

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Estate of James Evans, by and through successors in interest,
Lashonda Banks and Godfrey Evans; Lashonda Banks, individually;
Godfrey Evans, individually v. County of Los Angeles; Los Angeles
County Sheriff's Department; Sheriff Robert Luna, individually; and
Does 1 through 10, individually

Estate of Evans · No. 2:24-cv-09198-SRM-JC · Decided September 15, 2025

SUMMARY

This document is a Modified Protective Order entered by the United States District Court for the Central District of California in Estate of James Evans v. County of Los Angeles. It governs the designation, handling, use, and disclosure of confidential discovery materials, including information implicating the privacy rights of county employees and inmates. The order also addresses procedures for seeking to file protected material under seal and states that its terms do not extend beyond commencement of trial.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Central District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Jacqueline Chooljian
DECIDED	September 15, 2025
DOCKET	2:24-cv-09198-SRM-JC
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	The court entered a modified stipulated protective order governing confidential discovery material in the federal civil-rights action.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	nonprecedential
PARTIES	Estate of James Evans, by and through successors in interest, Lashonda Banks and Godfrey Evans, Lashonda Banks, individually, Godfrey Evans, individually v. County of Los Angeles, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, Sheriff Robert Luna, individually, Does 1 through 10, individually

TOPICS

discovery dispute

civil procedure

civil rights

section 1983

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure

civil rights

federal discovery

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether good cause existed to enter a stipulated protective order governing confidential discovery material.
2. Whether designation of discovery material as confidential automatically authorized filing that material under seal.
3. What standards and procedures govern requests to file confidential discovery material under seal.
4. How confidential designations must be limited, made, corrected, and handled during the litigation.

HOLDINGS

1. A stipulated protective order does not itself authorize a party to file confidential discovery material under seal; a separate application satisfying the applicable local-rule standards is required.
2. A party seeking to seal material related to a dispositive motion or trial must show compelling reasons, supported by specific facts and legal justification, and the requested relief must be narrowly tailored.
3. The protective-order protections extend to protected discovery material and information derived from it, but do not govern use during a court hearing or trial and generally terminate upon commencement of trial, subject to any separate order by the presiding judge.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“this Stipulated Protective Order does not entitle them to file confidential information under seal” (§ 3)

“There is a strong presumption that the public has a right of access to judicial proceedings and records” (§ 3)

“Once a case proceeds to trial, information that was designated as confidential and is used as an exhibit at trial becomes public and will be presumptively available to all members of the public, including the press” (§ 6)

“Mass, indiscriminate or routinized designations are prohibited.” (§ 7.1)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

The action concerns alleged failures by County defendants to provide James Evans with adequate medical care, supervision, and monitoring during his detention at Men's Central Jail. Discovery was expected to include confidential, proprietary, and private information, including information implicating the privacy rights of County employees and nonparty inmates. The parties sought a protective order to regulate designation, use, disclosure, and handling of such discovery materials.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Plaintiffs filed the action on October 24, 2024, alleging that County defendants failed to provide James Evans with adequate medical care, supervision, and monitoring while he was detained at Los Angeles County's Men's Central Jail. The parties stipulated to a protective order, which the court modified in paragraphs 3 and 5 and entered on September 15, 2025.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Kamakana v. City and County of Honolulu, 447 F.3d 1172, 1176 (9th Cir. 2006)
- Phillips v. General Motors Corp., 307 F.3d 1206, 1210-11 (9th Cir. 2002)
- Makar-Welbon v. Sony Electrics, Inc., 187 F.R.D. 576, 577 (E.D. Wis. 1999)
- Pintos v. Pacific Creditors Ass'n, 605 F.3d 665, 677-79 (9th Cir. 2010)
- Kamakana v. City and County of Honolulu, 447 F.3d 1172, 1180-81 (9th Cir. 2006)

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