

paul | perdue attorneys

Attorney Billing Guide

Attorney billing can be frustrating for both clients and attorneys. We compiled the following to help you better understand your bill and improve your client experience. If you have any questions about our process please give us a contact us.

Q: How do we get paid?

A: Hourly, Flat Fees or Contingent Fees. **Hourly billing** is the most common billing arrangement. Under this arrangement, the attorney gets paid an agreed upon hourly rate for the hours worked on a client's case or matter until it is resolved. Under a **Flat Fee** arrangement, the client is charged a set amount for the services provided to the client. Examples of Flat Fee matters include Simple Wills and Uncontested Divorces. Be sure you understand what is and isn't covered by the flat fee. If you have any questions, ask your attorney. The final billing arrangement is the **Contingent Fee**. Contingent means that the attorney takes no fee from the client up front but gets a percentage of the settlement or money upon judgment. Contingent fee arrangements are most commonly used in personal injury and debt collection cases. Contingent fees are prohibited in certain types of cases

Q: How are hourly cases billed?

A: Hourly cases are billed in six (6) minutes intervals. For active, hourly billed cases, you will receive a monthly statement showing the amount of time billed on your case.

Q: What is a retainer fee?

A: A retainer fee is a down payment toward the total cost of legal services. A retainer fee is NOT the total cost of services provided. The lawyer puts the retainer into a trust account.

Q: What is a Trust Account?

A: When a client signs up for a new case, the client's money is deposited into an account called a Trust Account. The client's money remains in the trust account until an attorney performs work on the case and earns the fee. A lawyer is prohibited from transferring client funds from the trust account to operating account until the fee is earned. For example if your case is billed by the hour, the lawyer will multiply the total time billed times the lawyer's hourly billing rate. This amount will be taken from the trust account and moved into the lawyer's operating account.

“When you are facing a crisis, you need someone on your side, our goal is to improve the client experience through honest, straightforward advice”

5842 B Allin Road
P.O. Box 1193
Prince George, VA 23875
Phone: (804) 668-5327
Fax: (804) 668-5329
Contact@paulperduelaw.com

Billing FAQs (Continued)

Q: What if there is money left in the trust account at the conclusion of my case?

A: Any money that remains in trust after all billing and costs have been paid and accounted for will be refunded to the client.

Q: What if I owe money at the conclusion of my case?

A: If your retainer fee has been exhausted, then you will be required to pay the amount not covered by your retainer fee.

Q: Do you have payment plans?

A: Yes, we can set up a payment plan. We know that legal services can be a burden on your finances. Therefore, we are happy to try and work with you to set up a plan to make it more affordable. Payment plans are done on a case by case basis. Please discuss any payment plans with your attorney.

Q: Do you accept Credit/Debit Cards?

A: Yes, we accept all major credit and debit cards. We can also set up a payment plan where you agree to have your card auto debited each month.

Q: What if someone else is paying for my legal services?

A: A third party who pays or helps pay for your legal services is called a guarantor. Your guarantor has no say in legal matters.

Q: Do you charge for costs?

A: Yes, we do charge for out of pocket costs. We charge for the following out of pocket expenses: mileage, service of process fees, court reporter fees, postage, fees for obtaining records, filing fees, and expert fees.

Q: How are costs billed?

A: Costs are billed against your retainer fee (the client's funds being held in the trust account) in the same manner as billable hours. If you do not have sufficient funds in trust to cover a certain cost then you will be responsible for paying that amount out of pocket. If you have a flat fee matter then costs may or may not be included in the fee. Please ask your attorney if questions about whether or not costs are included in your flat fee arrangement. Finally, for contingent fee (ex. Personal Injury) matters, costs are deducted from the gross settlement or judgment.

Q: Do you offer any Discounts?

A: Yes, we do offer a military discount.

Contact Us

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