Criminal / Civil Court Expert Witness Fee Schedule for Domestic Violence / Coercive Control Cases

www.domesticviolenceexpert.net

**** Rates listed below are effective beginning September 1, 2026***

$25 security retainer for criminal cases

- This fee is charged to secure the date on Melissa's calendar for criminal case expert witness testimony in Minnesota

Security retainer for civil cases

- The security retainer fee for civil cases is negotiated based on the number of days needed to secure on my calendar for expert witness testimony for depositions and trials. A minimum calendar hold fee is generally $500.00 per day. This fee is in addition to the hourly rate for any work performed on the secured dates.

Minimum $100 fee for criminal cases with up to one hour of preparation but no testimony

- This fee is charged only in cases when the expert witness has committed to the date and time of the criminal case, conducted an initial consultation with the attorney, the hearing/trial is canceled, and the expert witness is no longer needed.

Criminal Case / Civil Case "General" Testimony about Domestic Violence / Coercive Control

- **$100 per hour** for preparation time and court time for criminal cases
- **$250 per hour** for preparation time and court time for civil cases
- These include cases where there is no evaluation or assessment and the expert witness does not know any facts about the case but testifies about domestic violence and/or coercive control generally and its effects on victims.

Civil Cases for Divorce and/or Custody with a Domestic Violence / Coercive Control Assessment or Forensic Consultation with an Attorney / Client

- **$250 per hour** for civil divorce and custody cases. This rate applies to interviews, report writing, preparation, deposition, and court time
- Most civil cases require a minimum $2,500 retainer fee. In cases where both parties retain Melissa Scaia as the expert, a minimum $3,000 retainer fee is required.
- The total cost of an expert witness for a domestic violence / coercive control assessment is dependent on:
    - the complexity of the case, including but not limited to the frequency and severity of the alleged domestic violence/coercive control,
    - the number of collateral interviews conducted,

    - the extent of corroborating evidence to review, such as:
        - amount of documentation in text messages, parenting apps, emails, court transcripts,
        - audio/ video recordings,
        - other potential corroborating evidence to review,
    - deposition and trial preparation time needed, and
    - deposition and court hearing time needed.
- Cases with a deadline of less than 21 days *may* be subject to an additional "expedited assessment" fee and/or it may be necessary for Melissa Scaia to hire a secondary expert witness to assist in the review extensive corroborating evidence.
    - The fee for the secondary expert is an additional $250.00 per hour. Melissa Scaia has previously hired either Scott Miller or Jennifer Rose as a secondary expert on cases when needed.
- If the scope of work needed is limited, the hourly fee may be adjusted on a case by case basis.

Travel for depositions and/or court hearings and trials:

**** Online depositions and testimony is preferred for out of state civil cases and may be necessary in any civil case because of Melissa Scaia's travel schedule for international work as an expert on domestic violence / coercive control.*

$55 per hour for travel time for civil and criminal cases

- Melissa lives in NE Minnesota

Mileage

- IRS mileage reimbursement rate
- To and from Melissa's home office to the courthouse or other destination such as the airport or a law office

Parking Fees

- Any parking fees incurred in parking ramps, hotel parking and/or airport parking

Per diem

- Meal and incidental expenses per diem rate
- GSA rates used

Hotel/Lodging

- Costs related to a hotel/lodging is requested if the expert is required to be at the courthouse prior to 9 a.m. and the distance of the courthouse from her home office is more than 2.5 hours one way

****** All rates are subject to change. Melissa Scaia reserves the right to make changes to these rates. Melissa Scaia is an independent contractor as an expert witness.***

For comments, inquiries or questions, contact Melissa Scaia at:

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