

General Instructions For Injury Clients

Important Instructions for Injury Clients

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Things You Should NOT Do:

- Do not give written, recorded, or oral statements to anyone regarding your accident and/or injuries without first speaking to your attorney.
- Do not give any doctor, who is treating you or examining you, any false information about previous injuries or accidents. Tell the doctor that you do not remember.

Things You Should REMEMBER:

- Notify us if you change your address, telephone number, or place of employment.
- Obtain photos of your vehicle if it was damaged before you get it repaired. Make sure you use color film and take an entire roll of photos. Our office will have the photos developed for you. If you do not have a camera, we will make arrangements to have the pictures of your vehicle taken for you.
- Save all medical items, such as pill bottles, casts, braces, and all other items from your doctors.

- We need all photos and videos of the accident or the scene of the accident. These includes photos and videos you have taken and those taken by someone else for you.
- Notify us of any changes in your job, such as job duties, salary, or any other work-related issues.
- Obtain and save all receipts itemizing all expenses you have incurred as a result of your accident. These receipts must be dated and legible. Receipts must include complete vendor identification.
- Inform us of any new information that you think relates to your case, such as extensive medical treatment or hospitalization.

MISTAKES Clients Make:

- Not seeing your doctor if you are in pain
- Not following your doctor's orders
- Missing doctor's appointments
- Talking to about your case to someone other than your attorney or doctors
- Not telling your doctor about all of your medical problems that have resulted from the accident

You Need to Follow Your Doctor's Advice

Always follow your doctor's orders. Go to all of your doctor's appointments. There is never a reason or excuse to miss one. If you do miss an appointment, you are telling your doctor and the insurance company that you are not injured enough for it to matter. This can hurt your claim. It is imperative for your doctor to be updated regarding your condition and know how you are feeling. When you go to the doctor and report to him that you are in pain, he records an entry in your records. Do not get discouraged and not see your doctor if you are in pain.

It is our job to recover compensation for your pain and suffering. If you are not going to the doctor, you are saying that you are not in pain. By not going to the doctor when you are in pain, it makes it difficult to prove to an insurance company and a jury that you are having pain. It is very important for you to go to all of your appointments and work hard to get well.

Steps We Take First in Representing You

General information about your case is discussed when you are first interviewed. You will be given materials relating to things you should or should not do. In order for us to obtain your medical records and other necessary information, you will be asked to sign authorization forms.

The person who was responsible for your injury and/or their insurance company will be notified by us that you have retained us as your attorney. We will send requests for your medical records and billing information to all of the doctors and hospitals who have provided you with care.

Who Should You Talk to

Only discuss your case with us and your doctors. Do not discuss your case with anyone else. If your own insurance company wants to discuss your case before your medical bills are paid, refer them to us.

What Should You Sign

All necessary information regarding your case will be obtained by us. Do not sign anything for anyone else until you talk with us first.

Medical Payments before Your Case is Settled

We try to arrange to have your medical bills paid by your own insurance company while your case is pending. This could be from the medical payments provision of your automobile insurance policy, your health insurance policy, or, if applicable, worker's compensation insurance. You should mail or bring all medical bills related to your injury to our office. We will forward them to the appropriate insurance company.

Keep Detailed Records

Please record the following information:

- Lost work time and wages
- Other expenses resulting from your injuries, such as transportation and home care
- Pain and suffering in a daily diary
- Your physical limitations caused to you by the injury

Making your entries on a daily basis is highly important. A monthly summary will not be as helpful to us. Copies of checks and receipts of payment, as well as the records listed above, will be extremely helpful when the insurance company or an attorney wants you to recall your

pain, physical disabilities, and any out-of-pocket expenses. This includes medications.

Medical Liens

In some cases, our clients are involved in accidents where there is no medical payments insurance, worker's compensation, or private health insurance. If this applies to you, your doctor will expect you to pay him at the end of your case. Alabama allows a hospital to file a lien that must be paid out of the proceeds from your case. Contact our office if your doctor asks you to sign a "lien letter." It may not be appropriate for you to sign an agreement like this in some cases.

Subrogation

Alabama law provides subrogation to an insurance company if the insurance company pays a portion of your medical bills or other expenses resulting from your injury. The insurance company can recover some or all of the amount paid to you by the liable party. In these cases, the insurance company is usually required to pay a proportionate share of the attorney's fee and costs of the case. We handle this on a case-by-case basis.

You May be Photographed and Watched

Insurance companies conduct a detailed investigation of the injured person's background when a claim is filed. It is not unheard of for an investigator to park his surveillance van near your home and videotape your activities. It is the investigator's job to obtain footage of the injured person lifting heavy items or engaging in strenuous physical activity. In many cases, these same videotapes have been useful in showing our client's limitations, such as the use of a cane or crutches. If you feel like you are being watched, please contact our office. Try to avoid the camera, and do not exaggerate your limitations in front of the camera.

Bankruptcy

If you are considering filing bankruptcy, talk to your attorney before filing. You can lose all rights to your person injury case if you file bankruptcy. The Bankruptcy Court can take over and settle your case. Your creditors will receive your settlement money, and you will get nothing.

Why do Cases Take so Long?

Your doctors will provide us reports stating your exact medical condition and what is expected of your condition in the future before we can make you a reasonable claim. You need to reach "maximum medical improvements." Doctors can be very slow in making these reports. In some cases, we may ask you to contact your doctor to speed up this report. You may lose money you are entitled to if we try to settle your case before your medical condition is stabilized. Your case will not be settled until the damages have been determined and all investigations to determine who is responsible have been completed. Gathering the necessary information can take several months. If a trial is necessary, a case can take several years to complete. We will work as hard and as fast as possible to settle your case as quickly as possible, but we do have to ask you to be patient.