

Howen & Ruhnke PLLC's Terms and Conditions

This is an executive summary. Please actually read the terms and conditions in full. This gives a top-level “overview” of what the agreement is.

1. Billing and Payment Terms
 - a. You really should read the section for this.
2. Return Copies
 - a. We will provide a copy of the return to you when we deliver the work to you. Subsequent requests for returns will incur a fee.
3. Phone Calls, Emails, Video Calls, Text Messages, and In-Person Visits
 - a. Brief interactions are not charged. Longer, planned interactions will typically be charged for.
4. Changes in Scope after Initial Quote, Retainer Bill, or Estimate
 - a. If it's more work than we quoted, we are changing the price.
5. Termination and Withdrawal
 - a. We can separate services, but you will most likely owe us for work we have done.
6. Proprietary Information
 - a. Everything we make belongs to us, even if we give it to you as part of the work.
7. Conflicts of Interest
 - a. If we don't think we can do your work for conflict reasons, we will tell you.
8. Third-Party Service Providers
 - a. We have to share your information with our software providers to do your work.
9. Record Retention and Ownership
 - a. You need to hold onto your receipts and documents for audits; we are not your file service.
 - b. Workpapers that we create as part of the work belong to us.
 - c. It's your responsibility to provide your information on time, with enough time for us to prepare a return. We will make attempts to gather it from you.
10. Working Paper Access Requests by Regulators and Others
 - a. If someone compels us to give up papers and returns, we are obligated to.
11. Summons and Subpoenas
 - a. If the court compels us to give up papers and returns, we are obligated to.
12. Confidentiality
 - a. We don't share your information without your permission except for our software, court, or regulators as required.
13. Limitations on Oral and Email Communications
 - a. We occasionally give verbal or email advice, which we customarily stand behind. For us to stand behind the advice and you to “hang your hat on it”, it needs to be a paid research engagement.
14. Disclaimer of Legal and Investment Advice
 - a. We are not attorneys or financial advisors.

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15. Electronic Data Communication and Storage
 - a. We provide your information via a secure transmission service. We do our best to secure our emails and have no control over your emails once you receive them. The security of your emails is your responsibility.
16. Mediation
 - a. If we get really cross with each other, we will go through mediation.
17. Limitation of Liability and Limitation of Damages
 - a. We can only be liable to you for up to the fees you pay us for the service.
 - b. We are not responsible for indirect or liquidated damages.
18. Indemnification of Howen & Ruhnke PLLC
 - a. If you conceal information from us and someone sues us, you are obligated to protect us. You agree to protect us from outside party claims against us for work we do for you.
19. Designation of Venue and Jurisdiction
 - a. Texas!
20. Timing for Disputes
 - a. You have 1 year from the service completion date to have a dispute with us.
21. Independent Contractor
 - a. We work for ourselves, not as your employees.
22. Severability
 - a. If anything is struck out of our agreement by the court, the rest survives.
23. Survivability
 - a. After we complete the work, the limitation of liability, limitation of damages, indemnification, and timing for disputes survive.
24. Assignment
 - a. You cannot assign our agreement to someone else.
25. Force Majeure
 - a. Acts of god, disasters, war, etc., can delay your work, and we aren't responsible for the delay. Our bills will still be due if a disaster occurs.
26. Electronic Signatures and Counterparts
 - a. Electronic signatures are valid.
27. Entire Agreement
 - a. Our collective agreement or engagement with you will be comprised of a combination of these items. In all situations, the terms-and-conditions letter is considered part of the agreement.
 - i. Written engagement letter
 - ii. Quote
 - iii. Invoice describing services to be performed
 - iv. Terms and Conditions Letter

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This terms and conditions letter lists our standard terms and conditions for all engagements we prepare ("Terms and Conditions") related to our provision of services to you, either in conjunction with an engagement letter or not. This letter, and the accompanying engagement letter (if any), comprise your agreement with us ("Agreement"). If there is any inconsistency between the engagement letter and these *Terms and Conditions Letter*, the engagement letter will prevail.

For the purposes of this *Terms and Conditions Letter*, any reference to "firm," "we," "us," or "our" is a reference to Howen & Ruhnke PLLC, and any reference to "you," "client", or "your" is a reference to the party or parties that have engaged us to provide services.

Billing and Payment Terms

We will bill for our services differently based on the engagement type and situation.

