

DE-MYSTIFYING THE EXHIBIT REVIEW PROCESS

BY

ANNA M. JAUREGUI-LAW
STAFF ATTORNEY
APPELLATE DEFENDERS, INC.

2026 EDITION
(ORIGINAL PUBLICATION DATE JULY 2003)

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DE-MYSTIFYING THE EXHIBIT REVIEW PROCESS

I. INTRODUCTION

In the Fourth Appellate District, procedures for reviewing exhibits vary among the six county court systems. Division One jurisdiction covers San Diego County and Imperial County. Division Two jurisdiction covers Riverside County, San Bernardino County, and Inyo County. Division Three jurisdiction covers Orange County. Below is updated information assembled on the procedures, including the applicable rules of court.¹ Always check with the exhibit custodian as procedures can change. For contact information for the superior courts' appellate clerks and exhibit custodians, see [Superior Courts within Fourth District Court of Appeal](#).²

To promote efficiency and reduce travel expenses, *out-of-county appointed counsel should first attempt to secure exhibits from the trial attorney*, who may have a copy. Appellate Defenders, Inc. (“ADI”) may also help obtain copies of exhibits on behalf of out-of-county appointed counsel. To make a request for ADI to obtain a copy, email the case-assigned staff attorney. Provide the case name, appeal number, superior court

¹ This information can change at any time within the particular court. If the reader learns of a material departure from this guide, please contact the websitecommittee@adi-sandiego.com.

² http://www.adi-sandiego.com/practice/court_attorney_contacts.asp
Click on the corresponding Division link and scroll down to access the superior contact information list for each county superior court.

county case number, and the specific exhibits to be copied (the exhibit number, whether the exhibit is a People's, Defense's, or Court exhibit, and the type of exhibit [photo, document, CD, DVD]). See *post*, "Viewing Exhibits" pertaining to the specific Court of Appeal Division, for particulars on when and how ADI can assist. Staff attorney e-mail addresses are located on ADI's website.

If it is necessary for out-of-county appellate counsel to go to the superior court to view the exhibits, contact your case-assigned staff attorney beforehand,³ check the superior court website, and contact the exhibit clerk for any updated health precautionary measures, hours, appointment scheduling, and procedure for viewing media exhibits and obtaining a copy of exhibits. For specific procedure in obtaining a copy of exhibits from a superior court, some of which require a motion by appointed counsel in either the superior court or the Court of Appeal, see "Viewing Exhibits," *post*, pertaining to the specific Court of Appeal Division.

A. California Rules Of Court

Transmission of Exhibits to the Reviewing Court: California Rules of Court, rule 8.224(a) (rule or rules) provides, in relevant part, that within 10 days after the last respondent's brief is filed or could be filed, a party wanting the reviewing court to review

³ See [Claims Manual](#) - Exhibits: "counsel should call the project for advice on whether the travel is appropriate, whether preauthorization is required, or whether another option might be available."
<https://www.adi-sandiego.com/panel-attorneys/claims/>

an exhibit must serve and file a notice in the superior court designating such exhibit. The Court of Appeal must be served with a copy. If you miss the deadline, a motion requesting transmittal must be filed in the reviewing court.⁴ (Rule 8.224(c).)

Division Two has a [modified procedure](#).⁵ It sends to the appointed attorney, early in the case and usually with the appointment order, a form stating that it prefers early transmission of the exhibits. The form contains a request for transmission, which is to be completed by the attorney and returned to Division Two, not the superior court, with the appellant's opening brief.

Attachment to Appellate Briefs: Under rule 8.204(d), copies of exhibits or other materials in the appellate record may be attached to a brief. The attachment is limited to 10 pages in length, but a longer attachment may be permitted on application for good cause.

⁴ See ADI's [Motion Practice Guide](#), which provides a comprehensive overview of motions, useful resources, and practical tips. See ADI's [Form's and Samples](#): "Exhibits Transmission, Late."

