Working With New Matters

Contents
- About Working With New Matters
- Selecting System Settings
- Selecting New Matter Defaults
- Adding New Matters
- Matters Opened Summary

About Working With New Matters

In PCLaw, the parties for whom your firm is working are called clients, the cases or files worked on for these clients are called matters. Matters are used to co-ordinate client related activities such as fees, expenses, payments, appointments, and phone calls, and to organize matter related documents, e-mail, and research. Data entry, billing, payments, and reports are all matter driven.

Although matters are added individually to PCLaw, default settings can be selected at both the system and client level to speed the creation of the matter, including customizing the contents of the New Matter window. If a matter pre-dates the firm, opening balances can be added.

This is one in a series of documents describing matters and matter based features in PCLaw. Refer to the PDF Document Library in the Practice Management Support Center for additional documentation.

Selecting System Settings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pull-Down Menu:</th>
<th>Options &gt; System Settings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

System Settings affects all workstations. It does not change settings for pre-existing matters. Changing settings for pre-existing matters must be performed individually through Matter Manager, or for a group of matters through the Global Change - Matter feature. Multiple tabs can affect default matter settings including the Matter, Taxes, and Past Due tabs.

Matter Tab

Options on the Matter tab effect only matters created after the option is set and saved.

Exhibit 1. The System Settings window displaying the Matter tab

City: Type the default city to assign to new matters.

State, Province, County: Type the default state/province/county to assign to new matters.

Country: Type the default country to assign to new matters.
Task Code: Select the default task code to assign to new matters.
Rate: Select the billing rate to assign to new matters.
Department: Select the default department code to assign to new matters.
Sort Options: Select one of the following for client reports and client/matter Pop Up Help:
• By Client as Entered lists matters in the order they were entered
• By Client and Matter lists matters in order by client then matter
• By Client and Description lists matters in order by client then case description.

Automatic Matter Numbering: Select one of the following:
• Disable turns off automatic matter numbering
• By Firm numbers new matters incrementally based on the last matter number used
• By Client numbers new matters incrementally based on the client number used.

Credit Hold: Check to have PCLaw automatically place a credit hold on new matters. If time, fees or
disbursements are added for the matter, a credit hold warning appears.

Trust Receipt Hold: Check to have PCLaw automatically place a hold on trust receipts for new matters. If a
trust check is issued before the trust receipt hold period expires, a warning appears.

Days to Hold Receipt: Type the number of days to hold trust receipts.

Files Can Be Destroyed After XX Years: Type the number of years that physical records must be stored for
closed matters before they can be destroyed.

Run Conflict Search on New Matter/Client: Check to automatically run a conflict search after clicking the
New, Next, or OK buttons in the New Matter and New Client windows.

Log Matter Changes: Check to track changes to matter information on the Matter Change Log report.

New Matter Settings: Click to use the New Matter Settings window to select the fields to appear when
creating a new matter.

OK: Click to save your work this session and return to the PCLaw desktop.

Selecting New Matter Settings

Use New Matter Settings to list or restrict fields in New Matter Defaults. “Selecting New Matter Defaults”
on page 5. New Matter Defaults determines what eventually appears in the New Matter window. Fields
marked with an asterisk are mandatory fields on the New Matter window. These fields cannot be hidden.

Fields available for selection in New Matter Settings represent the Main and Billing tab of Matter Manager.
If a field from the Matter Manager > Billing tab is moved to the Shown pane, a corresponding Billing tab
appears on the New Matter window. If no fields from the Matter Manager > Billing tab are moved to the
Shown pane, the New Matter window will display only a Matter tab. Although a field may not appear on
the New Matter window, it is still present on the respective Main or Billing tab of Matter Manager.

Exhibit 2. The New Matter Display Fields window of New Matter Settings

Make a field available for the New Matter window when creating a matter for this client by:
1. Highlighting the field in the Hidden pane.
2. Click Add>> to shift the field to the Shown pane.
3. Check Automatically Default Matter to display the field in the New Matter window by default.
Make a field unavailable in the New Matter window when creating a matter for this client by:

1. Highlighting the field in the Shown window.
2. Click <<Remove> to shift the field to the Hidden window.

**Matter Billing Tab**

The System Settings > Matter Billing tab determines the default settings for new matters. Selected options do not directly affect the parameters in the Create Bill, Pre-bill, Request Bill, or Settlement Statement. The default billing options are shown on the Billing tab of Matter Manager and can be changed individually.

