



PRO SE / SELF-REPRESENTED GUIDE

Small Claims Court Exhibit Guide

A step-by-step guide to organizing your evidence for small claims court. Learn which documents to bring and how to present them effectively.

Small claims court is designed to be accessible to people without lawyers, but organized evidence can make the difference between winning and losing. Judges appreciate when litigants present clear, labeled exhibits that are easy to follow. This guide will help you gather and organize the documents you need to support your case.

Contracts & Agreements

- Written contracts or agreements**
Any signed documents showing what was promised
- Invoices or estimates**
Documents showing agreed-upon prices or services
- Receipts for payments made**
Proof of any money you paid
- Warranties or guarantees**
Documents showing what was guaranteed

Communications

- Text messages**
Screenshots with dates visible, showing relevant conversations
- Emails**
Printed copies with headers showing date and sender
- Letters sent or received**
Include envelopes showing postmarks if relevant
- Voicemail transcripts**
Written summaries of important voicemails with dates

Visual Evidence

- Photographs**
Clear photos showing damage, condition, or relevant items
- Videos (on USB drive)**
Short clips that clearly show what you need to prove
- Diagrams or sketches**
Hand-drawn or printed diagrams explaining what happened

Financial Documentation

- Bank statements**
Showing payments made or money owed
- Credit card statements**
Proof of charges or payments
- Repair estimates**
Written estimates from professionals for damages
- Medical bills (if applicable)**
Itemized bills for injury-related claims

Witness Information

- Witness contact list**
Names and phone numbers of people who saw what happened
- Written witness statements**
Signed statements from witnesses describing what they observed

COMMON MISTAKES TO AVOID

1. Bringing a disorganized stack of loose papers that the judge cannot follow
2. Forgetting to make copies for the other party and the court
3. Including irrelevant documents that distract from your main points
4. Not having original documents when copies are questioned
5. Presenting text messages as tiny screenshots that are hard to read

ORGANIZATION TIPS

- Number each exhibit clearly (Exhibit 1, Exhibit 2, etc.) in the corner
- Create a simple list of your exhibits to reference during your presentation
- Arrange exhibits in chronological order or by topic
- Use tabs or dividers if you have many documents
- Highlight key portions of long documents so the judge can find them quickly

COURTROOM PREPARATION

- Bring 3 copies of everything: one for you, one for the judge, one for the other party
- Arrive early to find parking and locate your courtroom
- Dress professionally - business casual is appropriate
- Turn off your cell phone before entering the courtroom
- Stand when the judge enters and address them as "Your Honor"
- When presenting evidence, say "I would like to show the court Exhibit 1, which is..."

Make your exhibits look professional

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