

2014 DAVIS-STIRLING ACT
ASSOCIATION PRE-LITIGATION DISPUTE RESOLUTION
IDR & ADR

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CHAPTER 10. DISPUTE RESOLUTION ENFORCEMENT

Article 1. Discipline and Cost Reimbursement

5850. OBLIGATION TO DISTRIBUTE FINE SCHEDULES IN THE ANNUAL POLICY STATEMENT.

(a) If an association adopts or has adopted a policy imposing any monetary penalty, including any fee, on any association member for a violation of the governing documents, including any monetary penalty relating to the activities of a guest or tenant of the member, the board shall adopt and distribute to each member, in the annual policy statement prepared pursuant to Section 5310, a schedule of the monetary penalties that may be assessed for those violations, which shall be in accordance with authorization for member discipline contained in the governing documents.

(b) Any new or revised monetary penalty that is adopted after complying with subdivision (a) may be included in a supplement that is delivered to the members individually, pursuant to Section 4040.

(c) A monetary penalty for a violation of the governing documents shall not exceed the monetary penalty stated in the schedule of monetary penalties or supplement that is in effect at the time of the violation.

(d) An association shall provide a copy of the most recently distributed schedule of monetary penalties, along with any applicable supplements to that schedule, to any member upon request.

5855. TEN DAY NOTICE REQUIREMENT FOR MEMBER DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS; CONTENT OF NOTICE.

(a) When the board is to meet to consider or impose discipline upon a member, or to impose a monetary charge as a means of reimbursing the association for costs incurred by the association in the repair of damage to common area and facilities caused by a member or the member's guest or tenant, the board shall notify the member in writing, by either personal delivery or individual delivery pursuant to Section 4040, at least **10 days prior to the meeting**.

(b) The notification shall contain, at a minimum, the date, time, and place of the meeting, the nature of the alleged violation for which a member may be disciplined or the nature of the damage to the common area and facilities for which a monetary charge may be imposed, and a statement that the member has a right to attend and may address the board at the meeting. The board shall meet in executive session if requested by the member.

(c) If the board imposes discipline on a member or imposes a monetary charge on the member for damage to the common area and facilities, the board shall provide the member a written notification of the decision, by either personal delivery or individual delivery pursuant to Section 4040, within 15 days following the action.

(d) A disciplinary action or the imposition of a monetary charge for damage to the common area shall not be effective against a member unless the board fulfills the requirements of this section.

5865. NO INTENT TO EXPAND OR REDUCE ENFORCEMENT RIGHTS.

Nothing in Section 5850 or 5855 shall be construed to create, expand, or reduce the authority of the board to impose monetary penalties on a member for a violation of the governing documents.

ARTICLE 2. INTERNAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION OR "IDR"

5900. DISPUTES GIVING RISE TO AN OBLIGATION TO PARTICIPATE IN IDR IF REQUESTED:

- (a) This article applies to a dispute between an association and a member involving:
- (A) their rights, duties, or liabilities under the Davis-Stirling Act,
 - (B) their rights, duties, or liabilities under the Nonprofit Mutual Benefit Corporation Law, or
 - (C) their rights duties or liabilities under their Association's governing documents.

(b) This article supplements, and does not replace, Article 3 (commencing with Section 5925), relating to alternative dispute resolution as a prerequisite to an enforcement action.

5905. OBLIGATION TO PROVIDE FAIR AND REASONABLE IDR PROCEDURES TO MEMBERS.

(a) An association shall provide a fair, reasonable, and expeditious procedure for resolving a dispute within the scope of this article.

(b) In developing a procedure pursuant to this article, an association shall make maximum, reasonable use of available local dispute resolution programs involving a neutral third party, including low-cost mediation programs such as those listed on the Internet Web sites of the Department of Consumer Affairs and the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development.

(c) If an association does not provide a fair, reasonable, and expeditious procedure for resolving a dispute within the scope of this article, the procedure provided in Section 5915 applies and satisfies the requirement of subdivision (a).

5910. MINMIUM REQUIRMENTS FOR FAIR, EXPEDITIOUS AND REASONABLE IDR PROCEDURES.

A fair, reasonable, and expeditious dispute resolution procedure shall at a minimum satisfy all of the following requirements:

- (a) The procedure may be invoked by either party to the dispute. A request invoking the procedure shall be in writing.

- (b) The procedure shall provide for prompt deadlines. The procedure shall state the maximum time for the association to act on a request invoking the procedure.
- (c) If the procedure is invoked by a member, the association shall participate in the procedure.
- (d) If the procedure is invoked by the association, the member may elect not to participate in the procedure. If the member participates but the dispute is resolved other than by agreement of the member, the member shall have a right of appeal to the board.
- (e) A resolution of a dispute pursuant to the procedure, which is not in conflict with the law or the governing documents, binds the association and is judicially enforceable. An agreement reached pursuant to the procedure, which is not in conflict with the law or the governing documents, binds the parties and is judicially enforceable.
- (f) The procedure shall provide a means by which the member and the association may explain their positions.
- (g) A member of the association shall not be charged a fee to participate in the process.

