

# Assessing Your Legal Bill

**A**s committee of estate, one of your first financial responsibilities will be to pay for the legal services your lawyer performed to have you appointed. At some point, it may also be necessary for you to retain a lawyer to do the work for the adult for whom you are committee. Prior to paying for any legal services, you should review all bills and invoices to ensure that the amounts you are being charged are reasonable and appropriate. This fact sheet provides some guidelines to assist you with assessing your legal services bill:

- Before making any payment, thoroughly review the lawyer's bill to ensure that the detailed information about services provided corresponds to what you agreed on when you hired the lawyer and that the amounts charged are reasonable. When you first hired the lawyer, you should have entered into a written agreement that defined the work to be done by the lawyer, services to be provided by other lawyers or legal assistants, and estimated cost of legal fees, disbursement and applicable taxes.
- If you have concerns about the bill, you should discuss it with the lawyer. If, after discussion, you are still not satisfied, you may have the account reviewed or assessed before the Registrar of the Court by contacting the Court Registry named on the top-right corner of the Committeeship Order. A list of Court Registries is available at [www.ag.gov.bc.ca/courts/contacts.htm](http://www.ag.gov.bc.ca/courts/contacts.htm). You should be aware, however, that there may be additional legal costs associated with this taxation process.
- On a hearing to assess costs, the Registrar considers several issues. Items that tend to increase legal accounts include: the complexity of the issues involved, the conduct of any persons that resulted in increased legal work, and whether the application for appointment of a committee was challenged by anyone. The Registrar will also consider whether or not all disbursements were reasonably necessary. Prior to setting the matter down for an assessment, you should review these issues with the lawyer.
- A bill may only be reviewed within certain time limits. Therefore you should not delay. If you hired the lawyer, you must challenge the legal bill within one year if you have not paid it, and within three months of payment, if you have paid it.
- If you require assistance in selecting a lawyer in your area, the Lawyer Referral Service is a useful resource. They may be contacted at 604-687-3221 or 1-800-663-1919. Dial-A-Law (1-888-565-5297) also provides useful recorded information.

Private Committee Services  
Public Guardian and Trustee  
#700 - 808 West Hastings Street  
Vancouver, BC V6C 3L3



Phone: 604-660-1500  
Fax: 604-660-4456  
Website: [www.trustee.bc.ca](http://www.trustee.bc.ca)