VyRal

A LeakReceipts Field Guide

LeakReceipts for Court Reporting

The Field Guide: where the money leaks, how to prove it, and how to close it

For: Court Reporting Firm — Transcript and Appearance

by VyRal Dynasty

LeakReceipts for Court Reporting The Field Guide: where the money leaks, how to prove it, and how to close it

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How every number in this book is labeled.

- **VERIFIED** means the figure comes from a named, dated source, and the source is printed next to it.
- **CALCULATED** means it is arithmetic on verified numbers or on your own numbers, and the math is shown.
- **ESTIMATE** means a reasoned range, and it is always called one.
- **STRUCTURAL** marks a standing rule of the trade (a law, a contract term, how the paperwork works), not a market figure.
- **STILL BEING MEASURED** means VyRal has not verified a figure yet, so no number is printed.

If a number is not labeled, it is a blank for you to fill from your own paper.

What this book is not. This is education, not legal, tax, accounting or financial advice. Where a fix says a professional decides, a professional decides. Nothing here says that any company, customer or person did anything wrong. The fixes show you how to check your own paper and ask in writing.

About how this book was made. This book was assembled with AI from VyRal's sourced research on this trade and checked against those sources. AI can make mistakes. Before you act on a figure, check it against the source printed beside it. Rules and rates change, and every figure carries its date for that reason.

Before you share any document with anyone, Vera included, black out account numbers, Social Security numbers and anything else you would not hand a stranger.

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The short answer for your trade

If you run or own a court reporting firm, the leak usually hides in one habit: treating "the job" as a single lump instead of the two separate products the law itself recognizes — your appearance fee for showing up and covering the deposition or hearing, and your transcript fee for the pages you actually produce and deliver. When those get blurred together, or when rush, realtime, rough draft, exhibits, copies, and cancellation aren't itemized the same way for every client, you either undercharge for real work or drift into inconsistent pricing that looks arbitrary from the outside. You don't have to guess at what's fair here — the federal court system publishes its own maximum per-page rate schedule, broken out by exactly these categories, and that schedule is the proof that itemizing every one of these pieces is standard professional practice, not an upsell.

Your leak map

Every leak this book covers, biggest first. The size grade is VyRal's research grade for how much money a leak tends to move in this trade. It is a grade, not a dollar figure. Your own paper sets the dollars.

#	Leak	Size grade	Evidence	Fixes
1	Appearance and Transcript Are Two Separate Products in Federal Law	Major	VERIFIED	1
2	Federal Courts Publish a National Maximum Per-Page Rate	Major	VERIFIED	1
3	State Statutes Can Set Their Own Hard Per-Page Caps	Major	VERIFIED	1
4	The Page Itself Is a Fixed, Defined Format — Padding It Is a Real Violation	Moderate	VERIFIED	1
5	Uniform Pricing to All Parties Is the Professional Ethics Standard	Moderate	VERIFIED	1
6	BLS Wage Benchmark	Small but common	VERIFIED	1
7	Self-Employment Tax (SECA) Boundary	Not graded	STRUCTURAL	1
8	Steno Machine, Software, and Certification (Pride Economy)	Not graded	STRUCTURAL	1

Then there are 4 more leaks to check, each with its own fixes, in the chapter called More leaks to check.

What people in your trade say hurts

Before we built a single fix, we went and read what people in this trade say out loud: forums, trade press, regulators' complaint files and court records. These are the pains that kept coming up, the ones with the most sources first. If one of them is yours, you're not imagining it.

Official page rates are set by the court and move only every few years

For official court transcripts, the court or a rule sets the most I can charge per page, and it moves on a fixed schedule: New Jersey every five years, Iowa only by rule change, federal courts by the Judicial Conference. In between, my costs keep rising while the cap stays put. If I price above a cap, I'm out of bounds; if I never check when the cap moves up, I leave money on the table.

Found in 7 public sources; newest dated 2026-10-17. VERIFIED count from VyRal's public research log; the sources are listed at the back.

I can't staff the jobs I book, so I pay up or turn work away

There are about a fifth fewer stenographers than ten years ago, and many active licenses are decades old. When I can't cover a deposition, I either lose the job or pay a premium to a freelancer, and that comes straight out of my margin unless my prices move with it.

Found in 5 public sources; newest dated 2026-11-03. VERIFIED count from VyRal's public research log; the sources are listed at the back.

National roll-ups buy my rivals and the vendor slots, so my work shrinks without anyone telling me

Every year the big platforms buy about a dozen local firms. Law firms are cutting down to two to four vendors per category, and the platforms get those slots. When a firm I share overflow work with gets bought, the work and sometimes the reporters go with it.

Found in 4 public sources; newest dated 2026-06-03. VERIFIED count from VyRal's public research log; the sources are listed at the back.

