

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Michael Manjeet Singh v. Warden Pheiffer, et al.

Singh v. Pheiffer, No. 1:22-cv-01412-KES-EPG (PC) (E.D. Cal. June 4, 2025) · No. 1:22-cv-01412-KES-EPG (PC) · Decided June 4, 2025

SUMMARY

This is a discovery order issued by the United States District Court for the Eastern District of California in Singh v. Pheiffer. The order requires the parties to exchange specified documents and evidence, establishes deadlines for production and objections, and provides procedures for responding to objections.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
DECIDED	June 4, 2025
DOCKET	1:22-cv-01412-KES-EPG (PC)
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	In a prisoner civil-rights action, the district court entered a discovery-management order requiring the parties to exchange specified documents and evidence without awaiting formal discovery requests.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Nonprecedential trial-court discovery order; precedential status unknown

TOPICS

discovery dispute civil procedure prisoners rights section 1983

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure prisoner civil rights federal discovery

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

- Whether the court should require the parties to exchange documents and evidence central to the prisoner civil-rights dispute without awaiting formal discovery requests.
- What procedures and deadlines should govern objections to the ordered disclosures and the production of subsequently obtained materials.

HOLDINGS

1. The district court may enter a pretrial case-management and discovery order requiring the parties to disclose relevant documents and evidence beyond the disclosures otherwise required by Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 26(a).
2. Each party must produce, within sixty days after service of the order, existing relevant documents and evidence within the party's possession, custody, or control that have not already been produced or provided by the opposing party; materials obtained later must be produced within thirty days.
3. A party may object to producing a listed document or item by filing and serving an objection within the applicable deadline, and opposing parties have fourteen days to respond; objections based on official-information privilege must follow the procedures in the scheduling order.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“There is universal acceptance in the federal courts that, in carrying out this mandate, a district court has the authority to enter pretrial case management and discovery orders designed to ensure that the relevant issues to be tried are identified, that the parties have an opportunity to engage in appropriate discovery and that the parties are adequately and timely prepared so that the trial can proceed efficiently and intelligibly.” (1-2)

“proper exhaustion improves the quality of those prisoner suits that are eventually filed because proper exhaustion often results in the creation of an administrative record that is helpful to the court.” (2)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

The action concerns claims by a state prisoner arising from alleged incidents, including alleged use of force, related disciplinary proceedings, grievances, medical conditions, and possible transfer or administrative-segregation placement. The order identifies categories of documents potentially relevant to those claims and defenses, including exhaustion records, rules-violation materials, witness statements, incident reports, medical records, video, photographs, and electronically stored information. The order also addresses access to confidential documents and video recordings for the incarcerated plaintiff.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The opinion is a pretrial discovery order in a pending action brought by Michael Manjeet Singh against Warden Pheiffer and other defendants. The court acted to facilitate the just, speedy, and inexpensive disposition of the case and imposed document-production and objection deadlines.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- United States v. W.R. Grace, 526 F.3d 499, 508-09 (9th Cir. 2008)
- Woodford v. Ngo, 548 U.S. 81, 94-95 (2006)

OPINION

(PC) Singh v. Pheiffer

PER CURIAM.

1 2 3 4 5

6 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

7 EASTERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

8 9 MICHAEL MANJEET SINGH Case No. 1:22-cv-01412-KES-EPG (PC) 10 Plaintiff,

11 v. DISCOVERY ORDER REQUIRING

PARTIES TO EXCHANGE

12 WARDEN PHEIFFER, et al., DOCUMENTS

13 Defendants. 14

15 To secure the just, speedy, and inexpensive disposition of this action,¹ the Court will 16 direct that certain documents that are central to the dispute be promptly produced.² 17 Accordingly, IT IS ORDERED that: 18 1. Each party has sixty days from the date of service of this order to serve opposing 19 parties, or their counsel, if represented, with copies of the following documents 20 and/or evidence if they have them in their possession, custody, or control, to the 21 extent these documents exist, are relevant, and the parties have not already done 22 1 See, e.g., *United States v. W.R. Grace*, 526 F.3d 499, 508–09 (9th Cir. 2008) (“We begin with 23 the principle that the district court is charged with effectuating the speedy and orderly administration of justice. There is universal acceptance in the federal courts that, in carrying out this mandate, a district 24 court has the authority to enter pretrial case management and discovery orders designed to ensure that 25 the relevant issues to be tried are identified, that the parties have an opportunity to engage in appropriate discovery and that the parties are adequately and timely prepared so that the trial can proceed efficiently 26 and intelligibly.”). 2 Advisory Committee Notes to 1993 Amendment to Federal Rules of Civil Procedure regarding

