

Laser Fax

Modification 5
Modification 5.40
December 14, 2006

STATE POLICE CRIME LAB FEES

The codes that appear under Cost Code CA11 (State Police Crime Lab fees) no longer display a set dollar amount. You will need to record the amounts based on the invoice you receive. This change is due to several suggestions received by the Help Desk and also concerns raised by members of the Computer Committee of the Special Court Judges Association. In a number of instances, the amounts in the MDJS did not match the invoiced amount or the Magisterial District Judge needed to split the amounts among multiple parties.

PUBLIC ACCESS REQUEST

The AOPC has become aware that many magisterial district courts have received via fax a letter requesting access to “criminal and traffic summonses” (For your reference a copy has been placed in the Statewide Folder under MDJS Documentation.) The *Public Access Policy of the Unified Judicial System: Magisterial District Court Records* provides that magisterial district court files and the information contained therein are open to the public. As noted in Informational Laser Fax 5.53, a magisterial district court must permit access to information/documents in the court’s official paper case files, unless the court is aware of specific controlling legal authority (e.g. 42 Pa.C.S. Section 5988 which restricts access to identities of child victims of sexual or physical abuse) or an order to seal issued by a court of common pleas or an appellate court that would prohibit the release of certain information.

In responding to this request, you may wish to consider the following:

1. The *Public Access Policy of the Unified Judicial System: Magisterial District Court Records* only provides for onsite inspection and photocopying of case files. The fee for photocopying is limited to \$0.50 per page.
2. When a request for inspection and photocopying is made to a court, it is important to remember that providing a requestor with access to the court files should not impinge upon the judiciary’s primary service – the delivery of justice. Therefore, in order to ensure that such requests do not interfere with the court’s ability to conduct its day-to-day operations, it may be appropriate for a court to set reasonable restrictions with regard to how and when access should be provided.

If you have any questions, please contact the MDJS helpdesk or Pam Walker, the MDJS staff attorney, at 717-795-2000.