5915. DAVIS-STIRLING ACT DEFAULT IDR PROCEDURE IF NO PROCEDURES ARE ADOPTED:

- (a) This section applies to an association that does not otherwise provide a fair, reasonable, and expeditious dispute resolution procedure. The procedure provided in this section is fair, reasonable, and expeditious, within the meaning of this article.
- (b) Either party to a dispute within the scope of this article may invoke the following procedure:
 - (1) The party may request the other party to meet and confer in an effort to resolve the dispute. The request shall be in writing.
 - (2) A member of an association may refuse a request to meet and confer. The association may not refuse a request to meet and confer.
 - (3) The board shall designate a director to meet and confer.
 - (4) The parties shall meet promptly at a mutually convenient time and place, explain their positions to each other, and confer in good faith in an effort to resolve the dispute.
 - (5) A resolution of the dispute agreed to by the parties shall be memorialized in writing and signed by the parties, including the board designee on behalf of the association.
- (c) An agreement reached under this section binds the parties and is judicially enforceable if both of the following conditions are satisfied:
 - (1) The agreement is not in conflict with law or the governing documents of the common interest development or association.

- (2) The agreement is either consistent with the authority granted by the board to its designee or the agreement is ratified by the board.
- (d) A member may not be charged a fee to participate in the process.

5920. ANNUAL POLICY STATEMENT MUST INCLUDE A DESCRIPTION OF THE IDR PROCESS:

The annual policy statement prepared pursuant to Section 5310 shall include a description of the internal dispute resolution process provided pursuant to this article.

ARTICLE 3. ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION PREREQUISITE TO CIVIL ACTION

5925. DEFINED TERMS RELATING TO ADR REQUIREMENTS AND PROCESS:

As used in this article:

(a) Alternative Dispute Resolution. "Alternative dispute resolution" means mediation, arbitration, conciliation, or other nonjudicial procedure that involves a neutral party in the decision-making process. The form of alternative dispute resolution chosen pursuant to this article may be binding or nonbinding, with the voluntary consent of the parties.

(b) Enforcement Action. "Enforcement action" means a civil action or proceeding, other than a cross-complaint, for any of the following purposes (that is of the nature of relief described in Civil Code section 5930(b), below):

- (1) Enforcement of any provision of the Davis-Stirling Act.
- (2) Enforcement of the Nonprofit Mutual Benefit Corporation Law.
- (3) Enforcement of the governing documents.

5930. OBLIGATION TO OFFER ADR PRIOR TO FILING A CIVIL ACTION.

- (a) An association or a member may not file an enforcement action in the superior court unless the parties have endeavored to submit their dispute to alternative dispute resolution pursuant to this article.
- (b) This section applies only to an enforcement action that is solely for declaratory, injunctive, or writ relief, or for that relief in conjunction with a claim for monetary damages not in excess of the jurisdictional limits stated in Sections 116.220 and 116.221 of the Code of Civil Procedure.
- (c) This section does not apply to a small claims action.
- (d) Except as otherwise provided by law, this section does not apply to an assessment dispute.

5935. TENDERING A “REQUEST FOR RESOLUTION” BEGINS THE ADR PROCESS; CONTENTS OF REQUEST:

(a) Contents of a “Request for Resolution”. Any party to a dispute may initiate the process required by Section 5930 by serving on all other parties to the dispute a Request for Resolution. The Request for Resolution shall include all of the following:

- (1) A brief description of the dispute between the parties.
- (2) A request for alternative dispute resolution.
- (3) A notice that the party receiving the Request for Resolution is required to respond within 30 days of receipt or the request will be deemed rejected.
- (4) If the party on whom the request is served is the member, a copy of this article.

(b) Manner of Service of the Request for Resolution. Service of the Request for Resolution shall be by personal delivery, first-class mail, express mail, facsimile transmission, or other means reasonably calculated to provide the party on whom the request is served actual notice of the request.

(c) Thirty Day Response Period. A party on whom a Request for Resolution is served has 30 days following service to accept or reject the request. If a party does not accept the request within that period, the request is deemed rejected by the party.

5940. NINETY DAY DEADLINE FOR COMPLETING ADR; SHARING OF ADR COSTS.

(a) If the party on whom a Request for Resolution is served accepts the request, the parties shall complete the alternative dispute resolution within 90 days after the party initiating the request receives the acceptance, unless this period is extended by written stipulation signed by both parties.

(b) Chapter 2 (commencing with Section 1115) of Division 9 of the Evidence Code applies to any form of alternative dispute resolution initiated by a Request for Resolution under this article, other than arbitration.

(c) The costs of the alternative dispute resolution shall be borne by the parties.

