

## 4 Actions to Take First After a Personal Injury Accident

### 1) **Seek Medical Attention**

- a) Your health is the top priority.
- b) Visit an emergency room or your family physician without any delay. Even if you feel ok, it is important to rule out any serious hidden medical issues that may have been caused by the accident. Understand also that in nearly every accident, you will feel worse the following days. This isn't just important to preserve the medical evidence of any possible case, it is most important to preserve your health. The longer you wait to seek an initial medical exam may affect the damages you claim as a result of your accident and it might affect your long term health.
- c) Carefully explain the accident and what happened to your body at the point of impact.
- d) Share any discomfort, headaches, pain, blurred vision, tightness, numbness; act. Everything is important.
- e) Ask your physician for a thorough exam, with x-rays and an MRI if you are experiencing any head pain or discomfort.
- f) Compare your current complaints to any pre existing conditions you may have had in your medical history. Aggravation of a preexisting condition is covered under the law.
- g) Request copies of your medical exam and radiology records.
- h) Follow your health care professional's advice. Follow up with any recommended treatment or return visits.

### 2) **Do Not Discuss Your Accident**

- a) Provide accident information to the police and your health care provider
- b) Notify your insurance company promptly
- c) Then seek professional advice from an attorney. Who you speak to about your accident and what you innocently say can be misinterpreted. Do not give any statements to anyone until you have the proper advice to preserve your rights

### 3) **Carefully Choose an Attorney**

- a) Research the experience of personal injury attorneys in your type of case
- b) Review the attorney's website
- c) Obtain information regarding verdicts and settlements
- d) Look for number of years in practice for the attorney handling your case
- e) Read client testimonials
- f) Verify professional accreditations
- g) Assess the attorneys work in the community
- h) Investigate client resources provided online
- i) Interview the attorney in a free, no obligation consultation
- j) Understand the attorney fee and insist on a written contingency arrangement – you only pay a percentage of the recovery if the case is successful. You do not pay a fee if there

is no recovery. Carefully review the written attorney retainer agreement and ask for explanations

- k) Ask how case expenses are handled and how those expenses are paid at the conclusion of the case
- l) Beware of any attorney that tells you what the case is worth in your initial consultation or guarantees a settlement. It is impossible to know the value of your case until you have finished treatment, received a prognosis and all damages and liability are assessed. There are no guarantees
- m) Ask how long similar cases take in the system and how you will be kept advised of the process. Understand that each case is unique; however the time increases if a lawsuit must be filed. Litigation can be costly and time consuming. Ask the attorney whether it is anticipated that a lawsuit will be filed and when it will be determined that it must be filed
- n) Insist that you be given regular status reports of the progress of your case and that no settlement be allowed without your prior approval. Ask how timely the attorney returns phone calls. For decades, the #1 complaint against attorneys is not returning client calls. Make sure you are not that client

#### **4) Keep complete records**

- a) Take photos of your vehicle and have a friend or family member take photos of your physical injuries
- b) Keep all receipts of every expense you incur as result of this accident, including medical expenses, wage loss, travel, prescriptions, and medical supplies, act
- c) Record a daily diary. This is essential to memorialize your pain, suffering, treatment, therapy and the effect it has on your life. During the time it takes to pursue your case, you run the risk of forgetting details, especially how much you actually endured months or years earlier.

Being involved in an accident is a stressful situation and can be costly to your physical, emotional and financial health. If you act and take the essential steps immediately after your accident, you can preserve your rights and your opportunity to recover any damages you may have suffered.

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