



Your Family Law Trial/Evidentiary Hearing Date

This handout may be helpful to a self-represented party preparing for a family law trial or evidentiary hearing. If your matter involves domestic violence, please see Judicial Council form DV-520-INFO.

WHAT IF I WANT TO SETTLE MY CASE BEFORE THE TRIAL OR EVIDENTIARY HEARING?

You and the other party may always reach an agreement that settles all or part of the trial or evidentiary hearing issues in your case. You can write your agreements on either of the forms below and submit the written agreement to the court for review and signature by a judicial officer. Once signed and filed, these agreements become orders:

- **Written Stipulation and Agreement.** [Local Form PL-FL015 Placer County Superior Court](#)
- **Child Custody Agreement and Order.** [Local Form PL-FL017 Placer County Superior Court](#)

If you do reach a full agreement and you do not want to have your trial or evidentiary hearing, you may file a drop request with your written settlement agreement. See **Continue/Drop Form.** [Local Form PL-FL005 Placer County Superior Court.](#)

NOTE: All drop forms must be accompanied by a written agreement to drop the trial or hearing with signatures of both parties. If you are dropping the trial or evidentiary hearing, include that agreement with your other agreements.

WHAT SHOULD I DO BEFORE THE DAY OF MY TRIAL OR EVIDENTIARY HEARING?

- 1) **Meet and Confer.** To “Meet and confer” means that you communicate with the other party or the other parties’ attorney to see if you can reach any agreements or if you can narrow the issues for trial. You are not required to meet and confer on a domestic violence matter.
- 2) **File documents before your trial or evidentiary hearing:** The court will give you dates to file certain documents and serve the other party in the case. For example, the court **may** order you to file and serve the following documents:
 - **Statement of Issues and Contentions.** [Local form #PL-FL025 for Statement of Issues and Contentions- Placer County Superior Court Website.](#)
 - **Income and Expense Declaration.** [Judicial Council Family Law Form # FL-150.](#)
 - **Witness List.** (Note: You do not need this form if your witness list is in the Statement of Issues and Contentions). [Judicial Council Family Law Form #FL-321](#)
Note: If you have a Family Code section 3111 evaluation or Evidence section 730 evaluation at issue in your case, please read [Placer County Local Rule 30.5.1\(B\)\(1\)](#)
- 3) **Serve (give) your filed documents on (to) the other party.** You must have another person or third party give the other party a copy of all forms you filed and then file a proof of service with the court. A proof of service tells the court that you gave the other party a copy of your filed documents. Below are proof of service forms:
 - **Proof of Personal Service.** [Judicial Council Family Law Form #FL-330 or #DV-200](#)
 - **Proof of Service by Mail.** [Judicial Council Family Law Form #FL-335](#) or #DV 250
- 4) **Prepare your Exhibits for Trial.** Exhibits are things like documents (bank statements, appraisals) photographs, videos, audio recordings, text messages, etc.
 - If you want to present an audio or video recording as an Exhibit and that audio or video recording includes people speaking, you must also have the recording transcribed and you must present a transcript with the recording at the time of your trial or hearing.
 - If you have an exhibit that is an audio/video recording, you will need to download the recording to a CD in a playable format.



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- If your exhibit includes a text message, social media post, or some other form of electronic evidence, you will have to bring it in a form (For example: printed out) that can be marked as an exhibit and left with the court. The court will not be able to look at the item on your phone or computer.
- 5) **Give a Copy of Your Exhibits to the Other Party Before the Hearing.** You must provide the other party with copies of all exhibits before your trial or hearing.
- 6) **Make four copies of any exhibit (defined above) that you want to present to the court as an Exhibit.**
- 7) **DO NOT file the exhibits with the court before your hearing.**
- 8) **DO NOT pre-mark you exhibits.** The clerk will mark all exhibits in numerical order on the day of trial.

WHAT SHOULD I DO ON THE DAY OF MY TRIAL OR EVIDENTIARY HEARING?

- 1) **Be on time.** Trials or evidentiary hearings may start as early as 8:30 a.m. and end as late as 4:00 p.m. A 15-minute recess or break will be taken each morning and afternoon. A lunch recess will be taken from 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. *Note:* Lunch and break times are approximate and depend on the needs of the parties and court staff.
- 2) All parties are expected to follow the California Rules of Court, the Evidence and Procedure Codes, as well as any other applicable law.
- 3) **Bring your witnesses and exhibits to court.**
 - Be sure your witnesses are ready to testify on the day of your hearing.
 - On the day of your hearing, bring four copies of your exhibits. (Four copies: 1 to mark as an exhibit, 1 for the other party, 1 for you and an extra copy for the court.)
 - You will also need to **bring your own equipment** such as a laptop if you want to play evidence in the courtroom. The device to play your evidence can have any of the following outputs (HDMI, Display Port, 3.5 mm Audio Out or VGA).
 - For more information, you can watch a video about displaying your evidence in the courtroom on the Self-Help Center webpage at <http://www.placer.courts.ca.gov/self-help-lhc.shtml>.
 - **Remember: Any audio/video recording, photograph or other exhibit will be left with the court and kept in evidence if it is admitted.** Please do not pre-mark your exhibits.
- 4) **Be respectful.** Treat the opposing party and attorney, court staff, and the court with respect. For example, do not interrupt the other side when they are speaking in court. You will get a chance to present evidence and tell the court your side of the story.

The Self-Help Center can assist you with procedural questions about your trial or hearing. You can make an appointment with the Self-Help Center at www.placer.courts.ca.gov.

The following links provide helpful information:

- California Judicial Council Self-Help Center: www.courts.ca.gov/selfhelp
- California Judicial Council Center for Families and Children: www.courts.ca.gov/selfhelp-family
- Placer County Superior Court Local Forms: www.placer.courts.ca.gov/forms-filing-forms
- Placer County Superior Court Interpreter Info: <http://www.placer.courts.ca.gov/general-interpreter>