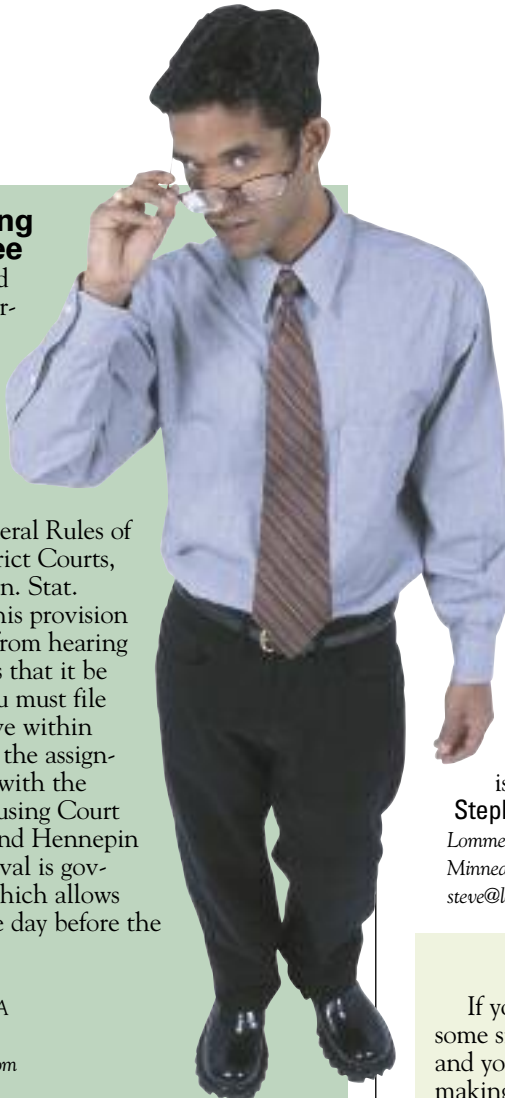


▲ **Removing a Referee**

In the event you'd like to remove a referee from your case (no disrespect to all the wonderful referees working hard out there ...) you do have the right to do so under Rule 107 of the General Rules of Practice for the District Courts, and pursuant to Minn. Stat. §484.70, subd. 6. This provision removes *all* referees from hearing the case and requires that it be heard by a judge. You must file your notice to remove within ten days of notice of the assignment of the referee, with the exception of the Housing Court referees in Ramsey and Hennepin County, whose removal is governed by Rule 602 which allows removal up until one day before the scheduled hearing.

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▼ **Attorney Fees**

Certain federal and state statutes provide for an award of attorney fees to the prevailing party. State and federal standards are identical. The "lodestar" standard multiplies a reasonable hourly fee times the hours expended. If you are a plaintiff, make careful, accurate and contemporaneous track of your time. If you have multiple claims or multiple clients, indicate whether the task applies to all. If the task applies to only some claims or some clients, specify this in your time entry.

If you are the defense, be aware of the substantial federal law which reduces attorney fees because of only partial success. The concept of "prevailing party" is not an all or nothing proposition.

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▲ **Client Relations**

If you have clients that call several times each week, try some simple tactics to cut down on the amount of time you and your staff must spend while making sure the clients' needs are met. Suggest that the client keep a list of questions rather than calling each time a question occurs to him/her. Remind clients paying an hourly rate that each contact costs them money. Provide clients with envelopes already addressed to you (and stamped), including an invitation for the client to send you a note once a week or monthly if they have questions, concerns, etc. — and answer them. Send copies of correspondence to clients with a brief note if necessary telling them what is happening or what this particular document means. Client comfort makes you look good!



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▼ **Held Bills & Client Service**

Attorneys with a careless approach to billing matters are signaling a casual approach which a client is likely to realize is the hallmark of poor legal service. Attorneys most often hold bills past the time they should be submitted because something that needs to be done has not yet been done. Attorneys who hold bills also typically have more work than they can accomplish or are unable to properly delegate and supervise work by others.

Law firm management will have to force the issue of held bills with senior members of the firm because held bills are evidence of poor client service, may be a red flag for more serious problems, and likely reflect an unequal distribution of work

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