

Chronology of events

A blank dated timeline you can print and fill in by hand.

A chronology is a dated list of what happened, with a note beside each entry saying which document shows it and where that document sits in your exhibits. No rule requires one. It is a working sheet you keep for yourself, and it is the fastest way to find out which parts of your account rest on a document and which parts rest only on your memory.

Fill it in beside your exhibit index and the two will agree. The exhibit letter and page you write in the last two columns are the ones from that index.

HOW TO FILL IT IN

1. One event per row, oldest first

If two things happened on the same day, give them two rows. A row that holds three events cannot be pointed at cleanly later.

2. Write the date the way the document writes it

If a screenshot says only "Mar 3" with no year, write "Mar 3" and put a question mark next to it. Do not fill in a year you are guessing at. If you later work the year out from something else, write down what told you. A date you cannot support is the most common way a careful timeline quietly becomes an inaccurate one.

3. Write what happened, not what it means

Rule 5.111(b)(2) says a declaration must be based on personal knowledge and explain how the person acquired it. Personal knowledge is what you saw, heard, or did. "The 6 pm exchange did not happen" is an event. "He is trying to alienate the children" is a conclusion, and it belongs to someone else to draw.

4. Name the document that shows it

Write what the document is, in enough words that you would recognize it a month from now. If nothing shows it, still write the row and leave this column empty. An empty column is the useful part of the sheet: it is a list of what you are asking someone to take on your word alone.

5. Point to where the document is

Write the exhibit designation and the page from your exhibit index. If you have not built the index yet, leave these two columns until you have, then fill them in down the sheet in one pass.

6. If two documents show the same event, list both

Put the second one on its own line inside the same row, or add a second row with the same date. Either is fine as long as you can read it later.

7. Keep this sheet for yourself

This is your working copy. Nothing here is filed anywhere unless you decide to use it, and nothing on it has been reviewed by anyone.

WHAT A FILLED-IN ROW LOOKS LIKE

Date	What happened	Which document shows it	Exhibit	Page
03/03/2026	The 6 pm exchange did not happen. I waited at the agreed place until 7:40 pm.	Text messages, 6:12 pm to 7:40 pm	A	12
Mar 8 (year?)	Voicemail saying the exchange time had changed.	Voicemail transcript	B	16
05/30/2026	Sixth absence from school this term.	School attendance record	C	17

A filled-in row looks like this. The second row shows how to record a date the document does not fully give.

WHERE THIS COMES FROM

Every procedural statement above is one of the following, quoted in full so you can check it yourself. Nothing here is our opinion about your case.

California Rules of Court, rule 5.111(b)(2)

"A declaration must be based on personal knowledge and explain how the person has acquired that knowledge. The statements in the declaration must be admissible in evidence."

Rule 5.111 adopted effective January 1, 2013. https://courts.ca.gov/cms/rules/index/five/rule5_111

This is the reason the middle column asks what happened rather than what it shows. Personal knowledge means what you saw, heard, or did.

California Rules of Court, rule 3.1110(f)(1)

"An index of exhibits must be provided. The index must briefly describe the exhibit and identify the exhibit number or letter and page number."

Rule 3.1110 amended effective January 1, 2017. https://courts.ca.gov/cms/rules/index/three/rule3_1110

This is the whole basis for the three columns the rule cares about: a designation, a brief description, and a page number.

California Rules of Court, rule 3.1110(c)

"Documents must be consecutively paginated. The page numbering must begin with the first page and use only Arabic numerals (e.g., 1, 2, 3). The page number may be suppressed and need not appear on the first page."

Rule 3.1110 amended effective January 1, 2017. https://courts.ca.gov/cms/rules/index/three/rule3_1110

Consecutive means one run of numbers across the whole thing, not a fresh count inside each exhibit.

California Rules of Court, rule 5.2(d)

"Except as otherwise provided in these rules, all provisions of law applicable to civil actions generally apply to a proceeding under the Family Code if they would otherwise apply to such proceeding without reference to this rule. To the extent that these rules conflict with provisions in other statutes or rules, these rules prevail."

Rule 5.2 amended effective July 1, 2026. https://courts.ca.gov/cms/rules/index/five/rule5_2

Rule 3.1110 sits in the civil rules, not the family rules. This is the rule that says how the civil rules reach a Family Code case. It is quoted here so you can read it yourself rather than take our word for it.

BEFORE YOU USE THIS

This is a blank organizing template. It is general information, not legal advice. It does not tell you what to file, what your evidence means, or whether you have enough of it.

Courts can have their own local rules and their own labeling conventions. Check your court's local rules before you file, or ask at your county law library or your court's self-help center. Both are free.

Nobody has reviewed what you write on this sheet. If you want advice about your case, talk to a lawyer.

Rule text quoted here was read from courts.ca.gov on August 10, 2026. Rules change. Read the current rule before you rely on it.

Chronology of events

Your name _____

Case number _____

Court (county) _____

Date prepared _____

Chronology page _____ of _____

Date	What happened	Which document shows it	Exhibit	Page

Chronology of events

Your name _____

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