1. Retainer bill for services in full before performing work.
 - a. The retainer is intended to cover the services agreed upon. Retainers are typically not refunded, as the expectation is to perform the services. If a refund is necessary, work performed will be deducted from the retainer.
2. Invoice for work completed but not released.
 - a. The work, deliverables, or returns will not be released until the invoice is paid and settled. This is our most common billing method after an initial deposit.
3. Retainer bill for hourly services based on an estimate before performing work
 - a. The work will not be performed until the invoice is paid. If the estimated invoice doesn't cover the work, an additional retainer bill will be generated. If the estimated time was higher than the time actually spent, the excess will be refunded, held on the account, or applied to other work, as agreed with the client.
4. Down payment, deposit, or initial billing on a tax return to cover an initial request list and/or extension.
 - a. These invoices will not be refunded if services are separated, as the down payment, deposit, or initial billing is to cover the services related to preparing a request list and filing an extension.
5. Other invoicing arrangements as mutually agreed with the client and firm.
6. We will not file your return without an invoice being settled unless otherwise agreed.

We will bill you for our professional fees and out-of-pocket costs. Payment is due on receipt. If payment is not received within 30 days of the invoice, you will be assessed interest charges of 18% per month on the unpaid balance. You have ten (10) days from the invoice date to review the invoice and to communicate to us, in writing, any disagreement with the charges, after which you waive the right to contest the invoice.

All outstanding invoices must be paid prior to the release of the work-product(s) specified in the Agreement.

We reserve the right to suspend or terminate our work for non-payment of fees. In the event that work is discontinued, either temporarily or permanently, as a result of delinquent or non-payment, we shall not be liable for any loss you may incur as a result of the work stoppage, including

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penalties, interest, fines or fees assessed against you. In such cases, you assume all risk associated with your failure to meet any governmental or other deadlines.

We accept a variety of payment methods. We accept cash, check, e-check, credit card, PayPal, Venmo, Zelle, wire, ACH, and Bullion (where agreed). Payment needs to be cleared and settled before work is released, regardless of the method.

Price adjustments year over year to adjust for inflation are typical, even when the scope of the work doesn't change. We reserve the right to update pricing on any piece of work on a year-over-year basis to adjust for inflation or price the work appropriately for its size.

Return Copies

We provide copies of the returns when the work is completed and released to you. Typically, these are provided via an electronic download link, but may also be provided via hard copy to you. The initial copy that we provide, if provided by a download link, is available for 30 days. After we deliver the return, subsequent requests for return copies will be provided, but there will be a charge. We reserve the right to release the return after the return copy charge is paid.

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|--|-------------|
| 1. One return copy requested | \$35/return |
| 2. Two return copies requested | \$30/return |
| 3. Three or more return copies requested | \$25/return |
| 4. As dictated by the situation | Varies |

Phone Calls, Emails, Video Calls, Text Messages, and In-Person Visits

Typically, we do not charge for phone calls, e-mails, text messages, or brief in-person meetings to drop off documents and information. We exercise this discretion not to charge for our time as a courtesy to the client in recognition of the entire relationship.

Situations that would incur an hourly charge would typically involve planned phone calls, long email write-ups, video calls, or meetings to discuss particular topics in person.

We reserve the right to charge for our time as appropriate and will communicate when charging is necessary for a given interaction.

Changes in Scope after Initial Quote, Retainer Bill, or Estimate

We will prepare written quotes, actual engagement letters, or retainer invoices based on the scope of the project, as agreed with the firm and client at that time. If the scope of work changes from the original situation, then the pricing is subject to change. Changes in scope will be communicated by the firm to the client or the client to the firm as they are discovered. Updated pricing will be provided and will supersede previous arrangements.

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Responding to taxing authority notices is not included in the price of preparing a return. Assistance with a taxing authority audit is not included in the price of preparing a return.

Termination and Withdrawal

Either party may terminate this Agreement at any time and for any reason.

If this Agreement is terminated before services are completed, you agree to pay all fees and expenses we incur through the effective date of termination. Partial work will be billed for.

Proprietary Information

You acknowledge that proprietary information, documents, materials, management techniques and other intellectual property are a material source of the services we perform and were developed prior to our association with you. Any new forms, software, documents or intellectual property we develop during this engagement for your use shall belong to us, and you shall have the limited right to use them solely within your business. All reports, templates, manuals, forms, checklists, questionnaires, letters, agreements and other documents which we make available to you are confidential and proprietary to us. Neither you, nor any of your agents, will copy, electronically store, reproduce or make available to anyone other than your personnel, any such documents. This provision will apply to all materials whether in digital, "hard copy" format or other medium.

