've taken for all members of the public coming into the courthouse, these extra steps are taken to safely bring jurors in for trials:

- We're using telephone standby to decrease the number of people coming to the courthouse in person. Call in the night before to find out if you have to report the next day. Standby begins on a Friday (call in on Thursday evening) and ends on a Thursday (last call in on Wednesday evening).
- A new online portal allows potential jurors to register their phone number and email address so that we can send you an alert if it turns out you aren't needed to come into the courthouse. Once you receive your summons in the mail, visit [sdcourt.ca.gov/Jury](https://sdcourt.ca.gov/Jury) and click "Online Jury Services" to register.
- Concession sales in the courthouses may be limited or unavailable, so you may want to bring lunch or a few snacks with you when you report for jury service, but please do not bring in glass containers. Review all prohibited items listed at [sdcourt.ca.gov/Jury](https://sdcourt.ca.gov/Jury).
- Significantly fewer jurors are being summoned. Capacity in jury assembly rooms will be considerably limited and social distancing markers will be used to keep space between potential jurors.
- Juror interviews will take place in settings that permit 6 feet of distance between jurors.
- If you're selected to serve on a jury, you'll be spaced at least 6 feet apart in the courtroom or seated in the jury box with protective plastic panel installed between each of your fellow jurors and other courtroom participants.
- When it comes time to deliberate, you'll still be able to maintain at least 6 feet of space from others - you will go into another courtroom or a larger meeting room rather than the usual smaller jury deliberation rooms.



For additional details on the Court's resumption of jury trials, please watch the [Jury Duty during COVID-19 video](#) or refer to the [news release](#) posted to [sdcourt.ca.gov/coronavirus](https://sdcourt.ca.gov/coronavirus).



# Jury Duty

*We are  
summoning  
significantly  
fewer jurors  
than in the  
past, so there  
won't be as  
many people  
coming into the  
courthouses.*



*It is more critical  
than ever that you  
report for jury duty  
as directed.*

*Learn more:  
[sdcourt.ca.gov/Jury](https://sdcourt.ca.gov/Jury)*



# Courtrooms in Operation for Virtual Hearings

Case Type	Remote Hearing Platform	Number of Courtrooms	Locations
Criminal (Pre-trial hearings)	Microsoft Teams	20	Central Courthouse East County Regional Center North County Regional Center South County Regional Center
Behavioral Health Court, Mandatory Supervision, & Re-entry Court	Microsoft Teams	1	Central Courthouse
Drug Court	Microsoft Teams	4	Central Courthouse East County Regional Center North County Regional Center South County Regional Center
Mental Health Hearings	Microsoft Teams	1	Central Courthouse
Veterans Court	Microsoft Teams	1	Central Courthouse
Civil	CourtCall	27	Central Courthouse North County Regional Center
Civil Harassment	Microsoft Teams	5	Hall of Justice East County Regional Center North County Regional Center South County Regional Center
Limited Civil (non-Independent Calendar)	Microsoft Teams	2	Central Courthouse North County Regional Center
Small Claims	Microsoft Teams	2	Hall of Justice
Unlawful Detainer	Microsoft Teams	2	Hall of Justice
Family	Microsoft Teams	27	Central Courthouse East County Regional Center North County Regional Center South County Regional Center
Juvenile	Microsoft Teams	9	Juvenile Court East County Regional Center North County Regional Center
Probate	CourtCall through Nov. 1, 2020	3	Central Courthouse
Traffic & Minor Offenses	Microsoft Teams	8	Kearny Mesa Traffic Facility East County Regional Center North County Regional Center South County Regional Center
Appeals	Microsoft Teams	2	Central Courthouse



# How to Access a Virtual Hearing

## If your hearing is scheduled via CourtCall:

- Select Civil matters are heard via CourtCall and all Probate matters are heard via CourtCall through November 1.
- Arrangements to appear by telephone or video must be made as soon as possible by contacting CourtCall by phone at 888-882-6878 or online at [CourtCall.com](https://www.courtcall.com).
- CourtCall charges a fee for making the arrangements. If you have obtained an approved Order on Court Fee Waiver ([FW-003/FW-003-GC](#)), CourtCall may not require a fee. It is your responsibility to inform CourtCall that you have an approved Order to avoid being charged.

## If your hearing is scheduled via Microsoft Teams:

- Using a desktop computer or laptop: click [here](#) to access a tip sheet on how to download Microsoft Teams to your computer or click [here](#) to view a step-by-step video.
- Using a smartphone mobile device or tablet: click [here](#) to access a tip sheet on how to download Microsoft Teams to your mobile device or click [here](#) to view a step-by-step video.

If you don't have a computer or smartphone, Microsoft Teams hearings can be accessed by calling the corresponding conference call phone number.

If you do not have a telephone and/or if your type of hearing will require video presence, the Court has established Audio/Visual Access Rooms in each courthouse. These rooms are designed to allow people who do not have access to a computer or smartphone to use the Court's equipment for their hearing. Please note that the Audio/Visual Access Rooms are limited in capacity and not entirely private.

## Case-specific instructions for virtual hearings:

### Civil - [sdcourt.ca.gov](https://sdcourt.ca.gov)/Civil

- [Civil Restraining Order Virtual Hearings](#) (excluding Domestic Violence Restraining Orders - see Family)
- [Limited Civil Virtual Hearings](#)
- [Small Claims Virtual Hearings](#)
- [Unlawful Detainer Virtual Hearings](#)

### Criminal - [sdcourt.ca.gov](https://sdcourt.ca.gov)/Criminal

- Contact your attorney for details on pending criminal cases
- [Military Diversion Virtual Hearings](#)

### Family - [sdcourt.ca.gov](https://sdcourt.ca.gov)/Family

- [Family Law Virtual Hearings](#) (including Domestic Violence Restraining Orders)

### Juvenile - [sdcourt.ca.gov](https://sdcourt.ca.gov)/Juvenile

- Contact your attorney for details on pending juvenile cases

### Probate - [sdcourt.ca.gov](https://sdcourt.ca.gov)/Probate

- [Probate Virtual Hearings](#)

### Traffic - [sdcourt.ca.gov](https://sdcourt.ca.gov)/Traffic

- [Traffic & Minor Offense Virtual Hearings](#)

### Appeals - [sdcourt.ca.gov](https://sdcourt.ca.gov)/Appeals

- [Appellate Division Virtual Oral Arguments](#)
- [Appellate Division Traffic Virtual Arguments](#)

