

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Allen Hammler v. Del Pilar, et al.

Hammler v. Del Pilar · No. 1:25-cv-01493-BAM (PC) · Decided December 12, 2025

SUMMARY

The court recommends dismissing Allen Hammler’s 42 U.S.C. § 1983 action without prejudice for failure to obey an order and failure to prosecute. The recommendation follows Plaintiff’s failure to submit an in forma pauperis application or pay the filing fee after being warned that noncompliance could result in dismissal.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Eastern District of California
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Barbara A. McAuliffe
JURISDICTION	United States District Court, Eastern District of California
DECIDED	December 12, 2025
DOCKET	1:25-cv-01493-BAM (PC)
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	A pro se state prisoner brought a civil-rights action under 42 U.S.C. § 1983. After the court ordered him to submit an in forma pauperis application or pay the filing fee and warned that noncompliance could result in dismissal, he failed to respond. The magistrate judge recommended dismissal without prejudice and directed the clerk to randomly assign a district judge.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court applied the Ninth Circuit's five-factor test for dismissal for failure to prosecute or failure to obey a court order: the public interest in expeditious resolution, the court's need to manage its docket, prejudice to defendants, the policy favoring disposition on the merits, and the availability of less drastic sanctions.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Nonprecedential findings and recommendations; no reporter citation or precedential designation appears.

TOPICS

- sanctions
- section 1983
- civil rights
- civil procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure

prisoner civil rights

case management and sanctions

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the action should be dismissed without prejudice for Plaintiff's failure to obey the court's order requiring payment of the filing fee or submission of an in forma pauperis application.
2. Whether dismissal without prejudice was warranted under the factors governing dismissal for failure to prosecute and failure to comply with a court order.
3. Whether a lesser sanction was adequate under the circumstances.

HOLDINGS

1. A district court may dismiss an action when a party fails to prosecute, fails to obey a court order, or fails to comply with applicable local rules, subject to consideration of the relevant dismissal factors and less drastic alternatives.
2. Dismissal without prejudice was the appropriate recommended sanction because Plaintiff failed to comply with the order requiring an in forma pauperis application or payment of the filing fee, failed to prosecute the action, and had received adequate warning of the consequences.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“In the exercise of that power they may impose sanctions including, where appropriate, . . . dismissal.” (at 2)

“this factor lends little support to a party whose responsibility it is to move a case toward disposition on the merits but whose conduct impedes progress in that direction” (at 4)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Plaintiff Allen Hammler, a state prisoner proceeding pro se, filed a civil-rights action under 42 U.S.C. § 1983. The court ordered him to submit an application to proceed in forma pauperis or pay the \$405 filing fee and expressly warned that failure to comply could result in dismissal. Plaintiff missed the deadline, did not pay the fee, did not submit the application, and did not otherwise communicate with the court.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

On November 5, 2025, the court ordered Plaintiff to submit a completed application to proceed in forma pauperis or pay the \$405 filing fee. Plaintiff did neither by the deadline and did not otherwise communicate with the court. The magistrate judge issued findings and recommendations recommending dismissal without prejudice for failure to obey a court order and failure to prosecute, subject to objections within fourteen days under 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1).

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Thompson v. Hous. Auth., 782 F.2d 829, 831 (9th Cir. 1986)
- Ghazali v. Moran, 46 F.3d 52, 53-54 (9th Cir. 1995)
- Ferdik v. Bonzelet, 963 F.2d 1258, 1260-61 (9th Cir. 1992)
- Malone v. U.S. Postal Serv., 833 F.2d 128, 130-33 (9th Cir. 1987)
- Henderson v. Duncan, 779 F.2d 1421, 1423 (9th Cir. 1986)
- Carey v. King, 856 F.2d 1439, 1440 (9th Cir. 1988)
- Anderson v. Air W., 542 F.2d 522, 524 (9th Cir. 1976)
- Pagtalunan v. Galaza, 291 F.3d 639, 643 (9th Cir. 2002)
- In re Phenylpropanolamine (PPA) Products Liability Litigation, 460 F.3d 1217, 1228 (9th Cir. 2006)
- Wilkerson v. Wheeler, 772 F.3d 834, 838-39 (9th Cir. 2014)
- Baxter v. Sullivan, 923 F.2d 1391, 1394 (9th Cir. 1991)

OPINION

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT 9 EASTERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA 10 11 ALLEN HAMMLER, Case No. 1:25-cv-01493-BAM (PC) 12 Plaintiff,
ORDER DIRECTING CLERK OF COURT TO RANDOMLY ASSIGN DISTRICT JUDGE TO
13 v. ACTION 14 DEL PILAR, et al., FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO DISMISS
ACTION, WITHOUT PREJUDICE, 15 Defendants. FOR FAILURE TO OBEY COURT ORDER
AND FAILURE TO PROSECUTE 16 (ECF No. 5) 17 FOURTEEN (14) DAY DEADLINE 18 19
I. Background 20 Plaintiff Allen Hammler (“Plaintiff”) is a state prisoner proceeding pro se in this
civil 21 rights action under 42 U.S.C. § 1983.

22 On November 5, 2025, the Court issued an order directing Plaintiff to submit a completed 23
application to proceed in forma pauperis or pay the \$405.00 filing fee to proceed with this action.
24 (ECF No. 5.) The Court expressly warned Plaintiff that failure to comply with the Court’s order
25 would result in dismissal of this action without prejudice. (Id.)