⁵ http://www.adi-sandiego.com/practice/fourth_dist_div2.asp#superior2

B. A Note About Confidential Or Sealed Exhibits

The rules concerning sealed⁶ and confidential⁷ records in the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal set forth the procedure for transmission to the reviewing court, specify who can receive copies of these records, and outline how a party can discuss these records in a brief, petition, or other filing in an appellate court proceeding. The provisions are set forth at rules 8.45 to 8.47 and cover appeal and writ proceedings.

Sealed and confidential records include exhibits. (Rule 8.45(b)(1), (3) & (5).) Appointed counsel may personally view and obtain a copy of a confidential or sealed exhibit without a court order, as long as the party, or the party's trial counsel, had access to the record in the trial court. (Rule 8.45(d)(2), (3), & (5); see also rule 8.10(3) [“‘Party’ includes any attorney of record for that party”].) If neither the party nor trial counsel had access, then a court order will be needed.

Although rule 8.45(d)(1), (2), (3) & (5) requires that the “record” be transmitted to the Court of Appeal and to the party who had access to the record in the trial court, an exhibit would not be initially transmitted to the Court of Appeal or appointed counsel

⁶ “A ‘sealed’ record is a record that is closed to inspection by the public or a party by order of a court under rules 2.550-2.551 or rule 8.46.” (Rule 8.45(b)(3).)

⁷ “A ‘confidential’ record is a record that, in court proceedings, is required by statute, rule of court, or other authority except a court order under rules 2.550-2.551 or rule 8.46 to be closed to inspection by the public or party.” (Rule 8.45(b)(5).)

when the transcripts are filed with the court and sent to the attorney.⁸ Contact the superior court exhibit custodian ahead of time to make arrangements to view and obtain a copy of an exhibit. Many courts prefer email requests to review exhibits in general. Some do not. If the exhibit is sealed or confidential, please inform the exhibits clerk before going to the courthouse that, under rule 8.45, you are now authorized to view the exhibits without a court order. If there is a disagreement about your right to access without a court order, contact the case-assigned staff attorney.

II. VIEWING EXHIBITS IN DIVISION ONE

A. San Diego County⁹

In the past, ADI has been able to obtain a copy of case related “materials,” which includes exhibits, as well as confidential and sealed documents,¹⁰ on behalf of out-of-county appointed attorneys who deem it necessary to obtain and review the exhibits. However, the superior court has limited ADI’s ability to continue that practice. All panel attorneys who accept an appeal from San Diego will likely need to travel to view/obtain copies of exhibits if the case necessitates. First, try to obtain the exhibits from trial

⁸ Except for transcripts of recordings furnished to the jury or to the court under (rule 8.320(b)(11)) and documents “admitted in evidence to prove a prior juvenile adjudication, criminal conviction, or prison term” (rule 8.320(b)(13)(c).)

⁹ www.sdcourt.ca.gov

¹⁰ See court miscellaneous order 112812: <https://appellate.courts.ca.gov/district-courts/4dca/publication/adi-access-superior-court-records>. It applies to criminal, juvenile delinquency, juvenile dependency cases, as well as other cases, in both San Diego County and Imperial County Superior Courts.

counsel. Second, if that is unsuccessful, send a request to obtain exhibits to the case-assigned staff attorney and include the case name, appeal number, superior court county case number, and the specific exhibits to be copied (the exhibit number, whether the exhibit is a People's, Defense's, or Court exhibit, and the type of exhibit [photo, document, CD, DVD]). If travel is necessary, contact the case-assigned staff attorney to seek pre-approval.

There are four superior courts in which exhibits relating to adult felony cases are contained: central court in downtown San Diego and the branch courts in Vista, Chula Vista, and El Cajon. Branch courts will not transfer exhibits to central court, except in juvenile delinquency cases. Exhibits related to juvenile cases in Kearny Mesa will be transferred to central exhibits in downtown.

To view an exhibit, you must go to the respective courthouse.