5945. TOLLING OF CIVIL ACTION CLAIMS PERIODS.

If a Request for Resolution is served before the end of the applicable time limitation for commencing an enforcement action, the time limitation is tolled during the following periods:

- (a) The period provided in Section 5935 for response to a Request for Resolution.
- (b) If the Request for Resolution is accepted, the period provided by Section 5940 for completion of alternative dispute resolution, including any extension of time stipulated to by the parties pursuant to Section 5940.

5950. REQUIREMENT OF CERTIFICATE TO ACCOMPANY CIVIL LITIGATION FILING:

(a) At the time of commencement of an enforcement action, the party commencing the action shall file with the initial pleading a certificate stating that one or more of the following conditions are satisfied:

- (1) Alternative dispute resolution has been completed in compliance with this article.
- (2) One of the other parties to the dispute did not accept the terms offered for alternative dispute resolution.
- (3) Preliminary or temporary injunctive relief is necessary.

(b) Failure to file a certificate pursuant to subdivision (a) is grounds for a demurrer or a motion to strike unless the court finds that dismissal of the action for failure to comply with this article would result in substantial prejudice to one of the parties.

5955. POST-LITIGATION REFERRAL OF MATTER TO ADR:

(a) After an enforcement action is commenced, on written stipulation of the parties, the matter may be referred to alternative dispute resolution. The referred action is stayed. During the stay, the action is not subject to the rules implementing subdivision (c) of Section 68603 of the Government Code.

(b) The costs of the alternative dispute resolution shall be borne by the parties.

5960. AWARD OF LEGAL FEES (REFUSAL TO PARTICIPATE IN ADR)

In an enforcement action in which attorney's fees and costs may be awarded, the court, in determining the amount of the award, may consider whether a party's refusal to participate in alternative dispute resolution before commencement of the action was reasonable.

5965. ANNUAL OBLIGATION TO INFORM MEMBERS OF ADR PROCEDURES (SUMMARY)

(a) An association shall annually provide its members a summary of the provisions of this article that specifically references this article. The summary shall include the following language:

"Failure of a member of the association to comply with the alternative dispute resolution requirements of Section 5930 of the Civil Code may result in the loss of the member's right to sue the association or another member of the association regarding enforcement of the governing documents or the applicable law."

(b) The summary shall be included in the annual policy statement prepared pursuant to Section 5310.

ARTICLE 4. CIVIL ACTIONS

5975. COMMON INTREEST CC&Rs ARE ENFORCEABLE EQUITABLE SERVITUDES. WHO HAS ENFORCENT RIGHTS. AWARD OF LEGAL FEES.

(a) The covenants and restrictions in the declaration shall be enforceable equitable servitudes, unless unreasonable, and shall inure to the benefit of and bind all owners of separate interests in the development. Unless the declaration states otherwise, these servitudes may be enforced by any owner of a separate interest or by the association, or by both.

(b) A governing document other than the declaration may be enforced by the association against an owner of a separate interest or by an owner of a separate interest against the association.

(c) In an action to enforce the governing documents, the prevailing party shall be awarded reasonable attorney's fees and costs.

5980. CIVIL ACTIONS FOR WHICH AN ASSOCIATION HAS STANDING TO SUE:

An association has standing to institute, defend, settle, or intervene in litigation, arbitration, mediation, or administrative proceedings in its own name as the real party in interest and without joining with it the members, in matters pertaining to the following:

- (a) Enforcement of the governing documents.
- (b) Damage to the common area.
- (c) Damage to a separate interest that the association is obligated to maintain or repair.
- (d) Damage to a separate interest that arises out of, or is integrally related to, damage to the common area or a separate interest that the association is obligated to maintain or repair.

5985. COMPARATIVE FAULT DAMAGES REDUCTION.

(a) In an action maintained by an association pursuant to subdivision (b), (c), or (d) of Section 5980, the amount of damages recovered by the association shall be reduced by the amount of damages allocated to the association or its managing agents in direct proportion to their percentage of fault based upon principles of comparative fault. The comparative fault of the association or its managing agents may be raised by way of defense, but shall not be the basis for a cross-action or separate action against the association or its managing agents for contribution or implied indemnity, where the only damage was sustained by the association or its members. It is the intent of the Legislature in enacting this subdivision to require that comparative fault be pleaded as an affirmative defense, rather than a separate cause of action, where the only damage was sustained by the association or its members.

(b) In an action involving damages described in subdivision (b), (c), or (d) of Section 5980, the defendant or cross-defendant may allege and prove the comparative fault of the association or its managing agents as a setoff to the liability of the defendant or cross-defendant even if the association is not a party to the litigation or is no longer a party whether by reason of settlement, dismissal, or otherwise.

(c) Subdivisions (a) and (b) apply to actions commenced on or after January 1, 1993.

(d) Nothing in this section affects a person's liability under Section 1431, or the liability of the association or its managing agent for an act or omission that causes damages to another.