

Trial Technology Setup Checklist

Step-by-step guide to courtroom technology, war room setup, and exhibit management

- ✓ Pre-trial technology planning timeline (8 weeks out to trial day)
- ✓ Courtroom AV setup and testing checklist
- ✓ Trial database and exhibit management workflow
- ✓ Day-of-trial technology protocol

Pre-Trial Technology Timeline

8-Week Countdown to Trial

8 Weeks Before Trial:

- Retain trial technology provider / hot seat operator
- Conduct courtroom site survey (assess existing AV, power, sight lines)
- Determine technology needs (monitors, evidence camera, audio, war room)
- Begin trial database build in TrialDirector, OnCue, or Sanction
- Create master exhibit list with all potential exhibits

6 Weeks Before Trial:

- Begin importing exhibits into trial database (scan, OCR, organize)
- Start video deposition clip editing (designated testimony)
- Commission demonstrative exhibits (timelines, charts, animations)
- Identify and order rental equipment (monitors, cameras, cabling)
- Confirm war room location and setup requirements

4 Weeks Before Trial:

- Complete trial database build — all exhibits imported and indexed
- Sync all video depositions to transcripts
- Review and finalize demonstratives
- First full technology rehearsal with lead trial attorney
- Test all equipment (primary + backup)

2 Weeks Before Trial:

- Final exhibit list confirmed; database updated
- Opening and closing presentation slides completed
- Second technology rehearsal (full run-through of opening)
- Equipment shipped to trial city (if out-of-state)
- War room IT setup scheduled (network, printer, monitors)

1 Week Before Trial:

- Courtroom AV setup and testing (day before or morning of first day)
- War room fully operational
- All team members have access to trial database
- Backup drives created and verified
- Emergency contact list distributed (hot seat, AV, IT support)

The #1 technology failure at trial is inadequate preparation time.

Do not start building your trial database 2 weeks before trial. Complex trials need 6-8 weeks of technology preparation.

Courtroom Setup Checklist

Day-Before-Trial Courtroom Setup

AV Equipment Placement

- Primary presentation monitor positioned for jury visibility (test sight lines from every juror seat)
- Witness monitor positioned for witness box visibility
- Judge's monitor positioned on bench (if permitted)
- Attorney table monitors positioned for counsel reference
- Evidence camera (ELMO) positioned for physical exhibit display
- All monitors connected to presentation laptop via HDMI/USB-C splitter
- Audio system connected and tested at appropriate volume
- All cables secured with gaffer tape (trip hazard elimination)

Technology Station

- Primary presentation laptop loaded with trial database, TrialDirector/OnCue, and all exhibits
- Backup laptop with identical setup (complete mirror image)
- Backup external hard drive with all trial data
- Power strips and UPS (uninterruptible power supply) connected
- Ethernet connection or dedicated Wi-Fi hotspot (do NOT rely on courthouse Wi-Fi)
- All software activated and tested (license verification)

Testing Protocol

- Display every type of exhibit: document, photo, video, animation, demonstrative
- Test video deposition playback (audio + video + synchronized transcript)

- Test annotation tools (highlight, circle, callout, zoom)
- Test exhibit comparison (side-by-side display)
- Test from every display position (jury, witness, judge, counsel)
- Verify all font sizes are readable from the back of the jury box
- Run full test of opening statement presentation

Always bring your own internet.

Courthouse Wi-Fi is unreliable and often blocked by firewalls. Bring a dedicated cellular hotspot (Verizon or AT&T preferred for coverage) for any cloud-dependent tools.

