

**COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS POLICY**

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Purpose

To establish a Board Policy on the use of the County seal, which shall govern how, when, and by whom the County seal may be utilized or displayed.

Background

Government Code section 25004 authorizes counties to adopt a seal. This statute requires a description and impression of the seal to be filed in the office of the county clerk, but does not state when or under what circumstances a county seal may be used.

The Board of Supervisors adopted the official seal for the County on February 11, 1937. The question of the appropriate use of the County seal, particularly by private entities that have some connection to the County, arises fairly frequently. Consequently, it is helpful to have a policy that sets forth how the County seal may be used.

As used in this policy, the term “County seal” means the official County seal adopted by the Board of Supervisors, a description and impression of which are filed in the office of the County Clerk (Assessor/Recorder/County Clerk) and any reproduction or facsimile of the seal. The County seal is separate and distinct from the County logo which has its own [guidance for appropriate use](#).

Policy

It is the policy of the Board of Supervisors that:

1. County officials and employees, as authorized by the official in charge of a County department or office, may use or display the County seal in relation to official County business in formal communications where use of the County seal is necessary or more appropriate than use of the County logo, which includes but is not limited to the following types of uses: (a) on the San Diego County Charter, (b) on Board of Supervisors policies, (c) on County proclamations, (d) to identify County property, and (e) on County facilities’ exterior signage (excluding exterior/interior doors). The County logo will otherwise be used to identify the County, which includes but is not limited to the following types of uses: (a) to display on the business cards of County employees and officers, (b) to display on official County stationery, and (c) to include on the pages of the County’s web site. For purposes of this paragraph, the reference to County department or office means any County department or office that is included in the County’s official Operational Plan as receiving budgeted funds approved by the Board of Supervisors.
2. Except as set forth in paragraph 1 above, no person or entity, including any County advisory body, shall use or display the County seal without first obtaining the written approval of the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO). In determining whether to approve the use or display of the County

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seal, the Chief Administrative Officer shall be guided by the sole standard of whether such use or display of the County seal primarily serves the County’s purposes or interests.

3. The County seal shall not be used or displayed under any circumstances for reasons relating to private commercial purposes, unless expressly authorized under state law. No person or entity shall be deemed to have the approval or endorsement of, or an express connection with the County of San Diego for purposes of using the County seal unless such person or entity has received the Chief Administrative Officer’s approval as described in paragraph 2, above. In addition, the Chief Administrative Officer may terminate the use or display of the County seal, as authorized under paragraphs 1 and 2 of this Policy, if, in the judgment of the CAO, the manner or nature of such use or display detracts from the County’s purposes or interests.

Sunset Date

This policy will be reviewed for continuance by December 31, 2031.

Board Action

- October 18, 2016 (15) Adopted Policy A-138
- November 7, 2023 (21)
- October 8, 2024 (##)

CAO Reference

- 1. Chief Administrative Officer