Dependency Cases in Div. 1 Only: The court issued a miscellaneous order which directs the clerk to make exhibits received and filed part of the normal record on appeal. It provides the record should include, "All documents in the juvenile dependency file, including all documentary exhibits admitted in evidence or refused, when creating the record for this court." As a result of this rule, exhibits in San Diego dependency cases can be obtained through an augment/correction request.¹¹

¹¹ See Misc. Order No. 091515:
<https://appellate.courts.ca.gov/district-courts/4dca/publication/juvenile-transcripts>

(1) San Diego County Courthouse, Central Division Exhibit Room MS-C44:

1100 Union St., San Diego, CA 92101; (619) 844-2574. Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 4:15 p.m., Monday through Friday.

The appointed attorney must call in advance and make an appointment. Bring identification and the appellate appointment order in the event the exhibit room has not yet received the appointment order from the court. Only the attorney of record is permitted to view exhibits. A court order is required for all others, except for ADI.

The exhibit room is located in the basement, accessible only by elevator. From the lobby, take elevator number 1, which is the only elevator that goes to the basement. Upon exiting into a small corridor, you will see a phone. When the receiver is lifted, a list of departments shows up. Press exhibits.

If copies of paper documents or photos are needed, the exhibit technician will, as a courtesy, copy up to 10 pages or photos (photos are in black and white). If the copy request is for greater than 10 pages or the size is larger, there are two options: (1) bring a copier, scanner or camera or (2) obtain a superior court order to have a copy service come to the exhibit room and make the copies.¹² Photographic exhibits can be photocopied by the exhibit technician for the attorney, as long as they are no larger than 8" x 11" size.

¹² Motions filed in superior court must conform to rule 2.100, et seq. and be printed on pleading paper. See ADI's [Forms & Samples](#): "Exhibits, Request to Copy."

Equipment is available to review media exhibits (CDs, DVDs, audiotapes, and videotapes). The exhibit custodian can make a copy of a digital media exhibit but bring a brand new, unopened from the packaged thumb drive or flash drive. Counsel can also use a smartphone or camera to take a photo of an exhibit. For making a copy of other exhibits, speak to the custodian to make arrangements.

(2) North County Superior Court: 325 S. Melrose Dr., Room C021, Vista, CA 92081; (760) 201-8285. Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 4:15 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Call to make an appointment. The exhibit room is located in the single-story, old court building in the basement. While in the lobby, call the exhibit room, and you will be escorted to the room.

The same procedures outlined in section (1) above concerning viewing and copying exhibits apply.

(3) East County Superior Court: 50 E. Main St., El Cajon, CA 92020; (619) 456-4240. Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 4:15 p.m. Exhibits are available for viewing only on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Call to make an appointment.

The same procedures outlined in section (1) above apply. The only equipment that is available to review media exhibits is a laptop. You must give notice ahead of time that you will need this computer.

(4) **South County Superior Court:** 500 3rd Ave., Chula Vista, CA 91910; (619) 746-6198. Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m and 1:00 p.m. to 4:15 p.m. The exhibit room will be on the 2d floor next to elevators. Exhibits are available for viewing only on Tuesday and Thursday. Call to make an appointment.

The same procedures outlined in section (1) above apply. The equipment that is available is a tape player, a television to view VHS tapes, and a laptop.

(5) **Juvenile Superior Court:** Although exhibits are housed at 2851 Meadow Lark Drive, San Diego, CA 92123, as of 2025, juvenile exhibits are now transferred to the central courthouse, same building as described in section (1) above. Call central courthouse to make an appointment. The same procedures outlined in section (1) above apply with the following modifications. Only the appointed attorney of record or ADI is permitted to view these confidential exhibits, and an appointment order must be presented.

B. Imperial County¹³

ADI does not travel to Imperial County to obtain exhibits. In an effort to keep costs down, appointed counsel should first request trial counsel to secure the exhibits. If that is not fruitful, ask the exhibit custodian to send copies of documentary exhibits to you. Mailing a copy of an exhibit is not an option in death penalty cases. Traveling to the

¹³ www.imperial.courts.ca.gov

superior court to view exhibits is a last resort for any case.¹⁴

Imperial County Superior Court: 939 W. Main St., El Centro, CA 92243; (760) 482-2240, ext 2372; America.Sanchez@imperial.courts.ca.gov. Hours: 8:00 a. m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday to Friday. The main court contains the exhibits for felony adult and juvenile cases.