The deadline has expired, and 26 Plaintiff has failed to respond to the Court’s order or otherwise
communicate with the Court 27 regarding his application or payment of the filing fee. 28 /// 1 II.
Failure to Prosecute and Failure to Obey a Court Order 2 A. Legal Standard 3 Local Rule 110
provides that “[f]ailure... of a party to comply with these Rules or with 4 any order of the Court
may be grounds for imposition by the Court of any and all sanctions...

5 within the inherent power of the Court.” District courts have the inherent power to control their 6
dockets and “[i]n the exercise of that power they may impose sanctions including, where 7
appropriate,... dismissal.” Thompson v. Hous. Auth., 782 F.2d 829, 831 (9th Cir. 1986). A 8 court
may dismiss an action, with prejudice, based on a party’s failure to prosecute an action, 9 failure to
obey a court order, or failure to comply with local rules.

See, e.g., *Ghazali v. Moran*, 46 10 F.3d 52, 53–54 (9th Cir. 1995) (dismissal for noncompliance with local rule); *Ferdik v. Bonzelet*, 11 963 F.2d 1258, 1260–61 (9th Cir. 1992) (dismissal for failure to comply with an order requiring 12 amendment of complaint); *Malone v. U.S. Postal Serv.*, 833 F.2d 128, 130–33 (9th Cir. 1987) 13 (dismissal for failure to comply with court order).

14 In determining whether to dismiss an action, the Court must consider several factors: 15 (1) the public’s interest in expeditious resolution of litigation; (2) the Court’s need to manage its 16 docket; (3) the risk of prejudice to the defendants; (4) the public policy favoring disposition of 17 cases on their merits; and (5) the availability of less drastic sanctions.

Henderson v. Duncan, 779 18 F.2d 1421, 1423 (9th Cir. 1986); *Carey v. King*, 856 F.2d 1439, 1440 (9th Cir. 1988). 19 B. Discussion 20 Here, Plaintiff’s application to proceed in forma pauperis or payment of the filing fee is 21 overdue and he has failed to comply with the Court’s order.

The Court cannot effectively manage 22 its docket if Plaintiff ceases litigating his case. Thus, the Court finds that both the first and 23 second factors weigh in favor of dismissal. 24 The third factor, risk of prejudice to defendant, also weighs in favor of dismissal, since a 25 presumption of injury arises from the occurrence of unreasonable delay in prosecuting an action.

26 *Anderson v. Air W.*, 542 F.2d 522, 524 (9th Cir. 1976). The fourth factor usually weighs against 27 dismissal because public policy favors disposition on the merits. *Pagtalunan v. Galaza*, 291 F.3d 28 639, 643 (9th Cir. 2002).

However, “this factor lends little support to a party whose 1 responsibility it is to move a case toward disposition on the merits but whose conduct impedes 2 progress in that direction,” which is the case here. In *re Phenylpropanolamine (PPA) Products 3 Liability Litigation*, 460 F.3d 1217, 1228 (9th Cir. 2006) (citation omitted). 4 Finally, the Court’s warning to a party that failure to obey the court’s order will result in 5 dismissal satisfies the “considerations of the alternatives” requirement.

Ferdik, 963 F.2d at 1262; 6 *Malone*, 833 at 132–33; *Henderson*, 779 F.2d at 1424. The Court’s November 5, 2025 order 7 expressly warned Plaintiff that his failure to comply with the Court’s order would result in 8 dismissal of this action. (ECF No. 5.)

Thus, Plaintiff had adequate warning that dismissal could 9 result from his noncompliance. 10 Additionally, at this stage in the proceedings there is little available to the Court that 11 would constitute a satisfactory lesser sanction while protecting the Court from further 12 unnecessary expenditure of its scarce resources. Plaintiff has not paid the filing fee, or would be 13 proceeding in forma pauperis in this action, apparently making monetary sanctions of little use, 14 and the preclusion of evidence or witnesses is likely to have no effect given that Plaintiff has 15 ceased litigating his case.

16 III. Recommendation 17 Accordingly, the Court HEREBY ORDERS the Clerk of the Court to randomly assign a 18 District Judge to this action. 19 Further, the Court finds that dismissal is the appropriate sanction and HEREBY 20 RECOMMENDS that this action be dismissed, without prejudice, for failure to obey a Court 21 order and for Plaintiff's failure to prosecute this action.

22 These Findings and Recommendations will be submitted to the United States District 23 Judge assigned to the case, pursuant to the provisions of Title 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1). Within 24 fourteen (14) days after being served with these Findings and Recommendations, the parties may 25 file written objections with the court.

The document should be captioned "Objections to 26 Magistrate Judge's Findings and Recommendations." Objections, if any, shall not exceed 27 fifteen (15) pages or include exhibits. Exhibits may be referenced by document and page 28 number if already in the record before the Court. Any pages filed in excess of the 15-page 1 limit may not be considered.

The parties are advised that failure to file objections within the 2 specified time may result in the waiver of the "right to challenge the magistrate's factual 3 findings" on appeal. *Wilkerson v. Wheeler*, 772 F.3d 834, 838–39 (9th Cir. 2014) (citing *Baxter v. Sullivan*, 923 F.2d 1391, 1394 (9th Cir. 1991)). 5 IT IS SO ORDERED. 6 7 Dated: December 12, 2025 /s/ Barbara A. McAuliffe
_ UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24
25 26 27 28