Conflicts of Interest

If we, in our sole discretion, believe a conflict of interest has arisen affecting our ability to deliver services to you in accordance with either the ethical standards of our firm or the ethical standards of our profession, we may be required to terminate our services without issuing our work product.

Third-Party Service Providers

We may use third-party service providers, or software tools, (collectively, "external party" or "external parties"), to assist us where necessary to help provide professional services to you or support the needs of our firm. You consent to our use of external parties. Our firm remains responsible for exercising reasonable care in providing our services, and our services and work product will be subjected to our firm's customary quality procedures.

We may provide your confidential information to external parties in support of our services. You consent to the disclosure of your confidential information to those external parties. We take reasonably prudent business care consistent with our professional standards to prevent the unauthorized release of your confidential information.

In certain circumstances, we may require a separate, written consent from you before your information is transmitted to an external party or parties.

Records Management

Record Retention and Ownership

We will return any original records and documents you provide to us. Our copies of your records and documents are solely for our documentation purposes and are not a substitute for your own

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record-keeping obligations under any applicable laws or regulations. You are responsible for maintaining complete and accurate books and records, which may include financial statements, schedules, tax returns and other deliverables provided to you by us. If we provide deliverables or other records to you via an information portal, you must download this information within 30 days. Professional standards may preclude us from being the sole repository of your original data, records, or information.

Workpapers and other items created by us to support the delivery of our services are our property and will remain in our control. We will consider requests for copies of workpapers and other items created by us in accordance with the AICPA Code of Professional Conduct. Our workpapers will be maintained by us in accordance with our firm's record retention policy and any applicable legal and regulatory requirements. Catastrophic events or physical deterioration may result in damage to or destruction of our firm's records, causing the records to be unavailable before the expiration of the retention period, as stated in our record retention policy.

Requests for Information

We will make initial requests and follow-up requests for your work. Acknowledging our information requests is critical in the ongoing communication and preparation of your work. Our initial requests and follow-up requests are out of courtesy. Tendering and providing documents in a timely manner is the client's responsibility. Providing a complete set of documents and information for your return is your responsibility. Providing the documents and information with enough time for us to prepare your work is your responsibility. The timing for providing information for your work will be communicated to you. Information that is omitted either accidentally or intentionally will have consequences that the firm is not responsible for.

The firm, at its discretion, can charge for revision time if new information is provided after the work is substantially completed or finalized.

Working Paper Access Requests by Regulators and Others

State, federal and foreign regulators may request access to or copies of certain workpapers pursuant to applicable legal or regulatory requirements. Requests also may arise with respect to peer review, an ethics investigation, the sale of your organization, or the sale of our accounting practice. If requested, access to such workpapers will only be provided under the supervision of firm personnel. Regulators may request copies of selected workpapers to distribute the copies or information contained therein to others, including other governmental agencies.

If we receive a state, federal or foreign regulatory request, we agree to inform you of it as soon as practicable unless we are prohibited from doing so by applicable laws or regulations. You may, within the time permitted for our firm to respond to any request, initiate such legal action as you deem appropriate, at your sole expense, to attempt to limit the disclosure of information. If you take no action within the time permitted for us to respond, or if your action does not result in a judicial order protecting us from supplying requested information, we may construe your inaction or failure as consent to comply with the request.

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If we are not a party to the proceeding in which the information is sought, you agree to reimburse us for our professional time and expenses, as well as the fees and expenses of our legal counsel, incurred in responding to such requests.

Summons or Subpoenas

All information you provide to us in connection with this engagement will be maintained by us on a confidential basis.

If we receive a summons or subpoena which our legal counsel determines requires us to produce documents from this engagement or testify about this engagement, provided that we are not prohibited from doing so by applicable laws or regulations, we agree to inform you of such summons or subpoena as soon as practicable. You may, within the time permitted for our firm to respond to any request, initiate such legal action as you deem appropriate, at your sole expense, to attempt to limit discovery. If you take no action within the time permitted for us to respond, or if your action does not result in a judicial order protecting us from supplying requested information, we may construe your inaction or failure as consent to comply with the request.

