

Chain of Custody Form

A free, court-ready template for documenting electronic evidence — with a field-by-field guide.

OVERVIEW

A chain of custody form is the single document that records who handled a piece of evidence, when, how, and whether anything changed — from collection through production. It is the written backbone of a defensible chain of custody, and the record a court looks to when authenticity is challenged under Federal Rule of Evidence 901.

WHAT THE FORM MUST CAPTURE

FIELD	WHAT TO RECORD	WHY IT MATTERS
Matter / case ID	Unique identifier for the matter	Ties the item to the right case
Item / evidence ID	Unique identifier for the item	Lets you track each item individually
Description	What the item is (mailbox, device, file set)	Establishes what is being tracked
Source & location	Where the data originated	Shows provenance
Custodian / data owner	Whose data it is, and their role	Establishes ownership
Collected by	Who performed the collection	Supports the qualified-person standard
Date & time	When the collection occurred	Builds the chronology
Collection method / tool	How the data was collected	Demonstrates forensic soundness
Hash value (MD5 / SHA-256)	The fingerprint generated at collection	Proves the data has not changed
Storage location	Where the data was stored afterward	Maintains continuity
Transfer & access log	Every handoff and access, with date/time/person	Keeps the chain unbroken

THE HASH VALUE

The one field that makes the record proof.

A hash value is a string produced by running data through an algorithm such as MD5 or SHA-256. The same input always produces the same hash; change one bit and the hash changes completely.

Generate the hash at collection, then re-verify at each later step. Matching values show the data is unchanged. Differing values show it is not.

FRE 902(14) READINESS

Authenticate by certification, not testimony.

- Data copied through a documented digital-identification process (hash verification).
- A written certification by a qualified person, under penalty of perjury.
- Reasonable written notice to the opposing party before trial.

For educational and documentation purposes; not legal advice. Requirements vary by jurisdiction, court, and matter. [veniosystems.com](https://www.veniosystems.com)

Chain of Custody Record

One record per evidence item. Open it at collection — not after.

EVIDENCE IDENTIFICATION

MATTER / CASE ID	ITEM / EVIDENCE ID	DATE & TIME OF COLLECTION
CUSTODIAN / DATA OWNER	ROLE	COLLECTED BY (QUALIFIED PERSON)
SOURCE & ORIGINAL LOCATION	COLLECTION METHOD / TOOL	
DESCRIPTION OF ITEM (MAILBOX, DEVICE, FILE SET)	STORAGE LOCATION AFTER COLLECTION	

HASH VALUE AT COLLECTION

Algorithm: MD5 SHA-256 Value: _____ Verify and re-record at each step below.

TRANSFER & ACCESS LOG

Log every handoff and access. No silent transfers.

#	DATE / TIME	RELEASED BY	RECEIVED BY	PURPOSE / ACTION	HASH RE-VERIFIED	SIGNATURE / INITIALS
1					<input type="checkbox"/> Match <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	
2					<input type="checkbox"/> Match <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	
3					<input type="checkbox"/> Match <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	
4					<input type="checkbox"/> Match <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	
5					<input type="checkbox"/> Match <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	
6					<input type="checkbox"/> Match <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	
7					<input type="checkbox"/> Match <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	

WHEN THE FORM OUTGROWS THE SPREADSHEET

Let the custody record build itself. Venio captures every collection, transfer, review, and production event automatically in one auditable workflow — so you preserve the chain from day one. Book a demo → veniosystems.com/contact-us

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