



LEDES Format Quick Reference Guide

LEDES (Legal Electronic Data Exchange Standard) formats are widely used in the legal industry for electronic billing. This guide provides a quick overview of the most common LEDES formats and their uses.

LEDES 1998B

Format Type: Fixed-length ASCII text file

Usage: Still widely used due to its simplicity and long-standing adoption

Key Features:

- Each field has a fixed length
- Limited to 96 fields
- Supports basic invoice information

Best For:

- Simple billing structures
- Firms with older billing systems
- Clients who prefer straightforward, no-frills billing data

Limitations:

- Lack of flexibility in data fields
- Cannot easily accommodate complex billing arrangements

LEDES 1998BI

Format Type: Modified version of LEDES 1998B

Usage: Allows for international invoicing

Key Features:

- Similar to 1998B, but with added fields for international billing
- Supports multiple currencies and tax information

Best For:

- Firms with international clients
- Billing across different jurisdictions

Limitations:

- Still based on fixed-length fields, limiting flexibility



LEDES 2000

Format Type: XML-based

Usage: Offers more flexibility and detail than 1998B

Key Features:

- Uses XML structure for more detailed and flexible billing information
- Supports an unlimited number of fields
- Allows for custom fields

Best For:

- Complex billing arrangements
- Detailed time and expense reporting
- Clients requiring extensive billing data

Limitations:

- More complex to implement than 1998B
- May require more sophisticated billing software

LEDES XML 2.0 / 2.1

Format Type: Enhanced XML-based

Usage: Provides the most comprehensive and flexible billing format

Key Features:

- Builds upon LEDES 2000 with even more flexibility
- Supports detailed phase and task coding
- Allows for complex alternative fee arrangements

Best For:

- Sophisticated clients with detailed billing requirements
- Law firms offering diverse billing models
- Matters requiring extensive task and expense breakdowns

Limitations:

- Requires advanced e-billing systems to generate and process
- May be overly complex for simple billing needs



Timekeeper Format

Format Type: Specialized format for timekeeper information

Usage: Used to submit or update timekeeper details separately from invoices

Key Features:

- Focuses on timekeeper-specific information (rates, titles, etc.)
- Can be used to update rate information efficiently

Best For:

- Large firms with frequent timekeeper or rate changes
- Clients requiring regular updates on timekeeper information

Limitations:

- Limited to timekeeper data, not for full invoice submission

Choosing the Right LEDES Format

1. **Client Requirements:** Always prioritize the format required by your client.
2. **Billing Complexity:** For simple billing, LEDES 1998B may suffice. For complex arrangements, consider LEDES 2000 or XML 2.0/2.1.
3. **International Needs:** If billing internationally, LEDES 1998BI or later versions are necessary.
4. **System Capabilities:** Ensure your billing system can generate the chosen format accurately.
5. **Data Detail:** If extensive task and expense breakdowns are needed, opt for newer XML-based formats.

Remember: Consistency and accuracy in using LEDES formats are crucial for smooth e-billing processes and maintaining strong client relationships.