If we are not a party to the proceeding in which the information is sought, you agree to reimburse us for our professional time and expenses, as well as the fees and expenses of our legal counsel, incurred in responding to such requests.

Confidentiality

In providing services to you, we may require information that is considered confidential and may include Personally Identifiable Information (PII), i.e. information that can be used to distinguish or trace an individual's identity such as address, bank account and social security information. We will maintain all client information, including PII, on a confidential basis and have a duty to do so based on the standards promulgated by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants as well as applicable laws and regulations. You assume the risk of loss if you provide us with information, including PII, which differs from the information we request in order to provide services to you in accordance with the Agreement.

Referrals

In the course of providing services to you, you may request referrals to products or professionals such as attorneys, brokers, or investment advisors. As a courtesy, we may identify professional(s) or product(s) for your consideration. However, you are responsible for evaluating, selecting, and retaining any professional or product and determining if the professional or product meets your needs. You agree that we will not oversee the activities of and have no responsibility for the work product of any professional or the suitability of any product we refer to you or that you separately retain.

Limitations on Oral and Email Communications

We may discuss with you our views regarding the treatment of certain items or decisions you may encounter. We may also provide you with information in an email. Any advice or information delivered orally or in an email (rather than, for example, through a memorandum delivered as an

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email attachment that is a deliverable of a separate engagement) will be based upon limited research and a limited discussion and analysis of the underlying facts. Additional research or a more complete review of the facts may affect our analysis and conclusions.

Due to these limitations and the related risks, it may not be appropriate to proceed with a decision solely on the basis of any oral or email communication from us. You accept all responsibility for any liability, including but not limited to additional tax, penalties or interest resulting from your decision (i) not to have us perform the research and analysis necessary to reach a more definitive conclusion and (ii) to instead rely on an oral or email communication. The limitation in this paragraph will not apply to an item of written advice that is a deliverable of a separate engagement. If you wish to engage us to provide formal advice on a matter on which we have communicated orally or by email, we will confirm this service in a separate agreement.

Disclaimer of Legal and Investment Advice

Our services under this Agreement do not constitute investment advice unless specifically engaged in the *Engagement Objective and Scope* section of this Agreement. Our services under this Agreement do not constitute legal advice.

Electronic Data Communication and Storage

In the interest of facilitating our services to you, we may send data over the Internet, temporarily store electronic data via computer software applications hosted remotely on the Internet, or utilize cloud-based storage. In using these data communication and storage methods, our firm employs measures designed to maintain data security. We use reasonable efforts to keep such communications and electronic data secure in accordance with our obligations under applicable laws, regulations, and professional standards.

You recognize and accept that we have no control over the unauthorized interception or breach of any communications or electronic data once it has been transmitted or if it has been subject to unauthorized access while stored, notwithstanding all reasonable security measures employed by us. You consent to our use of these electronic devices and applications during this engagement.

Mediation

If a dispute arises out of or relates to this Agreement, including the scope of services contained herein, or the breach thereof, and it cannot be settled through negotiation, the parties agree first to try to settle the dispute by mediation administered by the American Arbitration Association ("AAA") under the *AAA Accounting and Related Services Arbitration Rules and Mediation Procedures* before resorting to arbitration, litigation, or any other dispute resolution procedure. The mediator will be selected by mutual agreement of the parties. If the parties cannot agree on a mediator, a mediator shall be designated by the AAA. The mediation will be conducted in Texas.

The mediation will be treated as a settlement discussion and, therefore, all discussions during the mediation will be confidential. The mediator may not testify for either party in any later proceeding related to the dispute. No recording or transcript shall be made of the mediation proceedings. The

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costs of any mediation proceedings shall be shared equally by all parties. Any costs of legal representation shall be borne by the hiring party.

This provision shall not apply to any dispute of fees owed, billed or due.

Limitation of Liability

OUR FIRM AND OUR FIRM'S OWNERS, OFFICERS, DIRECTORS, EMPLOYEES, AGENTS OR ASSIGNS (COLLECTIVELY "STAKEHOLDERS") LIABILITY FOR ALL CLAIMS, DAMAGES, AND COSTS ARISING FROM NEGLIGENT ACTS, ERRORS, OR OMISSIONS COMMITTED BY US IN THE PERFORMANCE OF THIS ENGAGEMENT IS LIMITED TO THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF FEES PAID BY YOU TO US FOR THE SERVICE GIVING RISE TO THIS LIABILITY.

