

YOUR TEMPORARY ORDERS HEARING PLAYBOOK: EVIDENCE PACKET, 20 - MINUTE SCRIPT, AND POSTRULING STEPS

A step-by-step, plain-English playbook for your first temporary orders hearing. Includes emergency vs. regular paths, state snapshots for financial disclosures (CA, FL, TX), how to label and present exhibits in a 20-minute hearing, and exact post-ruling actions. Not legal advice; check local rules.

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A calm, plain-English guide to your first court touchpoint after filing or being served. Use this to understand what temporary orders can cover, how to decide between emergency vs. regular hearings, exactly what to gather (with state snapshots), how to label and present exhibits in a

time-limited hearing, and what to do the moment the judge rules. General information, not legal advice; check your state and local court rules.

1) WHAT TEMPORARY ORDERS DO—AND WHY “TEMPORARY” LINGERS

Temporary orders stabilize life while the case is pending. They often become the pattern for months, so treat them like they matter.

The five common buckets courts address:

- Parenting time and decision-making (school/medical).
- Child support and sometimes spousal support.
- Exclusive use of the home/vehicles.
- Who pays which bills and insurance.
- Conduct restraints (don't hide assets, cancel insurance, or disrupt the kids' routine).

Must-Do vs. Strategy:

- Must-Do: Translate every ask into something the court can sign. “Fair support” becomes “\$[AMOUNT] per month based on [guideline or evidence], starting [DATE].”
- Strategy: Ask only for what you can sustain for 6–18 months. Judges hesitate to undo a working status quo later.

2) AUTOMATIC RULES YOU MAY ALREADY BE UNDER (STANDING ORDERS/ATROS)

Many places impose automatic rules the moment a case is filed or served. Violating them—even by mistake—can be used against you.

What this looks like:

- County standing orders (common in Texas counties like Dallas, Denton, Williamson): restrain asset moves, insurance changes, and moving children without permission.
- Statewide automatic temporary restraining orders (ATROs) (California): printed on the back of the summons; restrict asset transfers, insurance changes, and taking children out of state without agreement or court order.
- Circuit standing orders (some Florida circuits): baseline conduct expectations during the case.

Action in the next 24 hours:

- Find yours: Search your court or self-help site for “standing order,” “local rules,” or read the summons back page (CA). Download and read.
- Map overlap: If a standing order/ATRO already prohibits something, don’t duplicate it in your requested orders or TRO unless you truly need stronger, specific terms.
- Clerk’s Note: Write the exact title and effective date of any standing order that applies to your case and keep it at the front of your binder.

Safety Check:

- If revealing your address increases risk, ask your court’s self-help center about address-confidentiality options before filing documents.

3) EMERGENCY VS. NOTICED: WHICH PATH ARE YOU ON?

Two distinct tracks lead to early orders. Know which one you're on.

Emergency (ex parte) relief—when there's immediate danger or irreparable harm:

- Examples: imminent child removal, active violence/threats, foreclosure this week.
- Typical timing snapshots:
 - California: give notice by 10:00 a.m. the court day before unless excused; emergency orders are short-lived and bridge to a prompt full hearing.
 - Texas: a temporary restraining order (TRO) can issue fast but typically lasts about 14 days, then you must have a hearing.
 - Florida (DV injunctions): ex parte orders are commonly limited to about 15 days, with a quick evidentiary hearing set.
- What to file often includes a sworn declaration stating facts, plus required local forms. Keep requests tightly tailored to the emergency.

Noticed (regular) temporary-orders hearing—when urgency is lower:

- Both sides get notice and time to prepare. Expect strict time limits (often 20–30 minutes per side).
- These orders often last until modified or final decree.

Must-Do:

- If you're unsafe, prioritize a protective order path first. Many states can issue same-day temporary protection with a rapid follow-up hearing.
- If you're on the regular track, jump to the evidence packet section and start gathering today.

Strategy:

- If you and the other party agree on some issues, consider a written stipulation (e.g., CA Stipulation and Order) or, in Texas, a Rule 11 agreement. When signed by the judge, it becomes enforceable and can narrow the hearing.

4) BUILD YOUR EVIDENCE PACKET (WITH STATE SNAPSHOTS)

Start with financials and any documents that prove your specific asks. Label everything and assume you'll need to hand the judge a clean, organized packet.

Core packet (most places):

- Your declaration (short, numbered paragraphs) explaining exactly what you want and why.
- Exhibits labeled clearly (Exhibit A, B, C...) with brief captions (e.g., "March pay stub," "Lease—page 1").
- Copies: at least 3 sets (court, the other side, you). Some courts want 4; some accept pre-uploaded exhibits—check local instructions.

State snapshots (verify locally):

- California (FL-150 Income & Expense): attach last 2 months of pay stubs; bring your most recent federal tax return to the hearing. Parenting plan proposal and proof of key expenses (childcare, health premiums) help.
- Florida (Rule 12.285 Mandatory Disclosure): financial affidavit plus past 3 years of tax returns, 6 months of pay stubs, and 12 months of bank/credit/brokerage/retirement statements, plus any loan applications or promissory notes.
- Texas (no single statewide affidavit): many courts order a Sworn Inventory and Appraisement listing assets/debts with values. Some counties have their own forms. Bring pay records, recent bills, and anything that proves your proposed schedule/expenses.

