Misdemeanor Time Study
Frequently Asked Questions

Last Updated: August 2, 2013

- **Who is participating in this study?**
- **What do we include for cases that opened before the time study started?**
- **This seems to be taking a lot of time. Are there some tips for making time entry quicker?**
- **How do I search for a case that I previously created?**
- **How should I handle probation violations?**
- **What should be included in "dockets"?**
- **When is a case considered to be *Closed*? Also, what should I do when the case closes?**
- **I only practice in one court. Can the system default to my court?**
- **What's the *Assignment Date*? The date it's assigned to my office, or the date that it's assigned to me personally?**
- **I accidentally entered the same case twice. How do I delete a case?**
- **I accidentally entered the same time activity twice. How do I delete it?**
- **What is the most common mistake that participants are making?**

Who is participating in this study?

Since the purpose of the study is to develop a data-driven case weighting system for implementation of the caseload limits set by the Court's Standards, participation is limited to attorneys whose total caseloads are no more than approximately 400 misdemeanors per year (un-weighted).
Forty-eight attorneys are currently part of this project, and practice in the following courts:

County District Courts: Adams, Benton, Columbia, Ferry, Franklin, Pierce, Skagit and Thurston.
Municipal Courts: Battle Ground, Bellingham, East Wenatchee, Spokane, Tacoma and Tumwater.

In addition, attorneys around the state who already track their time and sharing their time records with State OPD. Their data will be merged with the time study data, to ensure a larger sample size and a more geographically diverse representation. Those attorneys practice in the courts of Clallam County District Court, Ferry County District Court, Bellingham Municipal Court, Bremerton Municipal Court, Seattle Municipal Court, and Sequim Municipal Court.
Return to Top

What do we include for cases that opened before the time study started?

Do not enter any *time* spent on cases prior to your beginning this misdemeanor time study (July 15 for most participants). However, you are encouraged to enter cases you already had open when starting the time study, and to document the time you spend on those cases during the time study.

For cases that you opened prior to July 15 (or whenever you began the time study), enter the basic case information. To the best of your knowledge, enter the date that the case was assigned to you, or when you began work on it. Enter the time you spend on this case during the time study.
Return to Top

This seems to be taking a lot of time. Are there some tips for making time entry quicker?

The system was designed to be quick and easy, but there are some possible steps that might help you to enter data faster:

1. **Use the Timesheet Feature.** In speaking to participants, we've learned that they are taking the longer route in entering time information on existing cases. The timesheet allows you to quickly enter time on multiple cases, without having to look up each one individually.

   On the Timesheet, there's a listing of all your time. You can enter time for any clients on this same page. This will particularly save time after returning from a pre-trial hearing calendar where you represented twelve different clients. Notice the variety of clients in this image:

Date	Type	hrs:min	Time Entry User	Case
07/05/2013	CC	00:05	Prince, Diana	Wayne, Bruce (Open Case)
07/05/2013	CT	00:40	Prince, Diana	Wayne, Bruce (Open Case)
07/06/2013	CP	00:25	Prince, Diana	Garrick, Jay (Open Case)
07/07/2013	CP	01:20	Prince, Diana	Kane, Kathy (Closed Case)
07/07/2013	CP	00:45	Prince, Diana	Drake, Bobby (Closed Case)
07/08/2013	CT	02:30	Prince, Diana	Kent, Clark (Open Case)
07/08/2013	CC	00:35	Prince, Diana	Drake, Bobby (Closed Case)

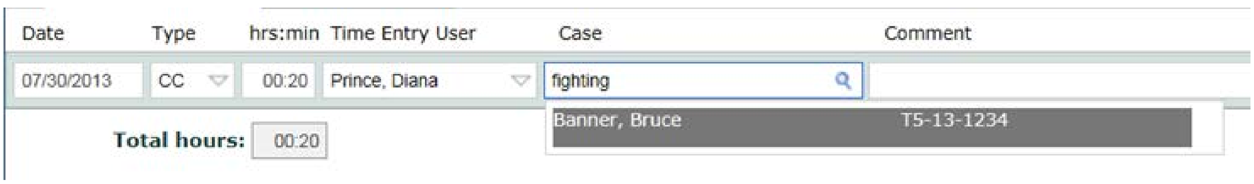
2. **Add the case number only if you need it.** WA State OPD does not have the ability to see your clients' case numbers. The case number field is there for your convenience. If it doesn't serve a purpose to you, don't fill in the information.

