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LEGAL CORRESPONDENCE

Sample Letters for Legal Matters

Letters in legal disputes and lawsuits often serve two purposes: first, to communicate in a clear, professional manner, and second, to document what was said or done for later use in court. The books and online resources in this Research Guide can help create effective, professional letters for many situations.

Whenever you send a letter on a legal matter, be sure to **keep a copy**. Consider sending it via registered mail, or faxing it and keeping the confirmation sheet.

General Litigation Letters

Win Your Lawsuit [KFC 968 .D86](#) (Self Help)

This excellent self-help book includes samples of common letters for all stages of litigation: discovery requests and objections; meet-and-confer letters (including one documenting efforts to work with an uncooperative party); cover letters for contacting witnesses and gathering evidence for trial; and more. The letters come with excellent instructions with no “legalese.” The letters are not indexed; browse the chapters on your situation.

Electronic Access: From any computer (Law Library or home) via the Legal Information Reference Center.

Instructions are available on our website at

www.saclaw.org/nolo-ebooks.

Represent Yourself In Court ([KF 8814 .B47](#))(Self Help)

Like *Win Your Lawsuit*, this is aimed at individuals rather than lawyers. It contains a number of sample letters with plain-English instructions.

Electronic Access: From any computer (Law Library or home) via the Legal Information Reference Center.

Instructions are available on our website at

www.saclaw.org/nolo-ebooks.

Model Letters to Doctors, Witnesses, Adjusters and Others [KF 320 .L48 .M3](#)

This book contains letters for all aspects of litigation—not just for doctors and witnesses. If *Win Your Lawsuit* does not offer a letter for your particular situation, this probably will; it has a large variety of letters, with comments on their use. Chapter 2 has a particularly useful set of stipulations for different circumstances. A detailed table of contents helps you find what you need.

Letters for Litigators [KF 320 .L448 .S53](#)

Another book with letters for many litigation situations. This book also has a detailed table of contents. A polite refusal to grant the opponent an extension of time is unique to this book (Chap. 13).

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Effective Lawyering: A Checklist Approach to Legal Writing and Oral Argument [KF 250 .P37](#)

Chapter 6 includes instructions on letter writing. While it does not contain samples, it includes checklists to ensure that include the elements required for an effective letter. It also discusses the recommended format and tone of e-mails.

Personal Injury and Insurance Claims

How to Win Your Personal Injury Claim [KF 257 .M38](#) (Self Help)

Sample forms for negotiating a settlement with an insurance company without litigation. Chapter 3 has sample notification letters to send to parties, witnesses, and insurance companies. Chapter 6 has sample demand letters for different types of accidents and injuries. Chapter 8 has letters to use during settlement negotiations (confirming conversations and making or responding to offers). Many of these may be adapted for use in litigation.

Electronic Access: From any computer (Law Library or home) via the Legal Information Reference Center. Instructions are available on our website at www.saclaw.org/nolo-ebooks.

Consumer Complaints and Small Claims

Prior to filing a small claims lawsuit, you must make a written demand that the defendant compensate you for the injury or loss you have suffered. These resources can help write an effective demand letter.

California Courts Self Help: “Ask for Payment”

www.courts.ca.gov/9739.htm

The California Courts’ Self Help section includes sample letters (some of them fillable) for general demands, demand for return of security deposits, bad check demands, and stop-payment demands.

101+ Complaint Letters that Get Results [HF 5415.52 .R83](#) (Self Help)

Chapter 1 teaches how to write, send, and follow up on a complaint letter to get results. The rest of the book is divided into topics such as consumer goods and services, employment, finances, health care, school, and travel. Each chapter provides a brief discussion of the law and numerous sample complaint letters.

Everybody’s Guide to Small Claims Court in California [KFC 976 .W37](#) (Self Help)

Chapter 6 (“Settling Your Dispute”) contains an excellent guide to what should be included in a demand letter, and sample letters and settlement agreements.

Electronic Access: From any computer (Law Library or home) via the Legal Information Reference Center. Instructions are available on our website at www.saclaw.org/nolo-ebooks.

