

THREE BINDERS EVERY LITIGATOR NEEDS

# LITIGATION NOTEBOOK CHECKLIST



# CHECKLIST

Use this checklist to to set up and maintain three core binders that will help keep you organized, focused and effective:

- The Working Binder
- The Argument Binder
- The Trial Binder



## 1. The Working Binder

**Purpose:** Your most-referenced materials for the case; fast context switching.

**Include:**

- Scheduling order
- Case agenda
- Pending motions
- Recent notes
- Case chronology
- Key research memos
- Foundational documents:
  - Civil: complaint; key court rulings/orders
  - Criminal: indictment; key 302s

**Use when:**

- Client calls with deadlines or status questions
- Team meetings on next steps
- Travel or quick refresh on case context

**Maintain:**

**Add:** new court orders, notes, memos; latest agenda and chronology

**Remove:** resolved motions, stale memos, superseded orders



## 2. The Argument Binder

**Purpose:** One-issue binder for any discrete argument (not just “big” arguments).  
Create binders for: discovery motions; pre-motion conferences; hearings; mediations.

### Include:

- Party briefs (yours and opposing)
- Key cases and authorities (highlighted)
- Statutes/rules excerpts
- Your notes, outlines, key points

### Maintain:

- Start early; assemble as you prepare
- Annotate and highlight as you read
- Refine and tab for fast navigation



## 3. The Trial Binder

**Purpose:** The daily, in-court planner for trial administration.

### Include:

- Today's issues to raise with the court
- Previous-day notes and rulings
- Key orders and procedures
- Foundational trial documents: exhibit list; witness list; juror info
- Trial briefs, motions, and supporting materials
- Last-night filings (e.g., motions in limine; jury-instruction requests)

### Maintain:

- Update nightly before each trial day
- Keep separate binders for major events (witness exams, openings, closings)

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# PRACTICE TIPS FROM ATTORNEY AT WORK

- [5 Checklists to Make Your Law Firm More Efficient — and Profitable](#) by Peggy Gruenke
- [How to Create Law Firm SOPs in Five Easy Steps](#) by Karen and David Skinner
- [Generative AI for Litigators: A Trial Lawyer's New Best Friend](#) by Marissa Ronk and Miles Orten
- [Ladies and Gentlemen! Watch Your Language at Trial](#) by Brian Johnson
- [Brief Writing: Name Plaintiffs and Parties Precisely](#) by Josh Taylor
- [Brief Writing: Tell Compelling and Simple Stories to Improve Your Facts Section](#) by Josh Taylor

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