



Enhanced legal aid phone services

A new telephone triage project was implemented on July 2, 2008, to enhance the society's telephone-based legal aid services.

The objectives are to reduce waiting times and dropped calls for LawLINE, enhance services to family and civil clients, improve access to legal services, and better match clients and staff based on service needs and expertise.

The project involves two phases. The first, already in progress, is a screening system for everyone who contacts the LSS Call Centre and LawLINE. This system allows staff to assess callers' needs and refer them to the services most appropriate to their situations, including legal information outreach workers, LawLINE, and family duty counsel.

Once the screening system is running smoothly, we will expand the project to include brief advice by external telephone advice lawyers, who will log on to the LawLINE queues from remote locations.

For information about what kinds of issues LawLINE handles, check the LSS website: www.lss.bc.ca/general/LawLINE.asp.

LSS has received a Law Foundation grant to support this project.

Tariff revisions

The July 15, 2008, revisions to the Tariff Guide are posted on the LSS website at www.lss.bc.ca/lawyers/tariffGuide.asp. Check out the Message to Tariff Bar for a list of the changes made.

Family Tariff revision highlights

Among the tariff changes that came into effect on July 15, 2008, the following will be of particular interest to family lawyers (please see the *Guide to Legal Aid Tariffs* for full details):

- Emergency Services — Preparation for Supreme Court cases: Lawyers may now bill up to 5 hours for preparing Supreme Court cases. This is in addition to general preparation hours.*
- Emergency Services — Preparation for a hearing in Supreme Court: Billable hours have been increased to a maximum of 5 hours per motion (from 3 hours).*

*** indicates that the tariff item is part of a pilot and will expire on March 31, 2011, unless core funding is obtained**

- Dispute Resolution Services — Travel: Lawyers may now bill for travel to or from mediation or a collaborative location if the trip exceeds 160 km per round trip.
- Emergency Services; Dispute Resolution Services; Extended Services — Opinion for Extended Family Services: Lawyers may bill up to one hour to prepare an opinion to apply for Extended Services or to obtain further Extended Services.
- Emergency Services; Dispute Resolution Services; Extended Services — Articling student additional preparation: Articling student work on a file can be billed up to 5 hours for Emergency Services, 5 hours for DRS, and 10 hours for Extended Services.*

CFCSA Tariff revision highlights

The following tariff revisions will be of interest to lawyers doing child protection work (please see the *Guide to Legal Aid Tariffs* for full details):

- Clarification about the lifespan of a CFCSA referral (see page 3 of the CFCSA Tariff): The rules encourage counsel to keep CFCSA files open until the case has been concluded by:
- Continuing Custody Order,
- Director files Form B, withdrawing all applications, or
- return/placement of children and all Supervisions Orders have expired.

The last point is important because any new Presentation Hearing brought during the life of a referral (for any reason other than loss of jurisdiction) triggers a fresh allotment of most tariff items, including general preparation. The rules clarify for clients, staff, and counsel when a new referral is required versus when a new issue is added to an existing referral.

- Mediation attendance: Actual attendance time may now be billed without prior authorization (previously, authorization was required if more than 6 hours).
- Preparation and attendance for consensual dispute resolution processes: These are new tariff items allowing up to 5 hours to be billed for

preparation and up to 8 hours for attendance. CDR processes include four-way meetings, family group conferencing, extended family meetings, etc. These new items replace the previous tariff item for attendance at Aboriginal Extended Family Meetings.*

- Collateral issues: Lawyers may now bill up to 4 hours to assist clients with collateral issues (e.g., income, housing, immigration, drug and alcohol, mental health, etc.) where the assistance will likely help resolve the CFCSA matter.
- Articling student additional preparation: Articling student work on a file can be billed up to 5 hours.*

Disbursements Tariff Revision Highlights:

- Electronic Disclosure is now billable without prior authorization up to \$1,000 (previously \$100)
- Skip Tracing is now included in those items that do not require prior authorization for amounts up to \$200

Case Management update

The Case Management Section (authorizations) is pleased to announce the following changes as we continue to make improvements to better support lawyers and clients:

- Kristy has joined the team as our new Disbursements Coordinator
- Michelle has joined the team as an additional Case Management Assistant working .7 for 3 years
- Michael has joined the team as a Case Management Assistant (replacing Alaina)
- Stephanie's focus is as our Case Management Coordinator

Tip from the Tariff Helpdesk

Lawyer e-services

Please note that if you bookmark the Lawyer e-services Web page (save it to your "Favourites") and set your user ID and password so it will be remembered by your computer, that information will not be remembered when you next do an update. Please ensure that your ID and password are safely noted so that you can retrieve them when necessary.

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Bursaries for CLE Family Law Conferences

LSS and the Continuing Legal Education Society are offering bursaries to lawyers with less than five years' call for upcoming CLE criminal, immigration, and Family Law Conferences:

- [Mastering Family Chambers](#)
Friday, October 3, 2008 — \$525.00
- [Family Law Drafting Boot Camp](#)
Thursday & Friday, November 13 & 14, 2008 — \$1,000.00

LSS will pay the registration fee for one conference for a limited number of tariff bar lawyers who agree to take 12 referrals in the coming year. To apply, send an e-mail to lawyersresources@lss.bc.ca, indicating your call date and the conference you want to attend, and stating that you agree to accept 12 referrals in the coming year. Spaces are limited, so apply early! Lawyers who don't qualify can still get a 25% discount on the registration fee if they agree to take 12 referrals in the coming year.

New Lawyer Orientation Manual

Beginning in September, all new lawyers who take legal aid referrals will receive a copy of the *Lawyer Orientation Manual*, a new publication from LSS. Developed as part of the LSS quality assistance program, the manual is designed to introduce lawyers and their staff to LSS services, structure, and resources. Topics include working with LSS (how to get a vendor number, and how to get and bill referrals), client eligibility, and an overview of the range of coverage provided by LSS in each area of law. The manual also provides a description of the quality assistance resources available to lawyers, as well as LSS resources for clients.

With an eye to recruitment, LSS will be sending a copy of the manual to all existing referral lawyers in BC (even experienced referral lawyers may enjoy the chapter on useful billing tips!). We encourage you to share it with your colleagues. The *Lawyer Orientation Manual* will also be available soon in PDF on the LSS website.