Settling Debts and Dealing with Debt Collectors

American Credit Repair [KF 1040 .R54](#) (Self Help)

This book gives samples of many letters and requests that can be used to deal with creditors and credit bureaus.

Credit Repair [KF 1040 .L44](#) (Self Help)

This self-help book contains sample letters to request that credit agencies investigate and correct errors on credit reports; negotiate with your creditors; demand that debt collectors “cease and desist” collection efforts; and inform creditors about identity theft. A sample letter informing a creditor of your judgment-proof status is unique to this book.

Electronic Access: From any computer (Law Library or home) via the Legal Information Reference Center. Instructions are available on our website at www.saclaw.org/nolo-ebooks.

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Solve Your Money Troubles [KF 1501.L46](#) (Self Help)

Chapters 6 and 9 focus on negotiating with creditors and stopping debt collector harassment.

Electronic Access: From any computer (Law Library or home) via the Legal Information Reference Center. Instructions are available on our website at www.saclaw.org/nolo-ebooks.

Collecting After Winning a Judgment

California Courts Self Help: "Get the Debtor to Pay You Voluntarily"

www.courts.ca.gov/11186.htm

This page includes information on collecting judgments and a sample letter. It also includes a program to help you write a letter demanding payment of your court judgment.

(www.courts.ca.gov/11324.htm) The program asks questions and then prepares a letter for you.

Letters for Victims of Identity Theft

Federal Trade Commission: "Sample Letters and Forms for Victims of Identity Theft"

These sample letters and forms can help you exercise your rights as an identity theft victim, like requesting action from the credit reporting companies and businesses where the thief opened new accounts or tampered with your existing ones.

Electronic Access Only: From any computer (Law Library or home) on the Internet at:

www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0281-sample-letters-and-forms-victims-identity-theft

Guide for Assisting Identity Theft Victims [KF9367 .G84](#) (Self Help)

Drafting effective dispute letters can be new and challenging for some consumers. This guide contains sample letters for that victims can use to dispute fraudulent charges, request changes to their credit reports, and take other steps to restore their identities, as well as follow-up letters if the dispute is not resolved.

Letters for Specific Cases

Letters for Divorce Lawyers: Essential Communications for Clients, Opposing Counsel, and Others [KF 320 .L48 C48](#)

Letters include client contact, discovery transmittal and scheduling, hearings and proposed orders, settlement offers and the like.

Letters for Small Business Lawyers [KF1659 .A65 .B38](#)

Includes letters for reaching out to and engaging small business clients, forming and dissolving entities, protecting intellectual property, compliance, business plans and contracts, and more.

Collection, Demand, and Commercial Letters for the General Practitioner [KF 320 C65](#)

Describes the purpose of demand letters, means of delivery, expected outcomes, and tips, along with dozens of sample letters and commentary.

Attorney Communications with Clients

California Client Communications Manual: Sample Letters and Forms [KFC 77 .C35](#)

Includes letters for use in initial contact and accepting clients, during representation, terminating representation, and in fee disputes and arbitration.

Electronic Access: On the Law Library's computers, using *OnLaw*.

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Letters for Lawyers: Essential Communications for Clients, Prospects, and Others

[KF 320 K48 L36](#)

Includes letters to clients, prospective clients, referral sources, employees and prospective employees, and the media.

Client Disputes with Attorney or Former Attorney

Mad at Your Lawyer? [KF 311 .Z9 S73](#) (Self Help)

Sample letters for situations including fee disputes, communication problems, firing and replacing your lawyer, and filing a complaint with the bar association.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS GUIDE, OR IF YOU NEED HELP FINDING OR USING THE MATERIALS LISTED, DON'T HESITATE TO ASK A REFERENCE LIBRARIAN.