3. **Shorten the names.** Again, WA State OPD is unable to see your clients' names. If it is easier to do so, shorten first and last names to just the first three letters. For example, *Jonathan Brown* could be *Jon Bro*. This saves typing time, and makes name searches more quickly.

Return to Top

How do I search for a case that I previously created?

The system will allow you to conduct a search by using a full word associated with the data you entered for the case. For example, you can search by first name, last name, case number, attorney first or last name, or charge. From the main screen (desktop version), use the search box in the middle of the screen. From the Timesheet, enter the name or other word in the Case box and click on the magnifying glass icon. When you see the appropriate case, select and enter it.



Return to Top

How should I handle probation violations?

If you are assigned to represent a person facing a probation violation (as opposed to general representation on a probation violation docket), you should create a new "case." There is no need to enter the underlying offense. Instead, for **Charge** simply select either "Probation Violation Review Hearing" or "Probation Violation Full Evidentiary Hearing." (Type "pv" for a quick search to find these options.) For **Disposition** select either "Violation Found" or "No Violation Found."

Return to Top

What should be included in "dockets"?

For purposes of this time study, "dockets" are intended to be calendars such as first appearance or arraignment where the attorney is designated, appointed, or contracted to represent groups of clients on that docket without an expectation of further or continuing representation. "Dockets" should not include, for example, pre-trial calendars because typically the attorney is providing full case representation to those clients. It is also common for public defense attorneys to be assigned to post-conviction "dockets" for persons checking-in with the court on the status of their probation. It is not expected that all attorneys will have docket activity for purposes of this time study.

Return to Top

When is a case considered to be *Closed*? Also, what should I do when the case closes?

For purposes of this time study, a case is considered closed when it reaches disposition, even if your office continues to provide ongoing representation during the probationary period. However, in the case of deferred prosecutions or stipulated orders for continuance, please consider the judge's acceptance of that agreement to be the “closed” date. In the event that the client does not complete the requirements and returns to court, just change the case back to “open” status.

When a case closes, please be sure to take the following steps:

1. Change the status from Open to Closed.
2. Enter the date it is Closed.
3. Enter the Disposition.
4. Check any boxes that were relevant to the case that we’re checked before, such as motions or trial.

Return to Top

I only practice in one court. Can the system default to my court?

No. Because of the number of jurisdictions involved in this time study, unfortunately we cannot set the system to automatically show the court you work in. However, when you need to enter the court, just type the first two or three letters, and the system will pick up the court.

Return to Top

What’s the *Assignment Date*? The date it’s assigned to my office, or the date that it’s assigned to me personally?

The assignment date is when you begin working on it.

Return to Top

I accidentally entered the same case twice. How do I delete a case?

The system will not allow you to delete a case. However, if you discover that you entered the same case twice, first make sure that all your time-keeping is tied to only one of the two versions. Then, the next time you open a new case, go ahead and enter that information in the duplicate entry. The system always allows you to change information, so just replace the old duplicate information with the new data.

Return to Top

I accidentally entered the same time activity twice. How do I delete it?

Any time data can be modified or deleted. To delete it, just select the link on your Timesheet, and click the red Delete icon at the top of your screen.

Return to Top

What is the most common mistake that participants are making?

From the data we’ve seen so far, the most common mistake is that users do not enter complete information when closing a case. See next question.

Return to Top