

# 2020 Scoping, Proofreading & Transcription Business Survey Results



The following information is the result of a business survey with 277 responses. 73 percent of participants are scopists. 22 percent are proofreaders. 5 percent are transcriptionists.

Time active in profession:

1-3 years: 22%

4-10 years: 18%

11-15 years: 23%

15 or more: 37%

This poll is based on averages of where the rates fall for each category. It is not scientific due to the fact that different people use different scales in finding their rates and should only be used as a guide. These results are meant as a tool for people to get an idea what other professionals are charging for the same services. In order for an amount to be listed, 10 or more people must have said that that was their rate out of all who responded. (NOTE: The numbers are less for transcriptionists.)

The lowest and highest rates for all questions have been omitted so that better averages may be found. "Average" in this poll means the majority of people charge that rate. Where there are ranges given, an equal amount of people gave those rates. If only one rate is given, that is the rate that most people charge for that work.

---

The first group of questions applies to scopists, proofreaders and transcriptionist.

**Do you have formal training (court reporting class and/or scoping program)?**

Yes - 87%

No - 13%

**Is scoping/proofreading your primary source of income?**

Yes - 73%

No - 27%

**What is your income goal per month?**

\$500 to \$1,000 - 8%

\$1,000 to \$2,000 - 29%

\$2,000 to \$3,000 - 37%

\$3,000 or more - 26%

**Do you generally meet your income goal?**

Yes - 82%

No - 18%

**Do you receive a 1099 from your clients?**

Yes - 90%

No - 10%

**In which group do you generally fall?**

Full-time (Working at least four days a week for six hours a day or more) - 77%

Part-time (Working less than four days a week or working only a few hours each day) - 23%

**Do you feel like your rates are in line with the industry?**

Yes - 93%

No - 7%

**Do you charge more for highly technical and/or heavy medical files?**

Yes - 30%

No - 70%

Rate Range	Low Rate	Average Rate	Highest Rate
<b>Additional rate charge</b>	\$0.10	\$0.30 - \$0.45	\$0.85

**When do you send out invoices to your clients?**

With each job - 42%

Weekly - 5%

Biweekly - 47%

Once a month - 6%

**When do you expect payment on your invoices?**

Upon receipt of invoice - 34%

Within a week - 13%

Within two weeks - 42%

Within a month - 11%

**Do you charge a late fee if your invoice is not paid by your agreed-upon terms?**

Yes - 21%

No - 79%

**Accepted methods of payment:**

Cash

Check

Credit card

Money order

PayPal or other Internet money transfer

(Most people are now paid via PayPal and Zelle)

The next group of questions pertain only to scopists.  
Please see below for proofreaders.

**Where did you learn about this career?**

Friend, family member, court reporter, court reporting school, Internet search, newspaper/magazine, another scopist.

**Why did you choose to become a scopist?**

Wanted to be self-employed/own boss

Flexibility in schedule

Work from anywhere

Ability to work while traveling

Be home with kids while making good money

Great income

Second job

Love grammar

Enjoy court/legal TV

Could do from home despite disability

Exciting

Variety

Medical transcription too difficult, boring and/or hard to find work  
 Setting own income range  
 Diverse  
 Didn't want to/couldn't become a court reporter  
 Court reporting career too expensive and/or takes too long to complete

**When thinking of how much work you have on average, which applies to you?**

I often have more work than I can handle	I am always looking for more work	Like Goldilocks, it's just right
<b>31%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>57%</b>

**Do you know how to read steno?**

Yes - 84%

No - 16%

**If you are working with an EXCELLENT writer, do you discount your rate?**

Yes - 4%

No - 96%

Of the few respondents who did offer a discount for excellent writers, the discount was between .05 and .10.

**Do you charge an additional rate if the transcript grows?**

Yes - 34%

No - 66%

**If you charge an extra rate for page growth, what is the MINIMUM amount of growth that triggers a rate increase?**

2-5 pages	6-8 pages	Must be over 10 pages
<b>5%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>83%</b>

**How do you generally figure your rate for transcript growth?**

Add a percentage to the ENTIRE file - 67%

Add additional fee ONLY to the extra growth - 33%

Those using a percentage rate charge between 5% - 10% more.

