



PRO SE / SELF-REPRESENTED GUIDE

# Lemon Law Exhibit Guide

Organize repair records, dealer correspondence, and warranty documents for lemon law arbitration or court

Lemon law cases are won or lost on documentation. The Magnuson-Moss Warranty Act (15 U.S.C. § 2301) provides a federal floor, but most claims are filed under state lemon laws that have stronger consumer protections. California's Song-Beverly Act (Civ. Code § 1793.2) is among the strongest, requiring a refund or replacement after a "reasonable number" of repair attempts. Most states presume a vehicle is a lemon after 3+ repair attempts for the same defect or 30+ cumulative days out of service within the warranty period. Your repair orders, dealer correspondence, and out-of-service records are the evidence that proves the pattern.

## Repair Records

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## Purchase and Warranty Documents

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## Correspondence

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## Defect Documentation

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### COMMON MISTAKES TO AVOID

1. Not keeping copies of every repair order — even visits where the dealer "could not duplicate" the problem count toward your repair attempts
2. Failing to send the manufacturer a written demand letter before filing (many states require this)
3. Not tracking cumulative days out of service — you need specific dates, not estimates
4. Accepting verbal promises from the dealer instead of getting commitments in writing
5. Waiting until after the warranty expires to take action

### ORGANIZATION TIPS

- Create a chronological timeline of every repair visit: date, mileage, complaint, result
- Group repair orders by defect type — if the same problem was "fixed" three times, that pattern is your case
- Put the purchase agreement and warranty first so the arbitrator can see the coverage dates
- Calculate total days out of service and highlight it on a summary page
- Include any TSBs or recalls related to your defect — they show the manufacturer knew about the problem
- Save text messages and voicemails from the dealer. Screenshots with timestamps are evidence.

### COURTROOM PREPARATION

- Lemon law arbitration is typically less formal than court, but organized exhibits still matter
- Lead with the pattern: "three repair attempts for the same transmission shudder" is stronger than a narrative
- Know your state's presumption threshold (e.g., 3 attempts or 30 days out of service)
- Bring the vehicle's current mileage and be ready to discuss when the problem first appeared
- If the manufacturer argues you caused the defect, your maintenance records rebut that
- Some states allow attorney fees for successful lemon law claims — mention this to your attorney if applicable
- The burden of proof shifts to the manufacturer once you meet the presumption threshold

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