



News Release

Superior Court of California

County of San Francisco

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Release Date:

December 3, 2009

PRESIDING JUDGE TO LAUNCH NEW ASBESTOS COURT ON JANUARY 11

SAN FRANCISCO -- After holding a public hearing on a proposed general order that would establish a single asbestos case management department in the San Francisco Superior Court, Presiding Judge James J. McBride announced today the Court will begin the new effort on January 11, 2010 in Department 220.

After about 150 people attended a Nov. 17 public hearing on Proposed General Order 162, Judge McBride has decided to implement the order, with one minor change. The launch date has been revised from the initial date of January 4 to January 11, 2010.

Effective January 11, 2010, General Order 162 requires that all pre-trial motions in asbestos cases and other matters "as designated by the Presiding Judge shall be noticed and heard in a department or departments to be designated from time to time by the Presiding Judge and referred to herein as the Asbestos Department or Departments."

All asbestos pre-trial motions must be calendared through the Clerk's Office by calling 415.551.3688 between the hours of 9 a.m. and Noon, Monday through Friday.

Motions affecting the trial date are exempt from General Order 162 and shall continue to be heard in Department 206.

The order's case management provisions would require a case management conference date no later than 180 days after the filing of a complaint. Before the case management conference, the Court would review the file to "verify compliance with

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California Rules of Court, Rule 3.110.” The order further states that “failure to comply with the requirements set forth therein, including service, responsive pleading and default, may result in the cancellation of the case management conference and the issuance of an order to show cause.”

The new Asbestos Department or Departments would hear all discovery, law and motion and case management matters. Judge McBride has assigned Judge Harold Kahn to oversee the new Asbestos Department. Commissioner Arlene Borick will assist Judge Kahn with the case management efforts by enforcing the provisions of California Rules of Court, Rule 3.110.

The Court currently has more than 1,660 active pending asbestos cases – which account for about two-thirds of the state’s asbestos caseload. In 2008, asbestos cases consumed 45 percent of all civil jurors in the San Francisco Superior Court.

Judge McBride selected a working group of Bench Officers and Court staff, co-chaired by Claire Williams, Director of the Unified Family Court, and Wayne Parinas, Court Administrator for the Civil Operation, to work on these new efforts to manage asbestos cases more directly and effectively.

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