

Legal Billing Description Cheat Sheet for Lawyers

A practical set of billing narrative examples for research, drafting, review, communications, discovery, and transactional work.

Use this rule: describe the action, subject, and purpose of the work. Keep the narrative specific enough for billing review, but avoid unnecessary privileged detail.

Weak vs. stronger descriptions

Work type	Weak	Better billing description
Research	Research	Researched enforceability of limitation of liability provision for contract negotiation strategy.
Document review	Reviewed documents	Reviewed revised purchase agreement and analyzed indemnity and termination provisions for client comments.
Email	Email to client	Prepared email to client summarizing revised contract terms and recommended negotiation response.
Client call	Call with client	Joined client call to discuss discovery timeline, production scope, and next steps.

Copy-ready examples by work type

Legal research

- Researched pleading standards for fraud claim in support of draft motion to dismiss.
- Analyzed regulatory guidance related to data-retention obligations for client compliance review.

Document review

- Reviewed document production set and analyzed privilege issues for discovery response strategy.
- Reviewed lease agreement and analyzed renewal rights, assignment restrictions, and repair obligations.

Drafting

- Drafted revised service agreement provisions addressing payment, renewal, and termination.
- Prepared comments to purchase agreement regarding inspection period and closing conditions.

Client communications

- Prepared email to client regarding revised limitation of liability language and recommended negotiation position.
- Joined client call to review negotiation priorities and discuss response to counterparty comments.

Discovery and litigation

- Reviewed discovery responses and prepared follow-up requests regarding missing production categories.
- Prepared witness outline for deposition regarding project timeline and contract performance.

Transactional work

- Prepared closing checklist and coordinated outstanding signature and deliverable requirements with transaction parties.
- Analyzed contract assignment restrictions and prepared client summary of approval requirements.

Templates for everyday entries

Work type	Template
Research	Researched [legal issue] under [authority] to support [matter purpose or client decision].
Document review	Reviewed [document] and analyzed [issue or provision] for [client comments, filing, negotiation, or strategy].
Email	Prepared email to [recipient] regarding [specific issue] and [recommended next step or response].
Call or meeting	Participated in [client, internal, or third-party] call regarding [topic] to address [purpose or next step].

Billing safety check

1. State the action taken.
2. Name the document, issue, or subject where useful.
3. Connect the work to the client matter or purpose.
4. Use a clear verb instead of a vague phrase.
5. Match required task or activity codes.
6. Avoid unnecessary privileged detail.
7. Identify administrative or non-billable work accurately.

MIRA helps law firms capture work context, prepare clearer draft time entries, and review them in Microsoft Teams before billing. Learn more at miranow.ai.