

# B3: Better Billing Bulletin

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## Docket Requirements and Times of Day

Legal Aid Ontario (LAO) utilizes a payment system that processes the majority of certificate payments automatically to make payments to roster members quickly and efficiently. The payments are made based on the entries made in the online account and this requires placing a high degree of trust on our roster members to submit accounts in accordance with our rules and policies. In order to ensure responsible and transparent use of public funds, LAO must strictly enforce our billing rules and policies. Failure to comply with these rules will result in recovery and the Audit and Compliance Unit and Investigations Department do not permit the revision of dockets once subject to audit or investigation.

Roster members are expected to keep accurate records of the services that they provide to legally aided clients, as this is essential to the integrity of LAO's unique payment system. The Tariff and Billing Handbook and the LASA 2020 policy, Submitting Certificate Accounts Services, list the requirements for dockets submitted in support of certificates billed hourly or by block. Dockets must comply with all of the following criteria:

- Be computer generated (not handwritten)
- List the services provided in chronological order
- Include detailed descriptions of the services that were provided (e.g., what service, where the service was provided, who provided the service)
- Include the dates and the actual time spent for all services recorded in tenths of an hour. For example 30 minutes = 0.5 hours, 2 hours and 48 minutes = 2.8 hours
- Record times of day for all services of a **half-hour (.5) or more**; and
- Include the start and end times for court/tribunal attendances, and the nature of those attendances (in person or virtual)
- Court/tribunal attendances should be recorded separately from all other services provided on that day

## Docketing Tips

- Detailed descriptions of services make it easier to determine if you are entitled to any additional tariff maximums and/or discretionary increases.
- Do not use generic terms such as “preparation” or “research” to describe services. Insufficient details or vague descriptions may result in services being disallowed.
- Details with respect to court/tribunal attendances should include the name of the jurist/board member, whether the hearing proceeded and the outcome of the proceeding
- Work done by agents, articling students, and law clerks should be clearly indicated in the dockets and identify the individual by name.
- Telephone calls must be itemized in the dockets.
- Correspondence should be itemized in the body of the docket
- Template dockets\* are not accepted and may result in services being disallowed.

\*LAO considers dockets to be template dockets where the service descriptions or times contained on dockets for different clients are identical or so similar that the conclusion can be drawn that the services described in the docket do not reflect an accurate account of the services actually provided to the individual client.

LAO does not require that roster members attach dockets to block fee accounts, but roster members are required to maintain dockets and provide them upon request. Failing to provide dockets may result in recovery of funds, disallowed accounts, and roster management consequences.

## Sample dockets

[Dockets – Legal Aid Ontario](#)

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## Launch of New Travel Authorization Request Form

Legal Aid Ontario is pleased to announce the launch a new Travel Authorization Request Form, which is now available in both [English](#) and [French](#) in LAO’s Forms Library.

Before travel time and travel-related disbursements can be added to a certificate, lawyers must first seek prior authorization from LAO. The introduction of the Travel Authorization

Request Form will allow LAO streamline these requests. This will reduce processing time and ensure fairness and transparency in decision making.

Decisions are made carefully to maintain the integrity of local legal services, especially in rural and underserved areas. For more information please see the Overview section on page 1 of the form.

Completed forms can be submitted electronically through the certificate section of Legal Aid Online. For criminal cases, or any other certificate-related matter not suitable for Legal Aid Online, kindly direct this form to Centralized Services' general inbox at [gengta@lao.on.ca](mailto:gengta@lao.on.ca).

## 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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