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Appendix: Frequently Requested Letters

Demand and Complaint Letters	
Demands for payment	<i>101 Law Forms</i> , Chaps.5, 14, 15
Complaint letters and cancellations	<i>101 Law Forms</i> , Chaps.5, 14, 15
Online fillable/sample demand letters (small claims): general demand letter, demand for return of security deposit, bad check demand letter, and stop-payment demand letter	<i>California Courts Self Help</i> , http://www.courts.ca.gov/9739.htm
Settlement demand	<i>Model Letters</i> , Chap. 2
Performance demand	<i>Model Letters</i> , Chap. 2
Demand letter: Breach of contract claim	<i>Win Your Lawsuit</i> , Chap. 3
Demand letter: Tort claim	<i>Win Your Lawsuit</i> , Chap. 3
Negotiating and Settling Insurance Claims	
Notification of personal injury claim to potential defendant and to insurance company	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Win Your Personal Injury Claim</i>, Chap. 3 • <i>Model Letters</i>, Chap. 4
Demand letters to defendant's insurer (including suggested documentation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Win Your Personal Injury Claim</i>, Chap. 6 • <i>Model Letters</i>, Chap. 4
Claim of bad faith against insurance company	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Win Your Personal Injury Claim</i>, Chap. 8 • <i>Model Letters</i>, Chap. 4
Arbitration demand letter	<i>Win Your Personal Injury Claim</i> , Chap. 10
Negotiating and Settling Debts	
Agreement to reduce payments temporarily	<i>Money Troubles</i> , Chap. 6
Release of claims	<i>Money Troubles</i> , Chap. 9
Informing a creditor of judgment-proof status	<i>Credit Repair</i> , Chap. 9
Stopping Debt Collector Harassment	
Requesting verification of debt	<i>Money Troubles</i> , Chap. 9
Notifying creditor of improper debt collection tactics	<i>Money Troubles</i> , Chap. 9
Demanding collector cease all contact	<i>Credit Repair</i> , Chap. 9
General Litigation	
Cover letter for Notice of Acknowledgement and Receipt, explaining the consequences of failing to comply	<i>Win Your Lawsuit</i> , Chap. 7
Stipulations: continuance, amendments, additional time for response, briefing schedule	<i>Model Letters</i> , Chap. 2

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Letter confirming conversation of any sort	<i>Win Your Personal Injury Claim</i> , Chap. 3, Chap. 8
Confirming extension of time to respond	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · <i>Win Your Lawsuit</i>, Chap. 8 · <i>Model Letters</i>, Ch. 2
Polite refusal to grant the opponent an extension of time	<i>Letters for Lawyers</i> , Chap. 13
Cover letter for any document with response required (discovery, etc.)	<i>Win Your Personal Injury Claim</i> , Chap. 8
Letter listing evidence to be used at trial	<i>Win Your Lawsuit</i> , Chap. 12
Negotiating and Settling Lawsuits	
Settlement offer (settlement demand)	<i>Model Letters</i> , Chap. 9
Offer of Judgment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · <i>Represent Yourself in Court</i>, Chap. 6 · <i>Model Letters</i>, Chap. 9
Acceptance of settlement offer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · <i>Model Letters</i>, Chap. 9 · <i>Win Your Personal Injury Claim</i>, Chap. 9
Rejection of settlement offer	<i>Model Letters</i> , Chap. 9
Reply to unreasonably low offer	<i>Win Your Personal Injury Claim</i> , Chap. 8
Investigation and Discovery	
Informal pre-litigation requests for information and records	<i>Win Your Personal Injury Claim</i> , Chap. 6
Transmitting discovery to client	<i>Model Letters</i> , Chap. 8
Discovery requests: scheduling, responding, stipulations, demand for compliance	<i>Model Letters</i> , Chap. 2
Demanding compliance with discovery request or case questionnaire	<i>Win Your Lawsuit</i> , Chap. 10
Meet and confer, uncooperative (p. 222) and productive (p. 223)	<i>Win Your Lawsuit</i> , Chap. 12
Post-Judgment Collection	
Post-judgment collections letter (fillable)	<i>California Courts Self Help</i> , www.courts.ca.gov/11324.htm
Post-judgment demands for payment	<i>Represent Yourself in Court</i> , Chap. 20
Lawyer/Client Disputes	
Demand letters for return of your case files from your former lawyer	<i>Mad at Your Lawyer?</i> , Chap. 6