**Exhibit 3. The Matter Billing Tab of System Settings**

**Billing:** Check one or more of the following:

- **Auto Allocate Time/Fees at Billing:** Credits each working lawyer proportionally to the amount of work performed, after fixed allocations have been deducted.

- **Auto Transfer from Trust at Billing:** Automatically transfers funds from the default trust account to cover disbursements and possibly fees at billing if the latter is selected on the System Settings > Data Entry tab.

- **Include Matter on Past Due Notices:** Includes the matter when mass billing past due notices.

**Quick Bill:** Select the template name in the Template box to set as the default when using Quick Billing.

**Bill:**

- **Template:** Select the template name to set the default template to use for bills and request bills.

- **Frequency:** Select from the drop down list to set a default billing interval.

**Pre-Billing:**

- **Template:** Select the template name to set the default template to use when pre-billing.

- **Frequency:** Select from the drop down list to set a default pre-billing interval.

**Tip:** Select **Use Matter Bill Frequency** to set the pre-billing frequency to be the same as the billing frequency.
Automatically Charge Client: Check to have PCLaw add a disbursement to the matter’s invoice at the time of billing. The subsequent options become available.

One Time Only: Select to have PCLaw add a disbursement to the matter’s invoice the first time the matter is billed. Type the amount of the charge in the Disbursement Amount box.

Every Invoice: Select to have PCLaw add a disbursement to the matter’s invoice every time the matter is billed. Type the amount of the charge in the Disbursement Amount box.

As a % of Fees: Select to have PCLaw add a disbursement, whose value is a percentage of the fees charged to the matter. Type the amount of the charge in the Disbursement Percent box.

Explanation: Select an explanation code or type an extended explanation to add a default explanation for the charge.

G/L Account: Select the account nickname to allocate the charge to a default g/l account.

OK: Click to save your work this session.

Taxes Tab
Use this tab to set the values for sales tax and GST/VAT. Values in the Rate on Fees and Rate on Disbursements boxes for sales tax and GST/VAT are assigned to the new matter.

The default GST/VAT Category for the matter is the direct result of what tax is enabled.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GST/VAT Category</th>
<th>Tax enabled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Both GST/VAT and sales tax are enabled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>Both GST/VAT and sales tax are enabled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sales Tax Charged after Goods and Services tax option is enabled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y</td>
<td>GST/VAT only is enabled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>Sales tax only is enabled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>Taxes are not enabled.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exhibit 4. Table listing the different GST/Vat Categories and how they are used

The GST Category and individual tax rates can be changed for any matter through Matter Manager or Global Change - Matter.

Past Due Tab
For the Interest/Past Due Notices tab, if Calculate Interest on Invoices is enabled in System Settings, then Apply Interest on Overdue Invoices is automatically enabled for the matter. Other interest or past due notices settings for the matter default to the System Settings equivalent, but the option to enable these settings are not controlled by the System Settings tab. Any new matter automatically defaults to use System Settings values, however these default settings can be disabled through Matter Manager or Global Change - Matter.
Selecting New Matter Defaults

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Client Manager:</th>
<th>Main tab</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Client:</td>
<td>Main tab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matter Manager:</td>
<td>Settings tab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Matter:</td>
<td>Main tab</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

New Matter Defaults sets default values in the New Matter window for matters created for a particular client. Setting default values saves entry time for matters opened to the same client. This feature is found in the following locations by clicking the New Matter Defaults button:

- the Main tab of Client Manager
- the Main tab of the New Client window
- the Settings tab of Matter Manager
- the Main tab of the New Matter window.

Exhibit 5. The New Matter Defaults window for selecting default fields for the New Matter window.

Include a field in the New Matter window when creating a matter for this client by:

1. In the **Not Defaulted** window, highlight the field.
2. Click **Add** to shift the field to the **Defaulted** window.
3. Select the default value to appear for the highlighted field when creating a new matter for this client in the box below the **Defaulted** window.

Exclude a field in the New Matter window when creating a matter for this client by:

1. In the **Defaulted** window, highlight the field.
2. Click **Remove** to shift the field to the **Not Defaulted** window.

**Note:** Fields appearing in the Available box are determined by using the New Matter Settings option on the Matter tab of Options > System Settings.

Click **OK** to save your work.