Appearance, rush, rough draft and late cancels get folded in or forgotten

The market bills a lot more than pages: a half-day or full-day appearance fee, a rush premium that can double the page rate, rough drafts, realtime, exhibits,

weekend surcharges and a fee for a same-day cancel. If my invoice is just a page count, every one of those is free work I gave away.

Found in 2 public sources; newest dated 2026-10-17. VERIFIED count from VyRal's public research log; the sources are listed at the back.

Get your paper together

Every fix in this book starts with paper, not memory. Memory rounds in the other side's favor. Paper doesn't.

Pull the last 90 days. Put it all in one folder, paper or phone, and label each piece with its date. Black out account numbers and Social Security numbers before you share anything with anyone.

The paper that proves each leak:

- Your contracts, invoices, statements, pay records and the messages around them.

My folder checklist

Last 90 days of statements or pay records _____

Every contract or agreement I work under _____

Every invoice, ticket or settlement for the same 90 days _____

The messages that changed a price, a scope or a date _____

Leak 1: Appearance and Transcript Are Two Separate Products in Federal Law

Size grade: Major · Evidence: VERIFIED

What it is. Federal law separately authorizes payment for a reporter's attendance at a proceeding and for the transcript itself — official federal reporters are paid an annual salary fixed by the Judicial Conference for attendance, with transcript fees charged separately at court-prescribed rates.

Why it leaks. When a firm folds a reporter's blocked, non-recoverable appearance time into 'the transcript price,' it's giving away one of two distinct products the law itself recognizes as separate — a short, contentious proceeding with few transcript pages can be genuinely unprofitable if the appearance rides along for free.

The number to hold it against. Federal law treats a court reporter's attendance and transcripts separately: §753(e) ties reporter compensation to attendance, and §753(f) separately authorizes transcript fees at rates prescribed by the court. Source: 28 U.S.C. §753 (law.cornell.edu), confirmed August 21, 2026.

VERIFIED · Primary — government or regulator

> **Ask yourself:** If your reporter attended a proceeding that generated almost no transcript pages, did the appearance fee alone still cover the reporter's blocked time?

1. Reporter's appearance time folded into the transcript price

Fix approved · leak evidence: Verified

Fix 1 — Do it yourself (free).

1. Pull the last 3 months of jobs. For each one write: hours the reporter was booked (including travel and waiting), and transcript pages ordered.
2. Circle the jobs with few or no pages ordered. Those are the ones where the appearance was given away.
3. Add a separate appearance fee to your schedule (by half day or full day, or a minimum), with a cancellation or late-cancellation fee.
4. Put the appearance fee on the confirmation you send when a job is booked, so the client agrees to it before the reporter shows up.
5. Jobs already billed at an agreed price generally stay as billed. This fixes the next booking.

Fix 2 — The words to send, under your own name. Fill in the brackets, keep a copy, and send it from your own email or by mail. Nobody sends it for you.

Booking confirmation line (add to every confirmation)

Subject: Confirmation — [CASE NAME], [DATE] at [TIME], [LOCATION]

Dear [CLIENT NAME],

This confirms [REPORTER NAME] for [CASE NAME] on [DATE] at [TIME], [LOCATION].

Our fees for this booking:
- Appearance fee: [AMOUNT] per [HALF DAY / FULL DAY], billed whether or not a transcript is ordered
- Late cancellation (less than [HOURS] hours before start): [AMOUNT]
- Transcript: billed separately per our fee schedule, by delivery time and number of copies

Please reply to confirm. Our schedule is attached and is the same for every party.

Thank you,
[YOUR NAME]
[YOUR FIRM]

Fix 3 — Done for you. **LeakReceipts · Billing Capture**

WE DO: line up each booking against the pages ordered, show which appearances went out with little or no billing, and add an appearance line and cancellation line to each invoice draft before it goes out. YOU DO: set the appearance fee, approve each invoice, and send it.

Keep it closed. No booking confirmed without the appearance fee and cancellation terms in writing.

What this fix can't decide for you. For official reporters, how appearance is paid can be set by the court. That is the court's call. We do not interpret §753 for him.

My receipt for this leak			
Owed by my paper	Paid or billed	Gap (CALCULATED: owed − paid)	Fix 2 sent · answer

FREE FIRST CHAPTER

That's Leak 1 of 8.

The full Field Guide for Court Reporting walks through every leak on the map you just read: why it happens, the paper that proves it, and three fixes for each one — one you do yourself for free, the words to send under your own name, and what LeakReceipts can do for you while the decision stays yours.

Get the full guide:
leakreceipts.com/ebooks/court-reporting

Run it on your own numbers:
leakreceipts.com

WE WALK BY FAITH NOT BY SIGHT — 2 Corinthians 5:7