War Room Setup

Litigation War Room — Technology Requirements

Essential War Room Technology

- 2-3 large monitors (27"+ for team collaboration)
- High-speed printer (color, capable of 11x17 for exhibits)
- Scanner (for last-minute document scanning)
- Secure Wi-Fi network (password-protected, WPA3)
- Power distribution (multiple power strips, extension cords)
- Shared network drive or cloud sync for trial team document access
- Whiteboard or large pad for strategy notes
- Phone charging station
- Shredder for confidential documents
- Secure entry (keycard or lock)

Software Loaded on War Room Workstations

- Trial database software (TrialDirector, OnCue, or Sanction)
- eDiscovery platform access (Relativity, Everlaw)
- CaseMap or case analysis software
- Microsoft Office / Google Workspace
- PDF editor (Adobe Acrobat Pro)
- Video editing software (for last-minute deposition clip adjustments)
- Remote access VPN (for firm network access)

Exhibit Management Workflow

From Evidence to Courtroom Display

Step-by-step exhibit workflow

Step	Action	Tool	Notes
1	Create master exhibit list	Excel / CaseMap	Include exhibit #, description, witness, foundation
2	Scan and OCR all physical exhibits	Scanner + Adobe Acrobat	Searchable PDF format required
3	Import all exhibits into trial database	TrialDirector / OnCue	Organize by category, witness, or chronology
4	Code exhibits by type	Trial database	Document, photo, video, demonstrative, summary
5	Add annotations / callouts	Trial database	Pre-mark key passages, highlight critical data
6	Create exhibit bundles by witness	Trial database	Group exhibits needed for each witness examination
7	Build video deposition clips	TrialDirector + transcript sync	Cut designated portions; sync text to video
8	Create demonstratives	PowerPoint / design tools	Timelines, charts, diagrams, animations
9	Final review with lead attorney	Run-through in trial database	Verify every exhibit displays correctly
10	Create backup copies	External drives	Minimum 2 full backup copies of entire database

Name files consistently.

Use a standardized naming convention: PX-001_Smith_Contract_2024.pdf (Plaintiff Exhibit 001, Smith witness, Contract, 2024). This makes real-time courtroom retrieval instant.

Day-of-Trial Technology Protocol

Trial Day Operations — Hour by Hour

Morning Setup

- Hot seat operator arrives at courthouse 2 hours before start
- Power on all equipment and verify connections
- Test all displays (jury, witness, judge, counsel)
- Load today's exhibit bundles in trial database
- Verify backup laptop mirrors primary
- Confirm internet connectivity (hotspot, not courthouse Wi-Fi)
- Brief trial team on any technology changes or issues

During Proceedings

- Hot seat operator manages all exhibit display from tech table
- Exhibits displayed within 3-5 seconds of attorney request
- Annotations applied in real-time (highlight, zoom, callout)
- Video depositions played with transcript sync
- All exhibits logged as presented (tracking for trial record)
- Screen blanked when sidebar conferences or bench discussions occur

End of Day

- Save all presentation logs and annotations
- Back up trial database to external drive
- Charge all devices overnight

- Review next day's exhibit needs with trial team

- Update trial database with any new exhibits admitted

- Note any technology issues for troubleshooting

Screen discipline is critical.

NEVER leave an exhibit displayed when the jury shouldn't see it (objection sustained, sidebar, opposing examination). The hot seat operator must blank the screen instantly on command. This requires direct line-of-sight communication between attorney and operator.

Troubleshooting Quick Reference

Two-column layout: Problem -> Solution

Problem	Solution
Monitor goes dark mid-presentation	Check HDMI/USB-C connection. Switch to backup cable. If monitor failure, switch to backup monitor (always have one ready).
Exhibit won't display	Check file format. Re-import to trial database. Display from backup laptop. Have PDF backup copies on USB drive.
Video deposition won't play	Check codec. Convert to H.264/MP4. Test on backup laptop. Have audio-only backup option.
Annotation tools freeze	Close and reopen trial software. If persistent, switch to backup laptop.
Internet drops	Switch to cellular hotspot. Cloud-dependent tools (OnCue) need internet; TrialDirector works offline.
Power outage	UPS provides 15-30 minutes. Laptop batteries provide 2-4 hours. Save all work immediately.
Audio feedback / echo	Check for multiple active microphones. Mute all except primary audio source. Adjust volume.
Last-minute exhibit addition	Import to trial database immediately. Create backup PDF. Notify hot seat operator of new exhibit number.
Opposing counsel objects to technology	All exhibits displayed via technology must still be properly admitted. Technology presentation ≠ admission.
Juror can't see screen	Reposition monitor. Increase font size. Switch to larger display if available.

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