

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW WHEN HIRING AN ATTORNEY

Under what circumstances should you hire an attorney?

Personal injury laws vary by state and individual situations. Having correct knowledge of these laws is imperative. If you have been injured in a car wreck that was not your fault, hiring a personal injury attorney can help you receive a fair settlement from your insurance company. You should strongly consider hiring an attorney if:

- You sustained serious injuries with possible long-term repercussions.
- The other involved driver was uninsured or underinsured.
- You and the other driver are in dispute over who was at fault.
- You are feeling pressured by the claims adjuster to agree to a quick settlement.
- You don't feel you're being fully compensated for your injuries.
- You feel your state's statutes of limitation laws may come into effect before you can settle the claim on your own.

An experienced attorney has likely handled numerous cases similar to your situation and will be able to apply these laws to your particular case.

Your attorney will ensure that your legal rights are fully assessed and protected by interviewing witnesses, collecting records, conferring with expert consultants, planning legal strategy, preparing and filing necessary paperwork, and negotiating with insurers and opposing counsel -- all with an eye toward ensuring the best possible outcome for your case.

Tips for meeting with an attorney:

- ❖ Be prepared. Make notes before the meeting so you can easily go over the important points with the attorney.
- ❖ Bring all of the documents concerning your case to the meeting (accident report, medical bills or records, photos, etc.).
- ❖ Bring a pad to take notes.

How do you know which attorney to hire?

Finding the best attorney for your case is similar to making any other major financial decision. Some of the things you may want to ask the attorney when you talk over the phone or meet include:

- How much experience do you have with legal issues similar to mine?
- How recently have you handled a case like mine?
- How was it resolved?
- What was the result? (Did you win the case?)
- When was the last time you went to trial on a case?
- Have you ever been fired by a client?

Look for an attorney who concentrates his or her practice in the area of law that you need. Ask your state bar association if the attorney has ever been the subject of an ethical complaint or inquiry.

Keep in mind that most legal cases are not "sure things." Be wary of any attorney who "guarantees" results. However, an attorney will be able to determine the strengths and weaknesses of your case better than you can.

The most important thing is that you are comfortable and have confidence in the attorney.