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Legal Update



Summer 2009

In This Issue

This issue of *Legal Update* discusses some of the most important things to do after a car accident. It also answers often asked questions on personal injury matters, and it tells about a new government program making it easier to find out about auto recalls.

If you have a question about any article, please call us.

Alan L. Derzon
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Important Steps To Take After An Auto Accident

According to the government, each year about 1 in 9 people is in a car accident. Most accidents are minor, but some are serious and result in long term injuries and large monetary losses for the victim. After making sure injuries are attended to, here are some key steps to take if you're in an auto accident. They can reduce the hassles and help you obtain the maximum compensation for your injuries and losses.

• Exchange information with the other driver. You should exchange the following information: name,

address, phone number, driver's license number, insurance company and policy number (if the other driver isn't the car's owner, get as much of this information as you can for the registered owner).

- Other car. Write down the other car's make, model, year, license number and vehicle id number.
- Witnesses. Get the name, address and phone number of all witnesses.
- Make notes and a diagram of what happened. Include the road and weather conditions as well as where and when the accident happened.

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About Our Firm

We handle all types of personal injury cases, including:

- Auto Accidents
- Slip and Falls
- Product Injuries
- Medical Malpractice
- Dog Bites
- Work Injuries

Free Consultation

(414) 276-2100
or
1-800-249-4LAW

Answers To Frequently Asked Personal Injury Questions

Many people who have been in an auto or other kind of accident call us with questions. Here are answers to some often asked ones.

Q. I was hurt in an accident and want to make a claim, but I'm concerned about legal fees. How will I be charged?

A. Most personal injury claims are handled on a contingent fee basis. This means there's no fee unless there is a recovery (there may, however, be court and other costs).

The fee is a portion of the recovery.

Q. If I make a claim, how long will my case take?

A. The answer depends on several factors, including your injuries and the other side's willingness to resolve the matter. Many claims are resolved fast, while others — often be-

For most personal injury claims, there's no legal fee unless there is a recovery.

cause the person's damages are not known for a while — take longer. Every effort will be made to resolve your claim quickly, with the goal being to get you the maximum compensation.

Woman Injured On Unsafe Apartment Stairwell Recovers Damages

Owners of apartment buildings are required to keep their premises safe for tenants. A recent case is a reminder that accident victims can make a claim to recover compensation for their injuries.

Alicia V. slipped and fell walking down stairs at her apartment building. She suffered serious injuries, including broken bones. She made a claim against the building's owner, saying it failed to properly maintain the stairwell even though it knew the stairs were often slippery and dangerous. The parties settled out of court, with Alicia receiving a large amount of compensation.

Steps To Take After An Auto Accident, *continued*

- Don't take blame, at the scene or after, even if you think you caused the accident. Emotions affect you at an accident, and things you didn't know or see may prove the other driver caused the accident or was partly to blame. Never admit fault, at least not before consulting your lawyer. Remember that anything you say can be used against you later.
- Pictures. Take photos of the accident scene and cars. It's also good to photograph your injuries. These can help convey your pain.
- See a doctor, even if your injuries are minor. Many serious injuries take time to develop.
- Notify your insurance company,

but consult your lawyer before giving a statement to your insurer or filling out their documents.

- Don't sign a "release" or accept a settlement before consulting your lawyer. Once you accept a settlement, you usually can't recover more money.
- Legal help. Your lawyer will advise you about notifying other parties, your rights and how much money you may receive. Seek legal help promptly, as the time right after the accident can be vital to your claim.

Following these steps will help create a good record of what happened and help you receive the maximum compensation.

Government Makes Available Free Auto Recall Email Alerts

Car owners can now be instantly informed of auto recalls under a new government program. The recall alerts can be sent via email and are free. Before this program, the only auto-related email alerts the government offered free were for child car seats and tires.

Each year, about 600 vehicles are the subject of recalls. Many of these recalls are for safety defects that can put you and your family at serious risk.

To sign up for the free recall alerts, go to www.safercar.gov and select the "email recall notification system." You can choose to receive all vehicle recalls or just those for certain vehicles.

If An Injury Occurs

No one expects to be in an accident. But if you are in one, call us to find out about your rights. We will fight to obtain the maximum compensation for you.

Please also give our name to a friend or family member if they are in an accident.

Thank you for letting us serve your legal needs.

This newsletter is published for this firm's clients and friends. It has general information. Due to changes in the law, exceptions to general rules of law, and variations of state laws, seek professional legal advice before acting on any matter. ©2009 ANSI

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