Adding New Matters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pull-Down Menu:</th>
<th>File &gt; Matter &gt; New Matter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PCLaw Toolbar:</td>
<td>Matter icon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matter Manager Toolbar:</td>
<td>Matter icon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The New Matter window can contain as few fields as are considered mandatory, or additional fields from the Main and Billing tabs of Matter Manager can be added. The New Matter window may also contain a Custom tab containing custom fields that are marked mandatory and an Opening Balances tab for new systems.
The mandatory fields for the New Matter window are:
- matter nickname
- client nickname
- last name or company name
- responsible lawyer
- date opened
- type of law.

This topic describes the New Matter window with the maximum number of fields.

The Main tab
The Main tab is the tab that appears when opening New Matter. All the mandatory fields for creating a new matter are contained on the Main tab.

Exhibit 6. The Main tab of the New Matter window

**Last Matter:** Displays the nickname of the last matter created.

**Matter:** Accept the next incremental matter nickname or type one of your own.

**Client:** Select the client nickname.

**Open From:** Click to populate fields using information from an existing client, contact, or vendor using Pop Up Help - Clients.

**Type of Law:** Select the type of law nickname. The full name appears to the right of the box.

**Default Task:** Select the task code nickname. The full name appears to the right of the box.

**Default Rate:** Select the default rate code or type a numeric value.

**Dept:** For PCLawPro Enterprise systems using Track G/L Accounts by Department: Select the department code nickname. The full name appears to the right of the box.

**Referral Type:** Select from the drop down list to attach a referral type to the matter.

**Contacts:** Select if the type is a contact and click the Contact button to select from a list.

**Referral Sources:** Select if the type is a defined source and select the source from Pop Up Help - Resources in the adjacent box.

**Other:** Select if the type is not a pre-defined source and type the source name in the accompanying text box.

**N/A:** Select If there is no referral type.

**Description:** Type a description of this matter.

**Opened:** Accept the date opened for the matter or select a new date.
Client Intro: Select the client introducing lawyer nickname. The full name appears to the right of the box.

Matter Intro: For PCLawPro Enterprise: Click to select associated matter introducing lawyers, and their allocated percentages using the Matter Introducing Lawyers window.

Responsible: Select the responsible lawyer nickname. The full name appears to the right of the box.

Assigned: Select the assigned lawyer nickname. The full name appears to the right of the box.

Other Staff: Select the username of a staff member that is to be associated with this matter.

Title, First, Middle, Last: If the client or billing address is a person: Type the person's name. Only the surname is mandatory.

Firm Name: If the client or billing address is a firm: Type the firm's name.

Display As: If the client or billing address is has both a person and firm name: Select the name to take precedence.

Street: Type the street, apartment, and suite address.

City: Type the municipality for the client or billing destination.

State, Province, County: Type the territory for the client or billing destination.

Note: The Street, City, and State/Province/County boxes can be made mandatory by selecting respectively Force Addr1 for Matters, Force City for Matters, and Force State/County/Province for Matters on the Other tab of System Settings.

Zip, Postal, Post Code: Type the mailing code.

Attention: Type the name of the person to whom the correspondence or invoice is to be forwarded.

Copy to Clipboard: Click this icon to copy the address to the clipboard.

Business: Type the business phone number of the person or firm.

Home: Type the home phone number of the person or firm.

Bus. Fax: Type the business fax number of the person or firm.

Cell: Type the cell phone number of the person or firm.

Other: Type any other phone or fax numbers of the person or firm.

E-mail 1, E-mail 2: Type the e-mail addresses of the person or firm.

New Matter Defaults: Click to set default values for other matters created for this client using the New Matter Defaults window.

Conflict: Click to open the Conflict Search window.

New: Click to create another matter using a blank New Matter window.

Next: Click to add additional information to this matter within Matter Manager.

OK: Click to save the matter and return to the PCLaw desktop.
The Billing Tab

The Billing tab appears on the New Matter window only if billing fields are selected to be shown on the New Matter Settings window on the Matter tab of Options > System Settings.

Exhibit 7. The Billing tab of New Matter

Frequency: Select the interval from the drop down list to set the matter’s billing frequency.

Billing Template: Select to assign a default billing template to the matter.

When Mass Billing, Bill Only Costs: Check to include contingency matters in mass billing but not bill any assigned fees.

Produce Past Due Notices on Overdue Invoices: Check to include the matter when mass billing past due notices.

Past Due Template: Select to assign a default past due notice template for the matter.

Use Task Based Billing: Check to implement task based billing.

Associate Type of Law: Select the matter’s default type of law for task based billing.

Quoted Type: Select from the drop down list to attach a quote to the matter.

Quoted: Type the amount if the quote involves a quantitative target or ceiling.

Budget Fees: For PCLawPro Enterprise: Type the value of targeted fees.

