



For immediate release

February 16, 2006

Legal aid introduces tiered tariffs for lawyers

LSS is an independent, non-profit organization that has provided legal aid to people with low incomes in BC since 1979.

Legal representation is available for serious family issues (e.g., involving child apprehension matters or domestic violence) and serious criminal problems. It is also available for some immigration, mental health law, and prison law matters.

Legal advice is available at most courts through duty counsel and by telephone through LawLINE and the Brydges Line (both are province-wide toll-free lines).

Legal information is available through LawLINE, plain language publications, and Internet services, including the Electronic Law Library, the Family Law in British Columbia, the LSS, and the LawLINK websites. (See www.lss.bc.ca for most of our publications, our catalogue, and website links.)

To contact the **LSS Call Centre and LawLINE**, dial: (604) 408-2172 (Lower Mainland) or 1-866-577-2525 (toll free from outside the Lower Mainland).

Vancouver, BC — A new three-tiered system of tariff rates uses experience and type of service as the basis for paying lawyers who represent legal aid clients.

The Legal Services Society (LSS) brought in the rates as part of its ongoing commitment to tariff renewal. Lawyers' experience will be based on the year of their call to the bar. Tiered rates will apply to accounts received on or after February 15, 2006.

"The three-tiered system is designed to better reflect the skills and expertise lawyers gain with experience," said LSS Executive Director Mark Benton.

"It also reflects standard compensation practices in the legal profession, where billing rates tend to increase with seniority. We hope the tiered-rates will encourage senior lawyers to continue accepting legal aid referrals, and attract newer lawyers with the expectation of future increases as they gain experience," he said.

The tiered rates are:

<u>Tier</u>	<u>Years of call</u>	<u>Compensation rate</u>
1	Less than 4 years	Published tariff rate (<i>Guide to Legal Aid Tariffs</i>)
2	4 to less than 10 years	Tier 1 rate plus 5 %
3	10 or more years	Tier 1 rate plus 10 %

Tiers 2 and 3 will apply to most tariff items listed in the society's [Guide to Legal Aid Tariffs](#). Disbursements, duty counsel and circuit counsel, criminal enhanced fees and criminal category 1 and 2 offenses will continue to be paid at the published tariff rates for all lawyers.

Tiered rates were among the recommendations in the report [Managing for Results: LSS Tariff Renewal](#). The report was released in December 2005 after LSS conducted an extensive review of the system governing the work lawyers are paid for and their rates of pay.

As this system represents a new approach to lawyer compensation, LSS will evaluate it over time and make adjustments as appropriate.

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Tariff renewal is designed to ensure services are available to clients by encouraging lawyers to take legal aid referrals; supporting best practices and quality services by lawyers; and promoting better results for legal aid clients, LSS, and the justice system as a whole.

For further information, see the LSS [Notice to Counsel #48](#), the Legal aid tariff renewal [backgrounder](#) (December 15, 2005 posting), and/or contact:

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