In lieu of travel to the court for review of documentary exhibits, appointed counsel can request by letter or email that a copy be mailed. Follow up with a phone call if no response is received after a reasonable amount of time.

To view exhibits, call or email at least two days before the visit to make an appointment to view exhibits. On the day of your appointment, go to the clerk's office of the civil department. Viewing exhibits is not limited to attorneys of record; however, only appointed counsel or ADI can view confidential or sealed exhibits. An Exhibit Viewing Request Form must be submitted and state-issued identification, a State Bar card, and the Court of Appeal appointment order must be presented.

Copies of documentary exhibits can be made by the custodian; if there are time constraints, then request that copies be mailed.

No equipment is available to review media exhibits, and no equipment is available to make copies. To make copies, a superior court order is required.¹⁵ Make sure the motion

¹⁴ See footnote 3, *ante*.

¹⁵ See footnote 12, *ante*.

and order states that there are no costs to appellant because it is an indigent appeal. The exhibit technician will make the arrangements for making a copy. Appointed counsel can bring equipment to make copies but two days' notice must be given to the exhibit clerk.

The procedures outlined above also apply to review of juvenile case exhibits with two modifications. Only appointed counsel or ADI can view the exhibits, and an appointment order must be shown.

III. VIEWING EXHIBITS IN DIVISION TWO

Appointed counsel should first try to obtain the exhibits from trial counsel. Division Two's miscellaneous order¹⁶ permits ADI "to view and copy all portions of the file, including sealed and confidential documents and exhibits." Under this order, ADI can help obtain the needed exhibits, as more fully explained *post*.

If the case necessitates a hands-on review of exhibits by appointed counsel or there is a large number of exhibits, contact your case-assigned staff attorney to seek pre-approval for travel¹⁷ and then contact the superior court in advance to make arrangements, to obtain guidance on the exhibit review procedure for the particular court, and to ascertain the location of the needed exhibits, as some may be stored off site. Exhibit custodians prefer

¹⁶ See court miscellaneous order 22-4 at http://www.adi-sandiego.com/practice/fourth_dist_div2.asp which applies to criminal, juvenile delinquency, juvenile dependency cases, as well as other cases. The order applies to all counties under the jurisdiction of Division Two.

¹⁷ See footnote 3, *ante*.

attorneys to email their requests, but for some email is not available. For more information, see ADI's [Fourth District, Division Two page](#).¹⁸

San Bernardino County Cases Only: Out-of-county counsel can file a motion in the Court of Appeal to transmit media exhibits to the Court of Appeal for copying and transmission to counsel.¹⁹ For documentary exhibits, counsel can file an augment motion in the Court of Appeal, but should make clear that the request is for transmission and copying of exhibits to augment the record in a San Bernardino case. These procedures are not available for Riverside or Inyo County cases.

Appeals that have been transferred to Division One or Division Three: Those Divisions do not make copies for counsel. For Division One cases, out-of-county counsel should file a motion to transfer the exhibits to Division One, and ADI can go to the court and make the copies. Because this is a time-consuming process for ADI, counsel is requested to assess the necessity of obtaining the exhibits before seeking ADI assistance and to first ask trial counsel in the event trial counsel has the exhibits.

If the appeal has been transferred to Division Three, ADI does not travel there nor to Division Two where the exhibits are stored in the superior court. If counsel is unable to obtain the exhibits from trial counsel, then counsel may need to travel to the court to view and obtain them. Contact your case-assigned staff attorney to seek pre-approval for travel.

¹⁸ http://www.adi-sandiego.com/practice/fourth_dist_div2.asp#superior2

¹⁹ See ADI's [Forms & Samples](#): "Exhibits, Transmission for Copying (San Bernardino only)."

