



A GUIDE TO THE NEW JUDICIAL FEE STRUCTURE

An Overview to
Regulation No.
1/2024

For decades, Ethiopia's judicial system operated under a fee schedule established in 1952. While a testament to its long-standing legal framework, this outdated system was no longer sufficient to meet the needs of a modern, fast-growing economy. In a significant step toward judicial reform, the Council of Ministers approved Federal Courts Fee Regulation No. 1/2024, which came into effect to completely reform the fee structure of all federal courts.

This new regulation aims to achieve three primary goals: **to ensure a fair and consistent fee system, to help cover the rising administrative costs of the court system, and to ultimately support a more efficient and sustainable judicial service.** This article provides a comprehensive overview of the new fee structures, their implications, and how they affect your pursuit of justice.

The Core Fee Structure: A Practical Breakdown

The new regulation has fundamentally changed how court fees are calculated.

1. For Claims Involving Money (Article 7)

For civil lawsuits where a specific amount of money is being claimed, the fee is now calculated as a percentage of the claim amount. This percentage is not fixed; it decreases as the claim amount increases; a system designed to be more proportional to the value of the dispute. This is specified in a detailed schedule within the regulation.

- **For example:** A claim of 10,000 Birr would incur a court fee of 10%, which is 1,000 Birr. However, a much larger claim of 10 million Birr would fall into a different bracket with a much lower percentage, ensuring the fee doesn't become prohibitively large.

2. For Claims That Do Not Involve Money (Article 8)

Not all cases are about money. For cases that cannot be valued in monetary terms (such as *divorce, land disputes, or child custody matters*), the regulation sets a fixed fee based on the court level.

- **Federal First Instance Court:** The fixed fee is 1,000 Birr.
- **Federal High Court:** The fixed fee is 1,500 Birr.
- **Federal Supreme Court:** The fixed fee is 2,000 Birr.

Appeals and Other Judicial Services

The regulation also sets clear fees for appeals and a wide range of administrative services, a detail that was not clearly defined in the old system.

- **Appeals :** The fee for filing an appeal is generally 50% of the original court fee paid at the lower court. This rule applies to appeals from one court level to another, such as from the Federal First Instance Court to the Federal High Court.
- **Other Services (Article 10):** The regulation introduces specific fees for common court services that were previously managed inconsistently. For example, getting a copy of a court document now costs 5 Birr per page, and summoning a witness has a fee of 50 Birr per witness.

The Debate: Access to Justice

The new fee regulation, particularly the increased costs for larger monetary claims, has sparked a public debate. The primary concern is whether it could limit access to justice, especially for ordinary citizens with significant claims.

However, the regulation attempts to balance this by ensuring that certain individuals and case types remain exempt from paying any fees.

Know Your Exemptions

Under **Article 21**, the regulation explicitly exempts several categories from paying court fees to ensure that the cost of justice does not become a barrier. These include:

- Alimony and child custody cases.
- Pauper suits for individuals who are legally recognized as unable to pay.
- Criminal cases.
- Public interest and human rights suits filed by civil society organizations.
- Judicial reviews by employees.
- Cases related to environmental protection

A Practical Guide for the Citizen

Understanding this new system is the first step toward navigating it successfully. Here is a simple guide to help you calculate your court fee and know your rights.

How to Calculate Your Court Fee

Determine your claim: Identify if your case is monetary (seeking a specific amount of money) or non-monetary.

- **If monetary:** Find your claim amount in the fee schedule. The fee is calculated as a percentage. For example, if you're claiming 15,000 Birr, you will pay 10%, which is 1,500 Birr.

- **If non-monetary:** The fee is fixed based on the court level. For instance, to file a divorce case at the Federal High Court, the fee is a fixed 1,500 Birr.

Court Fee Rate Schedule

Claim Amount (in Birr)	Fee Percentage	Claim Amount (in Birr)	Fee Percentage
0 – 20,000	10%	8,000,001 – 9,000,000	3.40%
20,001 – 40,000	9%	9,000,001 – 10,000,000	3.30%
40,001 – 60,000	8%	10,000,001 – 20,000,000	2.90%
60,001 – 80,000	7%	20,000,001 – 30,000,000	2.80%
80,001 – 100,000	6%	30,000,001 – 40,000,000	2.70%
100,001 – 200,000	5%	40,000,001 – 50,000,000	2.60%
200,001 – 300,000	4.90%	50,000,001 – 60,000,000	2.50%
300,001 – 400,000	4.80%	60,000,001 – 70,000,000	2.40%
400,001 – 500,000	4.70%	70,000,001 – 80,000,000	2.30%
500,001 – 600,000	4.60%	80,000,001 – 90,000,000	2.20%
600,001 – 700,000	4.50%	90,000,001 – 100,000,000	2.10%
700,001 – 800,000	4.40%	100,000,001 – 200,000,000	1.90%
800,001 – 900,000	4.30%	200,000,001 – 300,000,000	1.80%
900,001 – 1,000,000	4.20%	300,000,001 – 400,000,000	1.70%
1,000,001 – 2,000,000	4.10%	400,000,001 – 500,000,000	1.60%
2,000,001 – 3,000,000	4.00%	500,000,001 – 600,000,000	1.50%
3,000,001 – 4,000,000	3.90%	600,000,001 – 700,000,000	1.40%
4,000,001 – 5,000,000	3.80%	700,000,001 – 800,000,000	1.30%
5,000,001 – 6,000,000	3.70%	800,000,001 – 900,000,000	1.20%
6,000,001 – 7,000,000	3.60%	900,000,001 – 1,000,000,000	1.10%
7,000,001 – 8,000,000	3.50%	Over 1,000,000,000	1.00%