Those charging only for the extra pages charge between .25 - .80. The average rate is .25.

Many scopists said that if it's obvious that the file is going to grow quite a bit, they renegotiate the page rate or will return the file to the reporter.

**Do you charge a higher page rate for files that contain a large amount of raw steno and/or lots of missing text that must be filled in and/or corrected?**

Yes - 76%

No - 24%

Of those who said they charged a higher rate, the range was .10 - .75 per page. Average additional rate is .25 per page.

**Do you charge an additional rate per page for voir dire (jury selection) and/or wall-to-wall colloquy (opening statements, closing statements, motions, hearings, arbs)?**

Yes - 18%

No - 82%

Of those who said they charged a higher rate, the range was .10 - .25 per page. Average additional rate is .25 per page.

**Do you charge more when working on trials versus depositions?**

Yes - 23%

No - 77%

Of those who said they charged a higher rate, the range was .25 - \$1.25 per page.  
Average additional rate is .25 per page.

**Do you charge an additional rate when working on files with interpreters?**

Yes - 5%

No - 95%

Of those who said they charged a higher rate, the range was .10 - .15 per page.  
Average additional rate is .15 per page.

When doing video work...	Unimportant	Neutral	Very important
<b>My client wants nonverbal sounds (uh, um hmm) in the file</b>	67%	12%	21%
<b>My client wants all stuttered false starts (He -- he -- he went to the store.)</b>	67%	20%	13%

**Definitions:**

*Audiosync* - listening to audio word for word within the CAT system throughout the entire job

*Spot-checking* - listening to audio just in questionable areas of the job

Scopists tend to use a few different formulas to reach their rates. The two most common are:

A) Normal turnaround time of five days = normal rate

Two to four days = normal rate + 50%

Less than one day or next day = normal rate + 100%

- B) Normal turnaround time of five days = normal rate
- Turnaround time of four days = normal rate + 50%
- Turnaround time for three days = normal rate + 65% - 70%
- Turnaround time for two days = normal rate + 80%
- Anything under 24 hours or next day = normal rate + 100%

**What is your NORMAL turnaround time?**

Average normal turnaround time is five days for freelance work, 30 to 50 days for trials. A large amount of scopists actually use five to seven days as their normal turnaround time for freelance work.

Poll Question	Low Rate	Average Rate	Highest Rate
What do you charge for work done with no audio, normal turnaround time?	\$1.10	\$1.25	\$1.50
What do you charge for audiosync (full audio) work, normal turnaround time?	\$1.25	\$1.50	\$1.75
What do you charge for videotaped work, normal turnaround time?	\$1.35	\$1.50 - \$1.65	\$1.95

**What is your EXPEDITED turnaround time?**

Expedited turnaround time is anything more than 24 hours and less than three days.

Poll Question	Low Rate	Average Rate	Highest Rate
What do you charge for no audio, expedited turnaround time?	\$1.50	\$1.60	\$1.95
What do you charge for spot-checking a job, expedited turnaround time?	\$1.65	\$1.75	\$2.00



<b>What do you charge for audiosync (full audio) work, expedited turnaround time?</b>	\$1.90	\$2.00	\$2.50
<b>What do you charge for videotaped work, expedited turnaround time?</b>	\$2.00	\$2.25	\$2.50

**What is your DAILY turnaround time?**

Daily turnaround is anything less than 24 hours for most scopists.

Poll Question	Low Rate	Average Rate	Highest Rate
<b>What do you charge for no audio, daily turnaround time?</b>	\$2.00	\$2.50	\$2.75
<b>What do you charge for spot-checking a job, daily turnaround time?</b>	\$2.25	\$2.50	\$2.75
<b>What do you charge for audiosync work, daily turnaround time?</b>	\$2.50	\$2.60 - \$2.75	\$3.00
<b>What do you charge for videotaped work, daily turnaround time?</b>	\$2.50	\$2.60 - \$2.75	\$2.85 - \$3.00

"Immediate Scoping" or "ASAP Daily Copy" means that rather than the scopist receiving the file in one piece and having about 24 hours to send it back, the scopist is receiving the file in small increments as the reporter is working throughout the day and is sending them back to the reporter as soon as they are finished. In other words, the scopist is basically working behind the reporter in a remote scoping type of situation until the job is done. This is a bit more demanding than daily copy and usually means a higher rate.