Auto Transfer from Trust at Billing: Check to automatically transfer funds from the matter’s trust account when billing.

Auto Allocate Time/Fees to Working Lawyers: Check to automatically allocate time and fee charges to working lawyers.

This option is overridden by any assigned fee allocations. If this option is not selected, fee and time charges are accorded to the matter’s responsible lawyer.

Apply Discount to Fees: Check to automatically include a discount to fees at the time of billing.

Discount %: Type the amount of the discount as a percentage.

Ask for Retainer: Check to include an automatic retainer refurbishment on the invoice.

Minimum Balance: Type the minimum balance for the retainer.

Retainers Kept in: Categorize the retainer as a general retainer or trust fund.
Auto Create Disbursements at Billing: Check to add a disbursement when invoicing the matter.

- **Amount:** Type the dollar amount of the auto-disbursement if it is a one time charge or an amount on every invoice.
- **Percent:** Type the percentage if the auto-disbursement is calculated from fees billed on the invoice.
- **Explanation:** Type the default explanation for the auto-disbursement.
- **G/L Account:** Select the default general ledger account for the auto-disbursement.

Apply Interest to Overdue Invoices: Check to enable interest charges to this matter.

- **Use Default Grace Settings:** Check to apply the grace period settings specified on the Past Due tab of System Settings to this matter.
  - **Calculate Interest from:** If **Use Default Grace Settings** is not checked: Select whether to calculate interest from the date of the invoice or after grace period.
  - **Grace Days Allowed:** If **Use Default Grace Settings** is not checked: Specify the length of the grace period for the matter in days.

- **Use Default Rate:** Check to apply the default interest rate specified on the Past Due tab of System Settings to this matter.
  - **Use Rate:** If **Use Default Rate** is not checked: Type the interest rate as a percent for this matter.
  - **Charge Interest for All Dates:** If **Use Default Rate** is not checked: Check to apply interest from the earliest invoice date for the matter.
  - **No Interest Before:** If **Charge Interest for All Dates** is not checked: Select the earliest date to apply interest to this matter.

Split Lawyer Charges: Click to assign automatic allocation of time and fee charges using the Split Lawyer Charges window. Allocations do not need to add to 100%:

- **Lawyer:** Select the lawyer(s) nickname.
- **Fee Allocation:** Type the percentage of the matter’s fees to allocate to each lawyer.
- **Default Billing Rate:** Select a default billing rate to be used by the lawyer when entering time for this matter only. This column is optional.
- **OK:** Click to save your work and return to the New Matter window.
Taxes: Click to select individualized tax settings for the matter:

Exhibit 9. The Taxes window accessed through the Matter Manager > Billing tab

GST Category: Select from the drop down list to change the GST category.

GST on Fees: Type the percentage to set the GST/VAT rate on fees.

GST of Disbursements: Type the percentage to set the GST/VAT rate on disbursements.

Sales on Fees: Type the percentage to set the sales tax on fees.

Sales on Disbursements: Type the percentage to set the sales tax on disbursements.

Do Not Charge TAF: For British Columbia firms only: Check to exempt the matter from paying TAF.

OK: Click to save your settings and return to the New Matter window.

The Custom Tab
A Custom tab appears on the New Matter window if two conditions are present:
• Add This Tab by Default For Matters or Add This Tab by Default for Clients must be selected on the Custom Tab Layout window for one or more custom tabs.

• One or more of the custom tab fields must be marked as a required field.

The Custom tab that appears on the New Matter window comprises only the required fields of all the custom or electronic billing tabs enabled to default to the matter or client. The complete custom or electronic billing tab appears in Matter Manager. All non-required fields do not appear in the New Matter window and must be entered in Matter Manager.

Tip: To work with custom tabs, select Custom Tabs on the Options pull-down menu. Electronic Billing tabs are provided with the Electronic Billing optional module.

The Opening Balances Tab
This tab is available only for a new set of books where a month has not been closed. Matter opening balances are for matters that existed prior to the start date for the set of books. The tab allows for the entry of previous accounts receivables, unbilled fees and disbursements, as well as trust balances for up to five trust accounts. Previous invoices can be added using their original issue date.

This window is also present on the Tools pull-down menu, and as a tab in Matter Manager.

Matters Opened Summary (For PCLawPro only)

Pull-Down Menu: Reports > Productivity > Matters Opened Summary

This report shows the number of matters opened by each lawyer in their role as introducing, responsible, and assigned lawyer. The report displays monthly quantities over a twelve month period.