Evidence to match common asks:

- Exclusive use of home/vehicle: lease/mortgage, utilities, insurance, car note, safety concerns tied to residence.

- Child support: income proofs (both parties if available), childcare/health insurance receipts, guideline worksheet if your state uses one.
- Parenting time: school calendar, your work schedule, daycare letter, any therapy/medical need notes (not general character letters).

Safety Check:

- Redact account numbers. If you fear doxxing or stalking, ask the clerk/self-help center how to safely file sensitive exhibits.

5) TURN PLAIN GOALS INTO SIGNABLE ORDERS

Courts sign specific, enforceable orders—not vibes. Convert goals into draft language you can say out loud and hand to the court.

Translate your asks:

- Instead of “fair child support,” say: “Child support of \$[AMOUNT] per month beginning [DATE], based on guideline inputs: my net income \$[X], the other party’s net income \$[Y], health-insurance premium \$[Z] (Exhibit B), childcare \$[C] (Exhibit C).”
- Instead of “primary custody,” say: “Temporary parenting schedule: with me from Sunday 6:00 p.m. to Friday 8:00 a.m.; with father Friday 6:00 p.m. to Sunday 6:00 p.m.; exchanges at [LOCATION]. I’ll handle school/medical decisions pending further order.”
- Instead of “he pays bills,” say: “Father pays the mortgage, property taxes, and home insurance starting [DATE]; I will pay utilities A/B/C. Each provides proof of payment within 3 days of due date by email.”

Strategy:

- Propose a plan that matches real work/school logistics. Judges reward practicality over aspiration.

- Avoid duplicating standing-order language; request only the extra detail or strength you actually need.
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6) YOUR 20MINUTE HEARING PLAN AND SCRIPT

You may get only 20–30 minutes. Use them to (1) ask, (2) prove, (3) sit down.

Suggested time budget (adjust to your court):

- 2 minutes: Opening ask.
- 10–15 minutes: Three focused issues with 1–2 exhibits each.
- 2–3 minutes: Brief close and proposed order hand-off.

Opening script (have it written):

- “Good morning, Your Honor. My name is [NAME]. I’m requesting temporary orders on three issues: (1) parenting schedule, (2) child support, and (3) exclusive use of the home.”
- “First, parenting: I propose [SPECIFIC SCHEDULE]. The children’s school and my work hours make this stable. See Exhibit A (school calendar) and Exhibit B (my schedule).”
- “Second, support: Based on income and the children’s needs, I request \$[AMOUNT] starting [DATE]. See Exhibit C (my pay stubs) and Exhibit D (childcare invoice).”
- “Third, housing: I request exclusive use of the home so the children remain in their school zone. See Exhibit E (lease) and Exhibit F (utility bill in my name).”

Witnesses and letters:

- Use witnesses sparingly; every minute they speak is a minute you lose. Character letters rarely move the needle at temporary orders. Prioritize documents tied to immediate needs.

Clerk's Note:

- Bring a clean, clip-ready proposed order or bullet list of the exact terms you want signed. Hand it up when the judge asks what you're seeking.
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7) DAY OF LOGISTICS THAT MATTER

Small logistics reduce stress and prevent mistakes.

Day-of checklist:

- Arrive 30–45 minutes early; find the right courtroom and check in with the bailiff/clerk.
- Silence phone; organize exhibits in the order you'll reference them (tabs A, B, C...).
- Address the judge as "Your Honor." Speak in short, factual sentences; avoid airing unrelated marital history.
- If you blank, read your written opening. That's why you brought it.
- Keep your own notepad. When the judge rules, write the exact words. Ask polite clarification questions if something is vague.

Safety Check:

- If you have safety concerns at court, ask security for an escort to your car and request separated seating or staggered exit if available.
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8) AFTER THE RULING: FROM BENCH TO PAPER TO ENFORCEMENT

Orders often take effect immediately when spoken from the bench. Don't leave the courtroom confused.

Right after the ruling:

- Clarify specifics on the record: dates/times for exchanges, dollar amounts, start dates, and who drafts the written order.
- Ask: "Your Honor, may we confirm that means [SPECIFIC TERMS]?"

Getting it in writing:

- If the other side drafts the order, read every word against your notes. If something is wrong, object in writing: "Proposed order states X; the court ordered Y on [DATE]." Attach your bullet list or minute-order language if available.
- If you're both self-represented and the court has a standard form, complete it promptly while details are fresh.

Compliance and next steps:

- Start following the oral ruling immediately if your jurisdiction treats it as effective at once. Calendar all payment and exchange dates.
- Track compliance: keep a simple log (date, what happened, proof). Patterns of missed payments/late exchanges support an enforcement motion later.
- If you couldn't gather everything in time, ask the court for permission to supplement, or file a narrowly tailored motion to modify when you have the missing evidence.

Strategy:

- If partial agreements emerge after the hearing, file a stipulation (or Rule 11 in TX) to lock in progress and reduce future conflict.