



## If I am involved in a car accident, do I need a personal injury attorney?

by Joseph E. Pendergast, III

When you are involved in an accident or personal injury situation, you probably aren't fully aware of your rights, what benefits you can claim, how to choose healthcare providers, and what loss of income and other expenses you deserve to have repaid. You will probably also find dealing directly with claims adjusters at insurance companies, who are skilled negotiators trained to settle accident claims as quickly and cheaply as possible, a daunting task, even at the best of times.

By hiring a skilled personal injury attorney who knows how to evaluate and document your claim, you can be sure that you will recover what you deserve. An accident and personal injury attorney can best determine all available insurance benefits, communicate with your healthcare providers and review all information presented to the insurance company. You heal while your personal injury attorney handles all the paperwork and investigation required.

The truth is that the final value of your personal injury claim depends on:

- The facts of your case.
- Type of injury and treatment received.
- The expertise and commitment of your personal injury attorney.

### Why is the skill of the personal injury attorney so important?

Choosing a qualified and committed personal injury lawyer is critical to your success. Just having the facts and evidence on your side isn't enough – you have to prove them and present them persuasively.

To do that, your personal injury lawyer will have to gather evidence, interview witnesses, negotiate with the insurance company, communicate with healthcare providers, calculate your damages, and build your case. A personal injury lawyer who understands the intricacies of personal injury litigation and how the insurance companies will act and react is in the best position to represent you and get you the results you deserve.

Remember, your personal injury lawyer has to prove that another party was responsible for your injury, prove your damages and convince the insurance company's attorney that if your case went to trial, you would be able to prove it. Without that expertise and commitment, even the most positive facts and evidence won't mean that you get the compensation you should for your injury. That's why it is so critical that you find the right personal injury attorney, one you can trust to build a strong case.

### What does it cost to hire a personal injury attorney?

Personal injury attorneys handle your case on a contingency fee basis, which means they receive compensation based on what they recover. So you can obtain the best possible legal expertise – without having to pay money out of your pocket for legal services. No recovery means no attorney fee.

## IMPORTANT CONSUMER INFORMATION



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### HARDWICK & PENDERGAST

*The personal injury law firm of Hardwick & Pendergast has been providing personal injury legal services to clients throughout Washington State for nearly 40 years. The firm has received the highest rating possible for legal ability and ethics from other attorneys and judges and is listed in the Bar Registry of Preeminent Attorneys.*

*Two highly respected attorneys lead the firm: Morton Hardwick and Joseph (J.P.) Pendergast, III. Mr. Hardwick is the former president of the South King County Bar Association and former chairman of the board of Valley Medical Center. Mr. Pendergast is a former King County Deputy prosecuting attorney and has extensive trial and appellate court experience.*

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