**What do you charge for immediate copy work using Dropbox/Connection Magic/RealTeam?**

Rates for this service averaged \$2.50 to \$3.50

**Do you offer indexing for your clients?**

Yes - 24%

No - 62%

I'd offer it, but none of my clients want it - 14%

When asked what scopists charge for running the index, the rates varied. Some scopists charged their normal page rate for any other page in the file. Other scopists charged a flat rate for the index or charged an hourly rate to complete it.

Do you send back job dictionaries to your clients?

Yes - 63%

No - 28%

I have no idea how to do that - 9%

What do you consider "rough" copy?

Poll Question	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Define raw steno	0%	3%	4%	9%	84%
Resolve conflicts	0%	0	3%	24%	73%
Read through the entire transcript	88%	10%	0%	1%	1%
Run spell check	0%	4%	1%	18%	77%
Check closely for proper formatting	29%	21%	12%	28%	10%
Fix formatting that jumps out as you look over the file quickly	0%	2%	7%	38%	53%
Fix any errors the reporter has flagged	0%	2%	2%	23%	73%

Poll Question	Low Rate	Average Rate	Highest Rate
---------------	----------	--------------	--------------

What do you charge for rough copy, normal turnaround time?	.25	.35	.60
What do you charge for rough copy, expedited turnaround time?	.30	.50	.65
What do you charge for rough copy, daily turnaround time?	.35	.60	.70
What do you charge for rough copy, immediate turnaround time?	.50	.65	.75

The above rates are for *ONLY* the rough copy. Many scopists said they would only do a rough if they also did the full scoping job.

**After you've scoped a file, do you go back and proofread the file? This does not include just looking at difficult areas, etc. Do you go back and read the entire file?**

I do NOT proofread my own file after I've scoped it: 72%

I DO proofread my own file after I've scoped it: 25%

I proofread my file only if it was difficult to scope: 3%

---

## PROOFREADING

**"Scoofing"** is a term used when a scopist or proofreader proofs a file with audio. While rates for this service vary, about 85% of people polled charge full scoping rates for this service.

**Do you charge a different rate for proofing within the CAT system and making changes within the file versus producing an errata sheet for the reporter?**

Yes - 22%

No - 78%

What is your turnaround time?	Less than 24 hours	Overnight/due in the a.m.	Two days	Three days	Four days	Five days
<b>Regular turnaround time</b>	1%	1%	3%	37%	10%	35%
<b>Expedited/rush turnaround time</b>	2%	16%	28%	34%	20%	0%
<b>Daily copy turnaround time</b>	82%	18%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Proofreading WITHIN the CAT system	Low Rate	Average Rate	Highest Rate
<b>What do you charge for proofreading, normal turnaround time?</b>	\$0.35	\$0.45	\$0.55
<b>What do you charge for proofreading, expedited turnaround time?</b>	\$0.50	\$0.70	\$0.85
<b>What do you charge for proofreading, daily turnaround time?</b>	\$0.70	\$0.95	\$1.25

Of those charging a different rate for providing an errata sheet (not working within the CAT system) using Word, PDF file, etc.) the average additional rate was .15 - .40 more per page.

**Do you charge different rates depending on what scopist you proof behind (regardless of who the reporter is)?**

Yes - 1%

No - 17%

I never know who the scopist is - 82%

---

## TRANSCRIPTION

Transcription rates vary quite a bit amongst the poll participants. Some people charged by the page and some by the audio minute or hour worked.

Flat page rate: \$2.00 - \$5.00

Rate per hour: \$2.90 - \$5.50

Rate per audio minute: \$2.00 - \$2.25

*Thanks to everyone who took the time to respond to the poll so that we have current data to share!*

***\*\*\*NOTE: Rates given will vary depending on many factors. The experience of the scopist and the quality and quantity of work received will all influence the rates charged for a particular service. This poll is to be used to give you a general sense of what others in the industry are charging and is in no way meant to tell you what to charge. You must decide for yourself and your business what rates will work for your unique situation.***

This poll brought to you by: **Scoping training at its BeST!**



Website by Best Scoping Techniques. All rights reserved.

---