Can Paralegals Bill for Time?

One of the most common challenges that new attorneys face is knowing the answer to the question of "can I bill for this task?" Clearly, showing up in court, talking to your client about his or her legal issues, and drafting legal documents are all billable tasks, but what about making copies after the secretary has left for the night? Often, more senior attorneys don't provide clear answers to these questions, and guesswork comes into play. When your client is the one bringing up these questions on a bill reflecting questionable tasks at attorney rates, then you might face a whole lot more scrutiny, resulting in delayed payments, disputes, and general loss of goodwill that can affect future business and referrals. Paralegals often face these same questions, and it is your job as the attorney to provide clear guidelines on what types of tasks paralegals should bill their time for to the client.

What Exactly Are Paralegals?

The job of a paralegal is not always clearly defined. Lawyers, of course, are heavily regulated by the bar associations of the states in which they reside. A person cannot hold themselves out as a lawyer or conduct attorney work unless they have passed the bar examination, been admitted to the state bar, and continue to honor the state bar regulations.

Paralegals, on the other hand, generally are not required to hold any specific license or certifications, and while there are paralegal educational programs, their job is mostly circumscribed by what they cannot do as opposed to what they can do. The paralegal profession arose in the 1960s as a way to increase the availability of legal services to more socioeconomic classes, and thus empowered individuals who might have been considered "legal secretaries" in the past to do more legally substantive work.

Thus, rather than simply doing secretarial tasks such as typing and filing, which do not require legal skills, paralegals could assist attorneys by doing

legal work under the direction of the attorney, such as preparing legal filings and researching legal guidelines and precedents. What paralegals cannot do is provide legal advice to clients, represent them in court, set legal fees, or perform other tasks prohibited by state bar associations.

So What Can Paralegals Bill Time For?

This brings us to the heart of our question: what types of paralegal tasks should be showing up on a client bill and what should not? You will again want to refer to the applicable rules for your specific state bar association, but a general principle across jurisdictions is that your bill should reflect time that requires the use of legal skills and that an attorney might otherwise do on his or her own but has delegated to the paralegal to do with the attorney's supervision. These tasks include, but are not limited to:

- Finding and pulling relevant case law, statutes, or other legal precedent
- Determining whether legal precedent is still good law
- Checking citations or other tasks to ensure legal accuracy
- Assisting in discovery, e.g., review of documents, collection of relevant materials from the client, transmission to the court and opposing parties, etc.
- Preparing forms, correspondence, and other legal documents

What is a properly billable use of time may not always be clear, and, ultimately, your client will often be the decision-maker for what you are actually able to collect with regard to a paralegal's hours. Thus, creating a professional-looking bill with proper time entries and a mutually beneficial approval process can go a long way in improving your collection efforts.

How TimeSolv Helps Virtual Paralegals and Attorneys Work Smarter

Virtual paralegals have quickly become a valuable part of the legal industry. Often working on a contract basis, these highly trained professionals help attorneys handle cases and keep their workloads under control.

Virtual paralegals provide attorneys with a variety of extremely valuable services. From case-related tasks, like conducting legal research and

drafting pleadings, to the important administrative task of client invoicing. With so many responsibilities and so little time, attorneys and virtual paralegals need effective tools that help them handle tasks in an efficient and profitable manner. TimeSolv legal billing software is one of those tools.

With numerous features and capabilities, TimeSolv helps virtual paralegals and lawyers work smarter instead of harder. Let's take a closer look:

#1 Time Tracking

With TimeSolv's time tracking feature, virtual paralegals and attorneys can quickly and easily track all of their billable and nonbillable time. Its user-friendly app can be accessed from any smartphone or tablet, so users can track time as soon as tasks are completed instead of waiting until the end of the day, the week, or the billing period.

This convenient time tracking option promotes accurate and complete tracking, so don't leave valuable minutes or hours on the table. Time tracking can be a tedious undertaking, requiring a lot of time and effort, but not with TimeSolv. Their software provides virtual paralegals and attorneys with the tools they need to track time in a complete, accurate, and efficient manner.

#2 Data Security

The safekeeping of client data is of utmost importance within the practice of law. Attorneys have a professional duty to protect the confidentiality of client information. For virtual paralegals, their client attorneys want to feel confident that client data and firm information will be maintained in a safe and secure fashion.

TimeSolv addresses these fears with state-of-the-art security provisions. Hosted by an Amazon Web Services (AWS) data center, TimeSolv's platform is highly encrypted with a 256-bit SSL used for data transmission between your browser and its data center. AWS maintains SSAE-16 (formerly SAS 70) compliance with Service Organization Control (SOC) comprising SOC 1, SOC 2, and SOC 3 compliance reports, as well as being ISO 9001 certified. Their PCI DSS compliance provides attorneys and virtual paralegals with the tools they need to securely protect client data.

Reliability is also part of TimeSolv's security measures. The company maintains an agile development environment that provides almost 100% uptime. There is no need to stop work for necessary updates or gamble security needs on outdated software. TimeSolv performs updates remotely at no additional cost, and with minimal interruption of service.

#3 Document Management

An efficient law practice requires organization and order. With its state-of-the-art document management feature, TimeSolv helps attorneys and virtual paralegals keep client documents organized within a secure cloud environment. The software allows for the attachment of documents to projects and matters for easy identification and access.

Tags and folders are also available for additional organization and improved interactions between law firm attorneys, virtual paralegals, and clients. With TimeSolv's document management feature, users can additionally save numerous versions of documents, so it's easy to see who has edited documents and differentiate between various versions.