Limitation of Damages

NOTWITHSTANDING ANYTHING TO THE CONTRARY IN THIS AGREEMENT, WE AND STAKEHOLDERS SHALL NOT BE LIABLE FOR ANY LOST PROFITS, INDIRECT, SPECIAL, INCIDENTAL, PUNITIVE, CONSEQUENTIAL, OR SIMILAR DAMAGES, TO THE EXTENT SUCH DAMAGES MAY BE LAWFULLY LIMITED OR EXCLUDED, OF ANY NATURE EVEN IF WE HAVE BEEN ADVISED BY YOU OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGES.

Indemnification of Howen & Ruhnke PLLC

The following is applicable to audit and attest engagements only:

You agree to hold us harmless from any and all claims which arise from knowing misrepresentations to us, or the intentional withholding or concealment of information from us by your management. You also agree to indemnify us for any claims made against us by third parties, which arise from any of these actions by your management. The provisions of this paragraph shall apply regardless of the nature of the claim.

The following applies to non-attest engagements only:

You agree to indemnify, defend, and hold harmless our firm and Stakeholders with respect to any and all claims made by third parties arising from this engagement, regardless of the nature of the claim, and including the negligence of any party, excepting claims found to have arisen from the gross negligence or intentional acts of our firm.

Designation of Venue and Jurisdiction

In the event of a dispute, the courts of the state of Texas shall have exclusive jurisdiction, and all disputes will be submitted to the Texas Business Court. We also agree that the law of the state of Texas, except for laws governing the choice of law, shall govern all such disputes.

Timing for Disputes

You agree that any claim arising out of this Agreement shall be commenced within 1 year from the date our services conclude as outlined in the *Timing of the Engagement* section of the

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Agreement, regardless of any longer period of time for commencing such claim as may be set by law. A claim is understood to be a demand for money or services, the service of a suit, or the institution of arbitration proceedings against us.

Independent Contractor

When providing services to your company, we will function as an independent contractor and in no event will we or any of our employees be an officer of you, nor will our relationship be that of joint venturers, partners, employer and employee, principal and agent, or any similar relationship giving rise to a fiduciary duty to you.

Our obligations under this Agreement are solely obligations of our firm, and no Stakeholder shall be subjected to any personal liability whatsoever to you or any person or entity.

Severability

If any portion of this Agreement is deemed invalid or unenforceable, said finding shall not operate to invalidate the remainder of the terms set forth in this Agreement.

Survivability

The following sections of this Terms and Conditions Letter shall survive termination of the Agreement: Limitation of Liability, Limitation of Damages, Indemnification, and Timing for Disputes.

Assignment, No Third Party Beneficiaries

All parties acknowledge and agree that the obligations and responsibilities of this Agreement cannot be assigned to any third party except as agreed to in writing. This Agreement has been entered into solely between you and us, and no third-party beneficiaries are created hereby.

Force Majeure

Neither party shall be held liable for any delays resulting from circumstances or causes beyond our reasonable control, including, without limitation, fire or other casualty, act of God, strike or labor dispute, war or other violence, epidemics or pandemics as defined by The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, or any law, order or requirement of any governmental agency or authority. However, no Force Majeure event shall excuse you of any obligation to pay any outstanding invoice or fee or from any indemnification obligation under this Agreement.

Electronic Signatures and Counterparts

Each party hereto agrees that any electronic signature intended to replicate a written signature shall be presumed valid, and we may reasonably rely upon it. For purposes hereof, "electronic signature" includes, but is not limited to, a scanned copy of a manual signature, an electronic copy of a manual signature affixed to a document, a signature incorporated into a document utilizing touchscreen capabilities, or a digital signature. Documents may be executed in one or more counterparts, each of which shall be considered an original instrument, but all of which shall be considered one and the same agreement.

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Entire Agreement

This Terms and Conditions Letter, including a written engagement letter (if any), written quotes or invoices stipulating services to be provided, represents the entire agreement of the parties and supersedes all previous oral, written, or other understandings and agreements between the parties. Any modification to the terms of this Agreement must be made in writing.

Essentially, our collective agreement can and will be comprised of a combination of these items. In all situations, the terms and conditions letter is considered part of the agreement.

1. Written engagement letter
2. Quote
3. Invoice describing services to be performed
4. Terms and conditions letter