

Legal billing desk card

Tenth-hour scale, UTBMS codes and what a reviewable entry carries

Monitask

One task · one entry · one task code

MINUTES TO TENTHS

1–6	0.1
7–12	0.2
13–18	0.3
19–24	0.4
25–30	0.5
31–36	0.6
37–42	0.7
43–48	0.8
49–54	0.9
55–60	1.0

A 20-minute task is 0.3 on this scale. On a quarter-hour scale it is either 5 minutes short or 10 minutes long — 20 is not a multiple of 15.

WHAT A TARGET ASKS OF A WEEK

YEAR	BILLABLE A WEEK	WORKED A WEEK	SHARE OF 1,840 H
1,700	37.0	52.8	92.4%
1,800	39.1	55.9	97.8%
1,900	41.3	59.0	103.3%
2,000	43.5	62.1	108.7%

Worked hours assume 70% of them are billable. The last column is the same target measured against the 1,840 available hours in 46 weeks of a 40-hour contract — which is how every other profession reads a utilization rate.

BEFORE YOU ROUND UP

20 two-minute emails billed at a 0.1 minimum each:
worked 40 minutes, billed 2.0 hours — 3× the time worked. At \$400/h that is \$533.33 in one day.

Group like tasks on one matter into a single entry with the real total: 6 of them is 0.2, not 0.6.

WHAT EVERY ENTRY CARRIES

Matter number	The client and the file it bills to
Timekeeper	The rate attaches to the person, not the task
Duration	In tenths of an hour, to the nearest tenth
Task code	Where in the matter the work sits
Activity code	What kind of work it was
Description	What a reviewer reads before approving it

UTBMS TASK CODES

L100	Case Assessment, Development and Administration
L110	Fact Investigation/Development
L120	Analysis/Strategy
L300	Discovery
L330	Depositions
L350	Discovery Motions
L440	Other Trial Preparation and Support
C300	Analysis and Advice
P200	Fact Gathering/Due Diligence
B110	Case Administration

Litigation set shown. Counseling (C), Project (P), Bankruptcy (B), Patent (PA), Trademark (TR), workers' compensation (WC), M&A (M*) and eDiscovery (L600-L690) have their own sets.

UTBMS ACTIVITY CODES

A101	Plan and prepare for
A102	Research
A103	Draft/Revise
A104	Review/Analyze
A105	Communicate (within legal team)
A106	Communicate (with client)
A107	Communicate (opponents/other outside counsel)
A109	Appear For/Attend

DESCRIPTIONS A REVIEWER APPROVES

Attention to file	Review defendant's production, Bates 1402-1890, for responsiveness to RFP 12
Research	Research Ninth Circuit authority on waiver of privilege by inadvertent production
Telephone call	Telephone conference with client re settlement authority ahead of 14 March mediation
Prepare for hearing	Prepare for hearing on motion to compel: outline argument, assemble exhibits A-F
Emails	Correspondence with opposing counsel re deposition scheduling for three witnesses

Name the document, issue or person · state the purpose · use the matter's defined terms · avoid "attention to", "work on", "handle".