

**Billing Guidelines for
Defense Attorneys Providing Services to
Mississippi Tort Claims Board (Board)**

1. The current rate for legal services is \$170 per hour. Defense of medical and nursing home malpractice claims will be billed at a rate of \$200 per hour. The hourly rate for paralegals should not exceed \$75 per hour.
2. When an attorney is selected to represent the Board, only the specific attorney has been hired, not the attorney's firm, or any unapproved attorneys in the firm. The Board cannot pay for the services of any attorney not included on the Approved Attorney Register (Register). Any time charged to a case by an attorney not on the Register will be removed before payment is made.
3. Only one (1) approved attorney in a firm should charge for reviewing the original file, and that should be limited to a maximum of two (2) hours.
4. Two (2) approved attorneys may not render separate bills for any one (1) action or item. The Board selects experienced attorneys to avoid having several inexperienced attorneys billing for what one (1) experienced attorney may do for him/herself.
5. Status reports are required every 120 days on inactive claim files. Failure in providing such reports could result in removal from the Registry.
6. Attorney is to report any and all settlement offers when received from Plaintiffs.
7. The Mississippi Tort Claims Board Claim File Number must be used on all correspondence and bills.
8. As required in the Contract for Professional Legal Service, all billing is to be submitted on a quarterly basis from the date of assignment. Any bill received otherwise will simply be returned without comment.
9. All items detailed on a bill should be charged separately, for example, "Research; phone conversations; travel to Vicksburg - 4 hrs." is not appropriate. Time for each detail should be shown.
10. When travel expenses are billed, each item must be listed on the time sheet, such as the number of miles traveled, parking, etc. The State of Mississippi uses the same mileage reimbursement rate as the Federal Register, which changes every year. There is no allowance for meals unless overnight travel is required.
11. Receipts should be provided for any extraordinary expenses that exceed \$100.
12. The amount of time charged for telephone calls made or received should be accurate. Any telephone calls charged more than .3 hours should be explained in the next status letter to the Board.
13. Photo copy expenses must be itemized for number of copies. The allowable charge per copy is \$.20 for office photo copies.
14. If attorney changes firms during the contract period, he/she must communicate this change to the Board prior to the quarterly billing. Retroactive changes to a contract must be approved by the Mississippi State Personnel Board, and payment can be significantly delayed if change is not communicated in advance.