

# B3: Better Billing Bulletin

Issue #45 | May 2014

## Speedier payment of accounts

Effective late April, to provide lawyers with faster payment and enable Lawyer Services and Payments (LSP) staff to address other accounts sooner, we will make the following changes to the system.

### For accounts that include disbursement billing

- If your account is within the tariff, and the billing issue relates to disbursements, we will process and pay the fees portion of your account within 21 days, and the disbursement portion within 60 days.
- You will now only have to enter your travel hours once. We've modified the system to automatically enter your total hours in the "Authorization" field.
- The system's threshold for disbursements now matches the intended threshold. In the past, when the disbursement limit for a matter was, say \$200, your payment used to be held up because the system's threshold was \$150. Now both payment thresholds are the same.

### For block fee accounts

For block fee accounts, the system will base billing deadlines on the disposition date, rather than the service start date. As a result, final accounts with a disposition date more than 18 months from the certificate issue date will not be considered late. You must still, however, bill interim accounts for block fee or ancillary block fees (such as bail hearings) on time.

## Private retainers

If you receive a certificate for legal services for which you have or will receive a private retainer, you must use a private docket and trust and ledger statements to disclose the existence and amount:

- no matter what type of certificate you receive
- no matter what LAO authorizations you have received
- for legal services for the same or related matter (and ancillary matters)
- no matter what fees have been paid or who paid the retainer.

LAO considers a private retainer to be any agreement to represent a legal aid client through any method other than through a certificate, including:

- signed or unsigned formal retainer agreements
- partial retainers, where the terms of the retainer agreement are not fully performed or completed
- informal unwritten/verbal retainer agreements
- pro bono (free) retainer agreements
- retainer agreements for disbursements only
- acceptance of any money for fees and/or disbursements, payable to the lawyer or to any third party




LAO will take these private retainers into consideration when considering payment of your legal aid account.

**Note:** You are not permitted to bill privately for services (or related and ancillary matters) provided after the effective date of the certificate.

## New, improved electronic document submission

We've updated *Legal Aid Online* to help you send your correspondence to the correct department for processing and help us process your request faster. As illustrated in the screen shots below, we've organized document types by category, and include instructions for each category. Plus, we've added a category – opinion guideline for Big Case Managed criminal appeals.

## All Certificate related correspondence for Lawyer Services & Payments (including BCM and PCU)




LSP		Customize   Find   	First  1 of 8  Last
	Document ID	Document Name	
1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	Invoices	
2	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	Request for Review of Discretion Decision	
3	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	Correspondence with Respect to Account Entry or Account Payment Errors	
4	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	Disbursement Request for Authorization	
5	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	General Correspondence	
6	<input type="checkbox"/> 6	Dockets and Private Dockets	
7	<input type="checkbox"/> 7	Request to Expedite Payment	
8	<input type="checkbox"/> 8	Review of Settled Accounts	

## Responses to the Audits & Compliance Unit

ACU		Customize   Find   	First  1 of 1  Last
	Document ID	Document Name	
1	<input type="checkbox"/> 11	ACU Response	

## Mid-level Case Management Assessment Forms Only

Use this form when you are requesting a budget for Mid-Level Case Managed matters (anticipated total cost of fees and disbursements to exceed \$8,000)

MCM		Customize   Find   	First  1-2 of 2  Last
	Document ID	Document Name	
1	<input type="checkbox"/> 18	Case Management - Family	
2	<input type="checkbox"/> 19	Case Management - Criminal	

## Big Case Management form

Use this form when you are requesting a budget for Big Case Managed matters (anticipated total cost of fees and disbursements to exceed \$20,000 or \$30,000 for murder)

BCM		Customize   Find   	First  1 of 1  Last
	Document ID	Document Name	
1	<input type="checkbox"/> 20	Big Case Management Form	

## Opinion Guideline for Big Case Managed criminal appeals

Use this form when you are submitting an opinion to the area committee regarding a big case managed criminal appeal

Appeal Opinion		Customize   Find   	First  1 of 1  Last
	Document ID	Document Name	
1	<input type="checkbox"/> 21	BCM Appeal Opinion Letter Template	

## Questions?

Please let us know if you have questions or if there are topics you'd like to see us cover by contacting the Lawyer Service Centre at [pl-lsc@lao.on.ca](mailto:pl-lsc@lao.on.ca)



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