A. Riverside County²⁰

Exhibit department hours are 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., Monday to Friday. Requests to view exhibits are by appointment only and should be made 2 to 5 days in advance. Call or email the exhibits department for details on viewing exhibits and/or obtaining a copy of an exhibit. Personal identification (e.g., driver's license) or an appointment order is required. Only the attorney of record or ADI can view confidential or sealed exhibits. Equipment to view media exhibits is not available at any of the exhibit department locations.

If the appeal has been transferred to another Division, ADI can obtain documentary, photographic, and electronic media exhibits directly from the Riverside Superior Court for counsel.

(1) **Riverside Superior Court:** Historic Court, 4050 Main St., Riverside, CA 92501; (951) 777-3098 or (951) 777-3148; RiversideExhibits@riverside.courts.ca.gov. The exhibit room is located in the basement. This location maintains exhibits for Hall of Justice, Historic Courthouse, Riverside Juvenile Court, Riverside Family Law, Banning Justice Center, Corona Court, and Moreno Valley Court.

(2) **Juvenile Superior Court:** 9991 County Farm Rd., Riverside, CA 92503; (951) 777-3147. Contact the Riverside County Superior Court exhibit department, *ante*, to make arrangements for viewing exhibits.

²⁰ <https://www.riverside.courts.ca.gov/>

(3) **Indio Superior Court:** Larson Justice Center, 46-200 Oasis St., Indio, CA 92201; (760) 393-2345; DesertExhibits@riverside.courts.ca.gov. Closed from 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.

(4) **Murrieta Superior Court:** Southwest Justice Center, 30755-D Auld Rd., Murrieta, CA 92563; (951) 704-7647; riversideexhibits@riverside.courts.ca.gov.

B. San Bernardino County²¹

San Bernardino Superior Court does not have equipment for making a copy of media exhibits, such as a CD, DVD, audiotape, or videotape. If out-of-county counsel needs a media exhibit, counsel may file a motion in the Court of Appeal requesting an order to the superior court to transmit exhibits to the Court of Appeal. The Court of Appeal will make a copy and mail it to appointed counsel.²² For documentary or photographic exhibits, counsel can file in the Court of Appeal a motion to augment. The motion should state that the request is for transmission and copying of exhibits to augment the record in a San Bernardino case. If the case was transferred to another Division, see *ante*, San Bernardino County Cases Only.

Because of various court closures, felony cases and the corresponding exhibits of those courts have relocated. The Appeals and Appellate Division is located at 8303 Haven

²¹ www.sb-court.org

²² See ADI's [Forms & Samples](#): "Exhibits, Transmission for Copying (San Bernardino only)."

Avenue, Rancho Cucamonga, California 91730. For general information on viewing exhibits see: <https://www.sb-court.org/divisions/exhibits>.

If out-of-county counsel must go to the courthouse to see the exhibits, after obtaining pre-approval by the case-assigned staff attorney, call or email at least one week in advance to make an appointment to view exhibits. Transfer of exhibits from one courthouse to another to accommodate the viewer is not permitted unless ordered by the court.

If a documentary exhibit is voluminous, give advance notice if you plan on making a copy request. The copies may be provided the day the attorney views the exhibit if time allows; otherwise, they can be mailed to the attorney.

(1) **San Bernardino Superior Court:** 247 West 3rd Street, San Bernardino, CA 92415; (909) 521-3349 or (909) 708-8724; aholt-weaver@sb-court.org and tperez@sb-court.org. Viewing hours: 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., Monday to Thursday.

(2) **Barstow Superior Court:** 235 E. Mountain View Street, Room 118, Barstow, CA 92311; (760) 718-3396 or (760) 718-3734; Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Email contact information is not available. Call 24 hours in advance to arrange exhibit review and determine location of exhibits. Exhibits involving active cases have been sent to different courthouses, mainly Victorville Superior Court. All closed cases are stored in Barstow.

