FREE CHART

Billing Increments Comparison Chart

How 0.1-hour, 0.25-hour and 1-minute increments change the billed time on the same work

MIRA · miranow.ai · Updated October 2026

6 min
One tenth of an hour (0.1)

15 min
One quarter of an hour (0.25)

+4 min
Added to a 2-minute email billed at 0.1

+13 min
Added to a 2-minute email billed at 0.25

1 The three increments side by side

Increment	Minutes per unit	Units per hour	Most added by round-up	Typical use
0.1 hour	6	10	5 minutes	Common default in legal timekeeping
0.25 hour	15	4	14 minutes	Coarser; some client guidelines restrict it
1 minute	1	60	Under 1 minute	Most precise; best for short calls

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Full-size infographic · free PDF below

Most added by round-up assumes durations recorded in whole minutes. Actual minutes are always the starting point.

2 Round-up method in four steps

1. **Record actual minutes**
   Example: a call lasted 17 minutes.
2. **Divide by the unit**
   17 / 6 = 2.83 tenths. 17 / 15 = 1.13 quarter hours.
3. **Round up to a whole unit**
   2.83 becomes 3. 1.13 becomes 2.
4. **Convert to decimal hours**
   3 x 0.1 = 0.3 hour. 2 x 0.25 = 0.5 hour. At 1-minute: 17 / 60 = 0.28 hour.

3 Same tasks, three increments

Task	Actual	0.1 hr	0.25 hr	1-minute
Read and answer short client email	2 min	0.1 (+4)	0.25 (+13)	0.03
Call with opposing counsel on dates	4 min	0.1 (+2)	0.25 (+11)	0.07
Review court notice, update calendar	8 min	0.2 (+4)	0.25 (+7)	0.13
Review redline of one clause	11 min	0.2 (+1)	0.25 (+4)	0.18
Client status call	17 min	0.3 (+1)	0.5 (+13)	0.28
Draft short letter to opposing counsel	22 min	0.4 (+2)	0.5 (+8)	0.37
Review discovery responses for gaps	31 min	0.6 (+5)	0.75 (+14)	0.52
Draft discovery deficiency letter	47 min	0.8 (+1)	1.0 (+13)	0.78
Research local rule on page limits	65 min	1.1 (+1)	1.25 (+10)	1.08
Total	207 min (3.45 hr)	3.8 hr (+21 min)	5.0 hr (+93 min)	3.45 hr

Figures in brackets are minutes added by rounding up. 1-minute values are actual minutes / 60, rounded to two decimals.

4 Annual effect of rounding a 2-minute email

Scenario	Worked	Billed at 0.1	Billed at 0.25	Billed at 1-minute
One 2-minute email	2 min	6 min	15 min	2 min
10 emails a day, separate entries	20 min	1.0 hr	2.5 hr	0.33 hr
Same, over 230 working days	76.7 hr	230 hr	575 hr	76.7 hr
10 emails a day as one matter entry	20 min	0.4 hr	0.5 hr	0.33 hr
One daily entry, over 230 days	76.7 hr	92 hr	115 hr	76.7 hr

230 days x 10 emails = 2,300 emails. 2,300 x 2 min = 4,600 min = 76.7 hr. 2,300 x 6 min = 230 hr. 2,300 x 15 min = 575 hr. Combine related same-matter correspondence only where client rules allow.

5 Ethics rules that apply to rounding

REASONABLE FEES

ABA Model Rule 1.5(a)

A lawyer shall not charge an unreasonable fee. Time and labor required is one listed factor.

DISCLOSE THE METHOD

ABA Model Rule 1.5(b)

Scope and basis of the fee should be communicated, preferably in writing, at or near the start.

1993 BILLING OPINION

ABA Formal Opinion 93-379

Lawyers may bill only for time actually spent and may not bill two clients for the same hours.

COURT REVIEW

Fee petitions

In fee-shifting cases, some courts have reduced awards for quarter-hour billing or block billing.

6 Client billing guideline norms to check

- [ ] Required increment, often 0.1 hour
- [ ] Whether rounding is allowed and in which direction
- [ ] Ban on minimum charges for emails, calls or letters
- [ ] Ban on block billing; one task per entry
- [ ] Limits on internal conferences between timekeepers
- [ ] Limits on multiple attendees at one meeting
- [ ] Administrative and clerical work not billable
- [ ] Required UTBMS task and activity codes
- [ ] Narrative detail required for each entry
- [ ] Submission deadline after work is performed
- [ ] Electronic invoice format such as LEDES
- [ ] Approval needed before research above a set time

7 Increment hygiene

Do

- ✓ Record actual minutes, then apply the increment
- ✓ Use the client's increment when it differs from the firm default
- ✓ Write the increment and rounding method into the engagement letter
- ✓ Review short entries for real value before release
- ✓ Use exact time when the client asks for it

Avoid

- ✗ Bill a fixed 0.2 or 0.25 for every email by habit
- ✗ Round each micro-task separately when a combined entry is allowed
- ✗ Round up twice, once per task and again on the daily total
- ✗ Change increments mid-matter without telling the client
- ✗ Rely on a rounded timer total without review

8 Short tasks with MIRA

MIRA captures work activity and lets lawyers review time inside Microsoft Teams closer to when the work happens, which reduces reconstruction of short tasks from memory. It also helps prepare clearer billable descriptions before billing review.

Sources and references: ABA Model Rule 1.5 (Fees); ABA Formal Opinion 93-379 (Billing for Professional Fees, Disbursements and Other Expenses, 1993); UTBMS task and activity code sets; LEDES electronic billing standard; Arithmetic: round-up to 6-minute and 15-minute units. General information, not legal advice. Check your jurisdiction's rules and your client billing guidelines.

MIRA
www.miranow.ai/resources/billing-increments