

Court and Clerk Records

Access and Maintenance:

The Chronological Case Summary (CCS) and the Record of Judgments and Orders (RJO)

Trial Rule 77

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Chronological Case Summary:

The official requirements for the Chronological Case Summary (CCS) are found in Ind. Trial Rule 77(B).

- The CCS is recognized as an official record of the trial court.
- It is important to enter on the CCS the date of receipt of motions, orders or judgments from the court and then record in real time when service was made, to whom and via what means.
- The CCS is the court's case management tool and must accurately record each judicial event as it occurs. A judicial event is an action by a litigant, their attorney, or the court. The clerk must accurately record each judicial event as it occurs and enter each event on the CCS as of the date of such action. Some trial court clerks use a file stamp for documents filed by litigants and attorneys and a "received" stamp for orders or judgments submitted by the court.
- The rule recognizes that not all events are entered on the CCS as they occur. The date of a CCS entry is the date that the entry is made, regardless of the date on the document or the date the activity occurred. The text of the CCS indicates the effective date of the document or the activity. For example, the court may issue an order on one date, but the order does not arrive in the trial court clerk's office for several days. Such an entry might be as follows: "Order

for discovery signed by the judge on January 4, 2006, and received in this office January 7th.”

- The requirement for maintaining a sequential record of events in a case means that **events are never backdated**.
- A CCS entry must be made on the date that an order is entered into the Record of Judgments and Orders (RJO) indicating that is the date on which the order may be found in the RJO. The CCS serves as the index, or locator, of orders, decrees, and judgments of the court. If the date the order is entered in the CCS is the same as the date it is entered in the RJO (as it should be), then one entry will suffice if it indicates that the order is entered in the RJO on that day.
- Clerks must make CCS entries of filed documents and orders on the day they are transmitted to the clerk’s office.
- A CCS entry **is never amended, corrected, or deleted once made**. It may be amended only by another corrective CCS entry. Some courts, with written approval of the Office of Judicial Administration, post CCS entries on the Internet and it is especially important the previously created record in a case does not change from one day to the next.
- In the instance of pleadings filed pursuant to Ind. Trial Rule 5(F) by registered, certified or express mail, return receipt requested, or by third-party commercial carrier for delivery to the clerk within three (3) calendar days, the pleadings are noted as received on the date the mail is received. The CCS entry will reflect that the pleading is considered filed at an earlier date and indicate what that date is.
- All documents handled by the clerk’s office that will have a CCS entry are stamped reflecting the date of receipt. This permits someone to associate the document correctly with its CCS entry.
- Entries in the CCS are intended to be very brief while retaining enough detail to be meaningful to someone accessing the records. The full text of orders and judgments are never entered into the CCS. The correct mixture of brevity and descriptiveness is left up to each individual jurisdiction. However, as a rule, enough detail in the entry is required to correctly understand the activity. So,

for example, a CCS that reads, "Motion received" or "Motion granted" is not descriptive enough. Never copy the full text from the motion or the order into the CCS.

Record of Judgments and Orders:

The official requirements for the Record of Judgments and Orders (RJO) are found in Ind. Trial Rule 77(D).

- The RJO is an official record of the trial court.
- A separate RJO for confidential matters is maintained unless the RJO is maintained electronically.
- Orders are placed in the RJO by the Court "File Mark" date on the date the Clerk's office receives the Order. The Clerk may stamp the Order with a "Received Date" stamp. The CCS's reference to the RJO's entry serves as a link or index to the RJO.
- All orders that conclude a case or orders that restrict the freedom of an individual are placed in the RJO.
- The RJO does not include every order of the court. Instead, the RJO contains final judgments of the court and "designated" orders of the court.
- A designated order reflects some substantive content such as a judicial action or opinion that contributes to the case's resolution. Procedural orders, such as orders granting a continuance, are not normally placed in the RJO.
- The final decision-maker about whether an order should be placed in the RJO is the judge issuing the order, even if the order appears to be one that would not ordinarily be placed in the RJO.