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Timezones

OpenClaw standardizes timestamps so the model sees a **single reference time**.

Message envelopes (local by default)

Inbound messages are wrapped in an envelope like:

```
[Provider ... 2026-01-05 16:26 PST] message text
```

The timestamp in the envelope is **host-local by default**, with minutes precision.

You can override this with:

```
{  
  agents: {  
    defaults: {  
      envelopeTimezone: "local", // "utc" | "local" | "user" | IANA timezone  
      envelopeTimestamp: "on", // "on" | "off"  
      envelopeElapsed: "on", // "on" | "off"  
    },  
  },  
}
```



envelopeTimezone: "utc" uses UTC.

envelopeTimezone: "user" uses agents.defaults.userTimezone (falls back to host timezone).

Use an explicit IANA timezone (e.g., "Europe/Vienna") for a fixed offset.

envelopeTimestamp: "off" removes absolute timestamps from envelope headers.

envelopeElapsed: "off" removes elapsed time suffixes (the +2m style).

Examples

Local (default):

```
[Signal Alice +1555 2026-01-18 00:19 PST] hello
```

Fixed timezone:

```
[Signal Alice +1555 2026-01-18 06:19 GMT+1] hello
```

Elapsed time:

```
[Signal Alice +1555 +2m 2026-01-18T05:19Z] follow-up
```

Tool payloads (raw provider data + normalized fields)

Tool calls (channels.discord.readMessages , channels.slack.readMessages , etc.) return **raw provider timestamps**. We also attach normalized fields for consistency:

timestampMs (UTC epoch milliseconds)

timestampUtc (ISO 8601 UTC string)



Raw provider fields are preserved.

>

User timezone for the system prompt

Set `agents.defaults.userTimezone` to tell the model the user's local time zone. If it is unset, OpenClaw resolves the **host timezone at runtime** (no config write).

```
{  
  agents: { defaults: { userTimezone: "America/Chicago" } },  
}
```

The system prompt includes:

Current Date & Time section with local time and timezone

Time format: 12-hour or 24-hour

You can control the prompt format with `agents.defaults.timeFormat` (auto | 12 | 24).

See [Usage Tracking](#) for the full behavior and examples.

[Usage Tracking](#)

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