#4 Accurate Expense Tracking

Client expenses can quickly add up, especially with complicated case matters. Virtual paralegals should not be held accountable for expenses incurred on behalf of attorney clients, and attorneys should not have to pay for expenses incurred on behalf of their clients. In order to be fully reimbursed for client expenses, law firms need to maintain expense records in an organized, accessible, and comprehensible manner. With TimeSolv's expense tracking feature, lawyers and paralegals can quickly track and document expenses, even without an internet connection.

#5 Integrations

System integration contributes to the efficiency of legal practice. When law firms use various applications that do not cooperate with each other, it negatively affects employee productivity. Lawyers and virtual paralegals need software options with integration capabilities. These features can lead to significant cost savings and increased business productivity.

TimeSolv offers extensive integration capabilities to help users easily sync data with various platforms, including:

- QuickBooks
- Xero Accounting
- Dropbox
- NetDocuments
- Microsoft 365
- AccountEdge

#6 Efficient and Timely Invoicing

TimeSolv's streamlined billing system allows attorneys and virtual paralegals to get invoices out faster with flexible templates and automation options that simplify the billing process. From custom narratives and easy-to-apply discounts to LEDES billing and automatic tax calculations, TimeSolv provides an efficient and easy billing process. With this tool, virtual paralegals can provide accurate invoices to their attorney clients promptly, so attorneys can efficiently provide their clients with invoices for payment.

#7 Project Management Tools

TimeSolv's project management features help attorneys and virtual paralegals effectively handle numerous projects and matters at once for greater profitability. These tools are particularly valuable for virtual paralegals working with numerous law firms at one time.

Comprehensive project management helps users easily stay on schedule while handling a number of necessary tasks. With a convenient platform, users can break projects down by task and easily monitor progress along the way. It also allows for the setting of time and billed hour limits to consistently keep users on a budget.

Essential Tech Skills Every Paralegal Needs

Virtual paralegals play a critical role in keeping cases organized, deadlines on track, and billing accurate. But without the right technical skills, even routine tasks can slow down workflows and create costly errors.

The most effective paralegals are not just organized. They are fluent in the tools that drive modern legal operations.

1. Time Tracking and Billing Software Proficiency

Paralegals often capture a significant portion of billable time. Knowing how to accurately log time, assign it to the correct matter, and support invoice generation is essential.

Key capabilities include:

- Entering time in real time or reconstructing it efficiently
- Categorizing billable vs. non-billable work
- Reviewing entries for accuracy before billing

Missed or inaccurate time entries directly impact firm revenue. Strong billing habits help ensure every minute of work is accounted for.

2. Trust Accounting and Payment Tracking

Handling retainers and client funds requires precision and compliance awareness. Paralegals should understand:

- How trust accounts differ from operating accounts
- How to track client balances by matter
- How payments are applied to invoices

Even if they are not responsible for final reconciliation, their daily entries must be accurate to avoid downstream issues.

3. Document Management and Cloud Collaboration

Virtual work depends on fast, secure access to documents. Paralegals should be comfortable with:

- Cloud-based document storage systems
- Version control and file organization
- Sharing documents securely with attorneys and clients

Strong document workflows reduce delays and prevent duplication of work.

4. Legal Software and Integrations

Modern firms rely on connected systems, not isolated tools. Paralegals should be able to work across:

- Practice management platforms
- Billing and invoicing tools
- Integrations with systems like QuickBooks or Microsoft 365

Understanding how data flows between systems helps reduce manual entry and errors.

5. Reporting and Data Awareness

Paralegals increasingly contribute to firm performance by maintaining clean, usable data. Basic reporting skills allow them to:

- Review time entry summaries
- Identify missing or inconsistent data
- Support attorneys with matter-level insights

Accurate data improves billing, forecasting, and decision-making across the firm.

6. Client Communication Tools

Virtual paralegals are often a key point of contact for clients. They should be comfortable using:

- Secure client portals
- Email and scheduling platforms
- Online payment systems

Clear, timely communication improves client satisfaction and speeds up the billing cycle.

Why These Skills Matter

Firms that invest in paralegal tech skills gain a measurable advantage. Work moves faster, billing is more accurate, and fewer tasks fall through the

cracks.

Without these skills, firms risk:

- Lost billable hours
- Billing delays
- Data inconsistencies
- Compliance gaps

With them, paralegals become a central driver of efficiency and profitability.

How TimeSolv Supports Paralegal Efficiency

When paralegals have the right tools, they spend less time on administrative work and more time supporting attorneys and clients.

TimeSolv helps by:

- Making time entry fast and accessible from anywhere
- Connecting billing, payments, and matter data in one system
- Providing clear visibility into client balances and activity
- Reducing manual reconciliation and duplicate data entry

This allows paralegals to work more efficiently while helping firms capture more billable time and improve cash flow.

Simplify Your Billing and Collection Efforts with TimeSolv

TimeSolv offers backend automated office solutions that bring big-firm innovation to all types of firms, no matter the size. We provide low-cost automated solutions to optimize your firm's billing, collection, expense tracking, internal reporting, and project management efforts, and offer free training to ensure that you are maximizing all the features that TimeSolv has to offer.

TimeSolv legal time tracking and billing software provides lawyers and virtual paralegals with the tools they need to increase profitability and grow

their businesses while working smarter and more efficiently. To start your free trial of TimeSolv today, click here.

About Erika Winston:

Erika Winston is a freelance writer with a passion for law. Through her business, Personal Touch Edits, she helps legal professionals deliver effective written messages. Erika is a regular contributor to TimeSolv and a variety of other publications.