

Superior Court of California
County of Imperial
Alternative Dispute Resolution Information
(Local Rule 3.5.0)

NOTICE: In all general civil cases, plaintiff and cross-complaints are required to serve this form on each defendant or new party to the action.

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) may help resolve disputes without trial. ADR is usually less expensive, less formal and less time consuming than a trial. ADR can also be less adversarial and may provide parties with the opportunity for more creative and/or flexible outcomes than can be achieved in trial. Since various ADR methods may or may not be appropriate in any particular case, it is advisable to consult with an attorney about options available.

There are three general types of ADR: mediations, arbitrations, and settlement conferences.

Mediation

An impartial person called a "mediator" helps the parties try to reach a mutually agreeable resolution of the dispute. The outcome is decided only by the parties. If the parties do not reach an agreement, the mediator does not make any decisions or recommendations to the court. Mediation is useful when the parties have a relationship they wish to preserve. Mediation may not be as useful if one of the parties is unwilling to compromise, or if one party has significant power over the other. The only court sponsored mediation service available in the Superior Court is for child custody and visitation.

Arbitration

An impartial person called an "arbitrator" listens to evidence and argument from both sides and then decides the outcome. Arbitration is less formal than a trial, and the rules of evidence may be relaxed. Pursuant to Imperial Superior Court Local Rules, Division 5 - Arbitration, Rule 3.5.0, all non-exempt unlimited civil cases where the amount in controversy does not exceed \$50,000 as to any plaintiff, and all limited civil cases shall be submitted to arbitration under CCP §1141.10 et seq.

Settlement Conference

The parties and their attorneys meet with a judicial officer to discuss possible settlement of the dispute. The judicial officer assists the parties in evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the case, but does not make any decision. Settlement conferences are scheduled upon request of the parties and order of the judge assigned to the case.

Additional Information

For information on Superior Court of California, County of Imperial's arbitration process see the Local Rules at www.imperial.courts.ca.gov and Stipulation to Use of Alternative Dispute Resolution Process, Local Form GN-02.