

NOTIFICATION TO AILA REGARDING CHANGES TO THE ATTORNEY SIGN -UP LIST FOR MASTER CALENDARS

The San Francisco Immigration Court has a long history of posting an attorney sign-in sheet for master calendars. These sign-in sheets are posted in the waiting room at 8am & 11am on the day of the master calendar. In the last year, we have experienced a growing number of issues with the sign-up sheet that have led court management to decide to eliminate posting the sign-in sheet in the waiting room. The most serious problems experienced with the attorney sign-up sheet system are as follows:

Private attorneys have started hiring transients off the street to sign them up for masters. These people are paid \$10 for each attorney's name they sign up. They frequently appear in our waiting room drunk or smelling of alcohol.

The hired transients or clerks from an attorney's office arrive hours before the sign up lists are posted and jockey for positions in line to sign up. There have been numerous arguments resulting in the security guards having to physically separate them. There are also frequently incidents in which the waiting people talk "trash" to each other, in loud voices, causing disruption at the front counter and scaring other waiting visitors.

When the lists get posted, there have been incidents of pushing and shoving to get to them. EOIR employees have been caught in the middle of the shoving as the people push their way to get to the list. As a result, the guards now maintain their own list of who arrived when and who should have first access to sign up.

Due to the security issues raised as well as the fact the security guards' attention to screening visitors is compromised having to monitor people waiting to sign-up, the court has decided to eliminate the master calendar attorney sign-up system effective Monday, August 10, 2009.

A new system for calling cases in master calendar has been created. It will work as follows:

- Cases will be called on the master calendar starting with attorneys who already have an E-28 on file with the court and whose name appears on the court's docket posted in the waiting room, starting at the top and working down the docket. Attorneys appearing "on behalf of" the attorney listed on the docket may proceed with the case when the listed attorney's name is called. **Private bar attorneys are urged to file E-28s at least two business days prior to the master calendar to ensure their name appears on the posted docket. E-28s filed at the front window the day before or the day of the master calendar will not appear on the posted docket.**
- If an attorney whose name appears on the posted docket is not present when called his/her case will be skipped and recalled once the next case is completed.
- For cases in which the attorney has not previously filed an E-28, the attorney should turn their completed E-28 into the court clerk when s/he arrives in the courtroom. **E-28s will only be accepted from the attorney. E-28s will not be accepted from office staff, respondents, or other representatives.** The courtroom will be open 15 minutes prior to the beginning of the master calendar so the attorney may turn in his/her E-28. Once the cases referenced in the first bullet above are called and completed, cases will be called in order of the E-28s received in court that day.

- The assigned pro bono attorney for the master calendar will “jump the line” when s/he is prepared to present the unrepresented cases (no change from current procedure)
- When an attorney’s name is called s/he may present all of the cases for which s/he is appearing that day, regardless of whether or not E-28s are on file for every case.
- The court clerk will call the cases. **The court clerk has the final word on who is next in line.**
- If an attorney arrives at the master calendar to submit his/her E-28 after the hearings have begun, the attorney must wait until the current case being heard is completed before approaching the court clerk. Please don’t interrupt the court clerk in the middle of a hearing.
- Once all of the aforementioned cases are completed, the IJ will hear any remaining unrepresented cases, telephonic appearances, and no-show cases.
- The IJ may take any case out of order that s/he deems appropriate (e.g. to accommodate a scheduled telephonic interpreter, security/health concerns, etc.)

Updated as of November 1, 2009