

How to Track a California Case Online

Research Guide

Last Updated: January 2013

Scope:

This guide describes various ways of locating information online about the status of and proceedings in cases which have been filed in the following California courts:

- California Supreme Court
- California Courts of Appeal
- California Superior Courts
- Ninth Circuit Federal Court of Appeals

California Supreme Court and California Courts of Appeal

You can find information on cases before the California Supreme Court and the California Courts of Appeal at <http://appellatecases.courtinfo.ca.gov/search.cfm?dist=0>. Case information is updated once an hour throughout the business day. To find case information on this page, you will need to know either in which court (Supreme or Appellate) or in which county (if it is a Superior Court case) the case is filed. From there you will be directed to a page on which you can search for the case using the case (or “docket”) number, the names of one or both parties, or the attorney’s name. You can also search for Court of Appeal cases by court calendar date. Searchable California Supreme Court and California Courts of Appeal cases (1850- Present) can be located at <http://www.lexisnexis.com/clients/CACourts/>.

California Superior Courts

Depending on the court, you may be able to find detailed case information online for Superior Court cases. There are a number of ways to search online.

One good source is found at <http://www.courts.ca.gov/find-my-court.htm>.

This webpage provides links to the Superior Court websites for each county in California. Some (but not all) California Superior Courts provide links to information regarding individual cases,

often in a section called “Case Search” or “Case Summaries.” The location of this information on a court’s website, and even what it is called, differs with each court.

San Diego Superior Courts

In San Diego County, case details are available on the San Diego Superior Court’s [website](#). The court details include case name, case number, case type, the date the case was filed and the location of the court file. In addition, a Register of Actions is included for probate and civil cases filed after January 1, 2008. The Register of Actions provides filing and scheduling information on a particular case.

To view recent case filings, click on “[New Case Filings](#)” on the court’s homepage. This link will take you to a list of cases filed with the court within the past five days. The list is organized alphabetically by party name and by case number.

To view case details for San Diego Superior Court, click on “case search” on the website’s [homepage](#). Search for a court file either by party name, case number or by the District Attorney’s (DA) case number. When you receive your search results, click on the case number to view the case details. The case details include the Register of Actions (for some cases) and the physical location of the court file. The physical location of the file is usually kept in the courthouse where the case was filed and will include all court filings and rulings in the case.

The court’s files are a matter of public record and as long as the files are not sealed, anyone may view the court files. See California Rule of Court [2.400\(a\)](#) and [2.550\(a\)](#). The court file may be viewed in person by visiting the courthouse where the file is located and showing a valid ID. The court file may not be removed from the courthouse but you may ask the court clerk to make a copy of the court file. Copies of the court file may be requested in person or a request may be mailed to the courthouse location for the file with the appropriate fee. See the San Diego Superior Court’s [General Information webpage](#) for more details.

In addition to case details, the tentative rules are also available on the San Diego Superior court’s homepage. To access the tentative rulings, click on “[Tentative Rulings](#)” link located on the homepage and then click on “[View Tentative Rulings](#).” In order to view the tentative rulings, you will need the court case number. A case number is usually assigned when a case is filed with the court clerk and will also be included in the caption of all court filings.

Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals

All opinions issued by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals since 2005 and memoranda (court opinions not designated for publication) issued since 2002 are available on the Court's website at <http://www.ca9.uscourts.gov>. On the court's homepage, move the mouse over "Decisions" and click on the link to either "Memoranda" or "Opinions". You can also check the status of cases which are to be (or which have recently been) heard *en banc* by moving your mouse over "Case Information" and clicking on the link to "Pending En Banc Cases." This site includes dates of relevant orders, citations for any published opinions, the current status of the case, issues raised on appeal, and whether there has been a holding by the court.

For detailed information about any pending Ninth Circuit or other Federal case, you can search PACER, a pay-per-use online database of unpublished Federal court documents. For information on how to use PACER, refer to our Research Guide: "[Accessing PACER](#)."

Other resources: You can access published opinions from Federal and State Appellate and Supreme Court cases online through Westlaw and Lexis, which are available for free on the Law Library's computers. You can also find certain published opinions for free on internet sites such as [Findlaw](#), [Google Scholar](#), [Open Jurist](#), and [LexisONE](#).

Consult a Reference Librarian for Additional Assistance