

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN RE: : NO. 1018
:
ORDER AMENDING RULE 803.1 : SUPREME COURT RULES DOCKET
OF THE PENNSYLVANIA RULES OF :
EVIDENCE :

ORDER

PER CURIAM

AND NOW, this 22nd day of July, 2025, upon the recommendation of the Committee on Rules of Evidence; the proposal having been submitted without publication pursuant to Pa.R.J.A. 103(a)(3):

It is Ordered pursuant to Article V, Section 10 of the Constitution of Pennsylvania that Rule 803.1 of the Pennsylvania Rules of Evidence is amended in the attached form.

This Order shall be processed in accordance with Pa.R.J.A. 103(b), and shall be effective October 1, 2025.

Additions to the rule are shown in bold and are underlined.

Deletions from the rule are shown in bold and brackets.

A True Copy Nicole Traini
As Of 07/22/2025

Attest: Nicole Traini
Chief Clerk
Supreme Court of Pennsylvania

Rule 803.1. Exceptions to the Rule Against Hearsay-Testimony of Declarant Necessary.

The following statements are not excluded by the rule against hearsay if the declarant testifies and is subject to cross-examination about the prior statement:

* * *

- (3) **Recorded Recollection of Declarant-Witness.** A memorandum or record made or adopted by a declarant-witness that:
- (A) is on a matter the declarant-witness once knew about but now cannot recall well enough to testify fully and accurately;
 - (B) was made or adopted by the declarant-witness when the matter was fresh in his or her memory; and
 - (C) the declarant-witness testifies accurately reflects his or her knowledge at the time when made.

If admitted, the memorandum or record may be read into evidence and received as an exhibit[,], but may be shown to the jury only in exceptional circumstances or when offered by an adverse party.

Comment: Pa.R.E. 803.1(3) is similar to F.R.E. 803(5)[,] but differs in the following ways:

1. Pennsylvania treats a statement meeting the requirements of Pa.R.E. 803.1(3) as an exception to the hearsay rule in which the testimony of the declarant is necessary. **[F.R.E. 803(5) treats this as an exception regardless of the availability of the declarant. This differing organization is consistent with Pennsylvania law.] The Federal Rule differs in that recorded recollections “are not excluded by the rule against hearsay, regardless of whether the declarant is available as a witness.” F.R.E. 803(5).**
2. Pa.R.E. 803.1(3)(C) makes clear that, to qualify a recorded recollection as an exception to the hearsay rule, the witness must testify that the memorandum or record correctly reflects the knowledge that the witness once had. In other words, the witness must vouch for the reliability of the record. The Federal Rule **[is ambiguous on this point and the applicable federal cases are**

conflicting] does not “spell out the method of establishing the initial knowledge or the contemporaneity and accuracy of the record, leaving them to be dealt with as the circumstances of the particular case might indicate.” F.R.E. 803, Note of Advisory Committee.

3. Pa.R.E. 803.1(3) allows the memorandum or record to be received as an exhibit[,] and grants the trial judge discretion to show it to the jury in exceptional circumstances, even when not offered by an adverse party. In federal court, “[i]f admitted, the record may be read into evidence but may be received as an exhibit only if offered by an adverse party.” F.R.E. 803(5).

Pa.R.E. 803.1(3) is consistent with Pennsylvania law. See *Commonwealth v. Cargo*, 444 A.2d 639 (Pa. 1982).

* * *

[Official Note: Adopted May 8, 1998, effective October 1, 1998; amended March 10, 2000, effective July 1, 2000; rescinded and replaced January 17, 2013, effective March 18, 2013; amended March 1, 2017, effective April 1, 2017.

Committee Explanatory Reports:

Final Report explaining the amendment to paragraph (1) and the updates to the Comment to paragraph (1) published with the Court’s Order at 30 Pa.B. 1646 (March 25, 2000). Final Report explaining the January 17, 2013 rescission and replacement published with the Court’s Order at 43 Pa.B. 651 (February 2, 2013). Final Report explaining the March 1, 2107 revision of the Comment and addition of paragraph (4) published with the Court’s Order at 47 Pa.B. 1627 (March 18, 2017).]

**SUPREME COURT OF PENNSYLVANIA
COMMITTEE ON RULES OF EVIDENCE**

ADOPTION REPORT

Amendment of Pa.R.E. 803.1

On July 22, 2025, the Supreme Court amended the Comment to Pa.R.E. 803.1 concerning the comparison with F.R.E. 803(5). The Committee on Rules of Evidence has prepared this Adoption Report describing the rulemaking process. An Adoption Report should not be confused with Comments to the rules. See Pa.R.J.A. 103, cmt. The statements contained herein are those of the Committee, not the Court.

Statements in the Comment summarizing the requirements of F.R.E. 803(5) have been deleted and replaced with quoted language from both the federal rule and its corresponding Advisory Committee Note. This manner of quotation avoids interpreting the federal rule. Additionally, quoting from F.R.E. 803(5), a new sentence has been added to the Comment to make clear that Pa.R.E. 803.1(3) and F.R.E. 803(5) differ with respect to admitting recorded recollections as an exhibit.

Additionally, the following commentary has been removed:

Official Note: Adopted May 8, 1998, effective October 1, 1998; amended March 10, 2000, effective July 1, 2000; rescinded and replaced January 17, 2013, effective March 18, 2013; amended March 1, 2017, effective April 1, 2017.

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The amendment was not published for comment because it is technical in nature and does not affect practice or procedure. This amendment becomes effective on October 1, 2025.