

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF
CALIFORNIA

Gordoa v. Apple, Inc.

Gordoa · No. 3:22-cv-02900-JSC · Decided April 28, 2025

SUMMARY

The United States District Court for the Northern District of California resolves the parties’ administrative motions to seal materials related to Apple’s motion for summary judgment and motion to exclude a plaintiff’s expert. The court grants Apple’s narrowly tailored sealing requests, denies Plaintiffs’ request to seal all exhibits based only on a protective order, and disposes of Docket Nos. 198, 208, and 213.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	United States District Court for the Northern District of California
JURISDICTION	United States District Court for the Northern District of California
DECIDED	April 28, 2025
DOCKET	3:22-cv-02900-JSC
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	The parties filed administrative motions to seal materials submitted in connection with Apple's motion for summary judgment and motion to exclude plaintiffs' expert, Dr. Hahn.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Motions to seal judicial records relating to matters more than tangentially related to the underlying cause of action require compelling reasons supported by specific factual findings that outweigh the presumption of public access. Requests must be narrowly tailored and supported by specific statements explaining the interests warranting sealing, the injury from disclosure, and why less restrictive alternatives are inadequate.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	unpublished
PARTIES	Carlos Gordoa, et al. v. Apple, Inc.

TOPICS

- civil procedure
- summary judgment
- evidence
- commercial litigation

PRACTICE AREAS

civil procedure

commercial litigation

evidence

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Apple demonstrated compelling reasons to seal limited portions of materials submitted with its summary-judgment and expert-exclusion motions.
2. Whether plaintiffs demonstrated sufficient grounds to seal all 22 exhibits to their opposition based on a general assertion of confidentiality and the parties' protective order.
3. Whether Apple demonstrated sufficient grounds to seal limited portions of four exhibits to plaintiffs' opposition based on proprietary and confidential source-code information.

HOLDINGS

1. Apple met its burden to show that sealing limited portions of Exhibits A and C and all of Exhibit B was appropriate because the materials contained sensitive business information concerning Apple's safety-testing protocols and product testing.
2. Plaintiffs failed to establish grounds for sealing all 22 exhibits because reliance on the parties' protective order and a general assertion of confidentiality did not satisfy the requirements for sealing, and the request was not narrowly tailored.
3. Apple met its burden to seal limited portions of Exhibits 12, 13, 14, and 15 because those portions contained sensitive business information, including proprietary and confidential source code.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“In considering motions to seal, courts recognize “a strong presumption in favor of access is the starting point.”” (at 1)

“Reference to a stipulation or protective order that allows a party to designate certain documents as confidential is not sufficient to establish that a document, or portions thereof, are sealable.” (at 2)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Apple sought to seal portions of exhibits submitted with its motions for summary judgment and to exclude plaintiffs' expert, asserting that the materials contained sensitive business information concerning safety-testing protocols and product testing. Plaintiffs sought to seal all 22 exhibits supporting their opposition based only on the parties' protective order and alleged confidentiality. Apple separately sought to seal limited portions of four exhibits to plaintiffs' opposition, asserting that they contained proprietary and confidential source-code information.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

In the underlying civil action, Apple moved for summary judgment and to exclude plaintiffs' causation expert. The parties filed motions to seal related exhibits and briefing. The court granted Apple's motions to seal limited

portions of its materials, denied plaintiffs' overbroad motion to seal all 22 opposition exhibits, and granted Apple's narrower motion concerning portions of four exhibits.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- *Kamakana v. City & County of Honolulu*, 447 F.3d 1172, 1178-79 (9th Cir. 2006)
- *Ctr. for Auto Safety v. Chrysler Grp.*, 809 F.3d 1092, 1097, 1099 (9th Cir. 2016)
- *Nixon v. Warner Commc'ns, Inc.*, 435 U.S. 589, 597-98 (1978)

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