

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

J.C. v. County of San Bernardino

J.C. · No. 5:24-cv-02440-SSS-SPx · Decided June 2, 2025

SUMMARY

This document is a stipulated protective order entered in J.C. v. County of San Bernardino, a federal civil action in the Central District of California. It governs the designation, disclosure, use, challenge, filing under seal, and final disposition of confidential discovery materials. The order was stipulated to on May 29, 2025, and ordered by Magistrate Judge Sheri Pym on June 2, 2025.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Central District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Sheri Pym
DECIDED	June 2, 2025
DOCKET	5:24-cv-02440-SSS-SPx
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	The parties stipulated to entry of a protective order governing confidential discovery material, and the magistrate judge entered the order for good cause shown.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	For the stipulated protective order, the court applied the good-cause standard under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 26(c). For sealing materials connected with court filings, the order recognizes the Ninth Circuit's distinction between good cause for non-dispositive motions and compelling reasons for dispositive motions or trial-related materials.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	nonprecedential
PARTIES	J.C., a minor, by and through his guardian ad litem, Cynthia Garcia v. County of San Bernardino, Deputy R. Ramos, Deputy C. Padilla, Does 1-10

TOPICS

- discovery dispute
- civil procedure
- sanctions
- public records

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure

civil rights

municipal law

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether good cause supported entry of a stipulated protective order governing confidential discovery material under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 26(c).
2. What procedures and restrictions should govern designation, disclosure, use, challenge, filing under seal, and disposition of protected discovery material.
3. What showing is required to seal protected material filed in connection with non-dispositive motions, dispositive motions, or trial.

HOLDINGS

1. Good cause supported entry of the stipulated protective order, which was entered to protect qualifying confidential discovery material while facilitating discovery and permitting appropriate use of the material in the litigation.
2. Material designated CONFIDENTIAL under the order may be used only to prosecute, defend, or attempt to settle the action and may be disclosed only to specified authorized persons subject to the order's conditions.
3. The protective order itself does not authorize filing material under seal. A party seeking to seal material must comply with Central District of California Civil Local Rule 79-5 and make the showing required for the type of filing: good cause for non-dispositive motions and compelling reasons, supported by specific facts and legal justification, for dispositive motions or trial.
4. Confidentiality designations must be limited to specific material that qualifies for protection, made in good faith, and appropriately marked; a challenging party may contest a designation, but the material remains protected pending resolution unless the designation is withdrawn or waived.
5. After the final deposition, receiving parties must return or destroy protected material within 30 days and provide written certification by the 60-day deadline, subject to counsel's limited retention of archival litigation files that remain governed by the protective order.

KEY QUOTATIONS

"There is a strong presumption that the public has a right of access to judicial proceedings and records in civil cases." (at 2)

"Mass, indiscriminate, or routinized designations are prohibited." (at 5)

"A Party that seeks to file under seal any Protected Material must comply with Civil Local Rule 79-5." (at 11)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

The action concerns records relating to a detention and investigations performed by the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department and its personnel, agents, employees, and contractors. The defendants anticipated that

discovery would involve private or confidential information, including law-enforcement personnel records, employment records, photographs, videos, and private information concerning witnesses and third parties. The parties sought protections governing designation, use, disclosure, challenges, sealing, and final disposition of such material.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

J.C., a minor, brought a federal civil-rights action against San Bernardino County and two sheriff's deputies. The parties jointly submitted a proposed stipulated protective order concerning confidential discovery materials, including law-enforcement personnel and investigative records. On June 2, 2025, Magistrate Judge Sheri Pym ordered the protective order entered.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Kamakana v. City & County of Honolulu, 447 F.3d 1172, 1176 (9th Cir. 2006)
- Phillips v. Gen. Motors Corp., 307 F.3d 1206, 1210-11 (9th Cir. 2002)
- Makar-Welbon v. Sony Elecs., Inc., 187 F.R.D. 576 (E.D. Wis. 1999)
- Pintos v. Pac. Creditors Ass'n, 605 F.3d 665, 677-79 (9th Cir. 2010)

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