27 Rule 26(a) (“The enumeration in Rule 26(a) of items to be disclosed does not prevent a court from

requiring by order or local rule that the parties disclose additional information without a discovery 28 request.”). 1 1 so. Defense counsel is requested to obtain these documents from Plaintiff’s 2 institution(s) of confinement. If defense counsel is unable to do so, defense 3 counsel should inform Plaintiff that a third-party subpoena is required. This 4 order applies to all documents including confidential documents. Moreover, the 5 parties are required to produce these documents, or lodge objections as 6 described below, without awaiting a discovery request. 7 a. Documents regarding exhaustion of Plaintiff’s claims, including 602s,

8 Form 22s, and responses from the appeals, if any.

9 b. Documents regarding a Rules Violation Report associated with the 10 incident(s) alleged in the complaint, including disciplinary charges and 11 findings, if any. 12 c. Witness statements and evidence that were generated from 13 investigation(s) related to the event(s) at issue in the

complaint, such as 14 an investigation stemming from the processing of Plaintiff's 15 grievance(s), if any.3 16 d. Incident reports regarding any use of force incident(s) alleged in the 17 complaint, if any. 18 e. Plaintiff's medical records related to the incident(s) and/or condition(s) 19 at issue in the case, if any. 20 f. Chronos for transfer or Administrative Segregation placement related to 21 the incident(s) alleged in the complaint, if any. 22 23 3 See Woodford v. Ngo, 548 U.S. 81, 94–95 (2006) (“[P]roper exhaustion improves the quality 24 of those prisoner suits that are eventually filed because proper exhaustion often results in the creation of 25 an administrative record that is helpful to the court. When a grievance is filed shortly after the event giving rise to the grievance, witnesses can be identified and questioned while memories are still fresh, 26 and evidence can be gathered and preserved.”). The Court notes that Defendant(s) only need to produce documents such as a Confidential 27 Appeal Inquiry or a Use of Force Critique to the extent those documents contain witness statements related to the incident(s) alleged in the complaint and/or evidence related to the incident(s) alleged in the 28 complaint that will not be provided to Plaintiff separately. 2 1 g. Video recordings and photographs related to the incident(s) at issue in 2 the complaint, including video recordings and photographs of Plaintiff 3 taken following the incident(s), if any.4 4 h. Documents, electronically stored information, and tangible things that 5 the disclosing party has in its possession, custody, or control and may 6 use to support its claims or defenses, unless the use would be solely for 7 impeachment, if any. 8 2. If any party obtains documents and/or other evidence described above later in 9 the case (including, but not limited to, documents and/or other evidence from a 10 third party), that party shall provide all other parties with copies of the 11 documents and/or evidence within thirty days. The failure of a party to comply 12 with this requirement may result, among other things, in the party not being able 13 to rely on the pertinent information later in the case. 14 3. Parties do not need to produce documents or evidence that they have already 15 produced. 16 4. Parties do not need to produce documents or evidence that were provided to 17 them by the opposing party. 18 5. Parties may object to producing any of the above-listed documents and/or 19 evidence. Objections shall be filed with the Court and served on all other parties 20 within sixty days from the date of service of this order (or within thirty days of 21 receiving additional documents and/or evidence). The objection should include 22 the basis for not providing the documents and/or evidence. If Defendant(s) 23 object based on the official information privilege, Defendant(s) shall follow the 24 procedures described in the Court's scheduling order. 25 26 27 4 If Plaintiff is not allowed possess, or is unable to play, video recording(s), defense counsel shall work with staff at Plaintiff's institution of confinement to ensure that Plaintiff is able to view the 28 video recording(s). 3 1 6. If a party files an objection, all other parties have fourteen days from the date the 2 objection is filed to file a response. If any party files a response to an objection, 3 the Court will issue a ruling on the objection. 4 5 IT IS SO ORDERED. 6 || Dated: _ June 4, 2025 [see hey

7 UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE

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