

§ 1.4

Tracking Billable Hours

Using Time Sheets

CRITICAL SKILL-SET

One of the keys to a successful paralegal career is being able to account for a large number of billable hours each month.

Why are Billable Hours Important to the Attorney?

Attorneys want their paralegals to bill as many hours as ethically possible. The more hours the paralegal bills, the more money the attorney brings in for the firm. After considering salary, office space and benefits, the average attorney may make a higher profit from a paralegal's billable hours than from his or her own billable hours.

Why are Billable Hours Important to the Paralegal?

Paralegals who average many billable hours have control over their own careers. Attorneys make significant profit on such paralegals and are willing to pay to keep them.

What are an Average Number of Billable Hours per month?

Some paralegals (those who work for government agencies or courts, for example) don't bill at all. Some are expected to bill many hours. The average paralegal bills between 120 to 140 hours per month with 20 of those hours being administrative hours, meaning the client cannot be charged for them. Never "pad" (which means to falsely increase) your billable hours. Doing so is unethical.

ASSIGNMENT § 1.4 | KEEP TRACK OF BILLABLE HOURS

USE TIME SHEETS WHEN WORKING ON ASSIGNMENTS OR CONDUCTING RESEARCH

Students are expected to keep track of the hours they spend outside of class on research and writing assignments. For instance, in a forthcoming chapter, students will prepare an interoffice memorandum. Every time you work on the assignment be sure to keep track of your time and log that time on a time sheet. Students may copy the following example of a Time Sheet or download an interactive Excel Sheet form from the study support website that automatically calculates and updates total time spent. Attach a copy of your Time Sheet when submitting assignments. *This is an ongoing assignment for the remainder of the program.*

You should also check the study support site that corresponds with this textbook. That site includes templates for tracking billable hours. Some courses may also include an online time-management app to help with this task.

EXAMPLE OF A CLIENT TIME SHEET

Date	Client Name	Client No.	Description of Matter	Hours
1/17/21	Admin.	11-111.111	Updated Time Matters database. Reviewed files	0 . 6
1/17/21	Smith, Abe	04-623.001	Met with attorney about client. Set up client file.	0 . 5
1/17/21	Toller, S.	99-164.004	Left client message to set up settlement conference.	0 . 1
1/17/21	Akins, P	01-418.021	Started work on summary of Phil Wilson's deposition, witness to alleged incident.	1 . 3
1/17/21	Toller, S.	99-164.0	Client returned call. Discussed settlement conf.	0 . 2
1/17/21	Smith, Abe	04-623.001	Phoned client to introduce myself. Client informed me of case facts. Set meeting date.	0 . 4
1/17/21	Foyer, Scott	02-328.001	Client called re: status of settlement payment.	0 . 2
1/17/21	Smith, Abe	04-623.001	At attorney's instruction, conducted initial legal research in law library.	1 . 6
1/17/21	Powers, E.	03-269.002	Revised complaint after attorney's revisions. Arranged for service with Process Server.	1 . 3
1/17/21	Foyer, Scott	02-328.001	Conferred with attorney re: settlement. Called client back to update as to status.	0 . 3
1/17/21	Saunders, B.	04-191.001	Drafted letter to Client regarding status of case and requesting additional retainer funds.	0 . 4
1/17/21	Hansen, Roy	03-047.001	Reviewed documents previously researched. Prepared interrogatories for opposing party	1 . 8
1/17/21	Admin.	11-111-111	Organized time sheets. Updated JTA's calendar.	0 . 3

EXAMPLE OF A BLANK CLIENT TIME SHEET

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