

Avoid the most common billing blunders

Billing is an extremely important aspect of a successful law firm. It is the component that ensures your practice is adequately compensated for the service it provides. When sending out bills, it is your responsibility and duty to ensure that you are providing accurate and fair statements. Here are some common billing errors that your firm should avoid at all costs.

Bill padding

When creating client bills, make sure the time listed adequately represents the time actually spent on each included task. When associates are faced with billing requirements, they may feel pressured to pad their bills with time not actually spent on a matter. Padding may also happen inadvertently when attorneys depend on their memories for billing purposes. This can become a very serious ethical matter and it is imperative that all members of the practice [follow the firm's policy](#) on this questionable action.

Mistakes

Always ensure that your bills are accurate before sending them to clients. Billing mistakes undermine the confidence that your clients have in your practice and ability. Some common causes of billing mistakes are inaccurate time tracking and last minute bill creation. Comprehensive [legal billing software](#) is essential to the prevention of billing mistakes. TimeSolv takes on much of the work by making time tracking more convenient and the billing process more precise.

Duplication of tasks

While two attorneys may attend the same deposition, it may not be appropriate to double bill for this single event. Unless completely necessary or agreed upon by the client, avoid duplicate billing. When clients see this on a bill, they begin to raise questions about the integrity of your firm. This undesirable practice can also lead to a complaint against your practice.

Overly-charged administrative work

Clients do not want to pay for administrative duties at the same rate they pay for attorney tasks. If you choose to pass these costs on to the client, consider doing so at a lesser rate and be discriminating about which tasks you bill. Also ensure that these duties are properly documented because they are often met with client resistance.

Vague task descriptions

Clients hate receiving bills with vague [task descriptions](#). When they view their billing statements, they want an understanding of provided services and the amounts billed. Avoid this pitfall by including details about each task. Specific dates, the name of the timekeeper and the time spent on each task should all be included on the bill. When clients understand the work completed on their case, they are more likely to pay their bills completely and on time.

Billing blunders can be detrimental to your legal practice. Not only do they undermine client confidence in your firm, but they can also lead to formal complaints. Click [here](#) to learn how TimeSolv helps law firms provide accurate and complete bills to their clients.

About Erika Winston:

Erika Winston is a Virginia based writer with a passion for all things legal. As a former domestic relations attorney, she understands the challenge of determining the best fee structure for your practice. Erika is a regular contributor to [TimeSolv](#) and a variety of other publications.