(3) **Fontana Superior Court:** 17780 Arrow Route, Fontana, CA 92335; (909) 320-5045 or (909) 350-9322. As of May 2014, Fontana court only handles infractions. All criminal exhibits pertaining to cases prior to May 2014 are at the Rancho Cucamonga Superior Court or the San Bernardino Superior Court.

(4) **Joshua Tree Superior Court:** 6527 White Feather Rd., Joshua Tree, CA 92252; (760) 974-3030 or (760) 974-3031; dhanna@sb-court.org. Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., Monday to Friday.

(5) **Juvenile Delinquency Superior Court - Central:** 900 East Gilbert St., Bldg 2, San Bernardino, CA 92415; (909) 269-8840 (press 1, then 8); mwhite-penright@sb-court.org. Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., Monday to Friday. An appointment order and identification are required to view juvenile case exhibits.

(6) **Juvenile Dependency Superior Court:** 860 E. Gilbert Street, San Bernardino, CA 92415; (909) 269-8840 (press 1, then 8); mwhite-penright@sb-court.org. Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., Monday to Friday. An appointment order and identification are required to view juvenile case exhibits.

(7) **Rancho Cucamonga Superior Court:** 8303 N. Haven Ave., Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91730; (909) 285-3534. Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., Monday to Friday.

(8) **Victorville Superior Court:** 14455 Civic Dr., Victorville, CA 92392; (760) 269- 4861. Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 12:00, Monday to Friday.

The location of exhibits of courts that have closed are as follows:

(a) Big Bear Court: All cases have moved to San Bernardino Superior Court or Victorville.

(b) Chino Court: All cases have moved to Victorville or San Bernardino.

(c) Needles Court: All cases have moved to Victorville Court.

(d) Redlands Court: All cases have moved to San Bernardino Superior Court.

(e) Twin Peaks Court: All cases have moved to San Bernardino Superior Court.

C. Inyo County²³

Only the main courthouse contains felony criminal adult and juvenile case exhibits: 168 N. Edwards St., Independence, CA 93526; (760) 872-2859; Gina.Ellis@inyocourt.ca.gov and Alyse.Caton@inyocourt.ca.gov. Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 and 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday to Friday.

Contact the exhibit department three to five days in advance to make an appointment. The exhibit room is located on the top floor. Generally, there is no requirement that only attorneys are allowed to view exhibits. However, only attorneys are allowed to view and obtain a copy of a confidential or sealed exhibit.

²³ <https://www.inyo.courts.ca.gov/>

There is no limit on copying of regular-sized paper exhibits. If you need a copy of a media exhibit, such as a CD, DVD, audiotape, or videotape, speak to the custodian ahead of time to make arrangements.

IV. VIEWING EXHIBITS IN DIVISION THREE

Division Three jurisdiction covers Orange County.²⁴ Appointed counsel should first attempt to obtain exhibits from trial counsel. If that proves unfruitful, ADI can help obtain copies of documentary and electronic media exhibits from the exhibit custodian and forward them to counsel. ADI cannot access confidential and sealed exhibits in the Orange County Superior Courts.

For non-documentary exhibits that the custodian cannot photocopy (e.g., physical exhibits or large charts), out-of-county counsel can make an appointment with the custodian and travel to the court to view and copy or photograph. The custodian may be contacted at CJCExhibits@occourts.org or by phone at (657) 622-7564. If it is determined an in-person visit by counsel is necessary to see any exhibit,²⁵ counsel should obtain approval from the case-assigned staff attorney.

All felony and delinquency case exhibits are reviewed at Central Justice Center, regardless of where trial proceedings were held. Central Justice Center is located at 700

²⁴ www.occourts.org

²⁵ See footnote 3, *ante*.

Civic Center Dr. West, Santa Ana, CA 92701. The Exhibits Room is on the first floor, room 1D110, window 69. Bring an appointment order and driver's license.

For dependency appeals, contact your case-assigned staff attorney. Juvenile court is located at 341 City Drive, Rm. C207, 2nd Flr., Orange, CA 92868.