

PERSONAL INJURY

Two critical issues in any legal claim after an accident or injury are:

- 1) What exactly happened during the incident that gave rise to the claim?
- 2) What kind of harm resulted?

These issues will arise at many stages of a personal injury case, and more complex cases can last a year or more, so having a clear record to refer back to can contribute toward the success of your claim. One of the best ways to make sure that you preserve every important detail of your accident or injury is to take notes as soon as possible after the incident, including what happened and the effects of your injuries on your daily life.

Do's and Don'ts After an Accident or Injury

THE DO's

DO seek proper medical attention before doing anything else.

DO summon the police, in appropriate cases.

DO cooperate with all law enforcement and emergency personnel who respond to the scene.

DO get the license plate numbers of all other vehicles involved in car accidents and the driver's names, addresses, telephone numbers, and insurance information.

DO get the name and address of the animal's owner and any license information if you were injured by an animal bite or attack.

DO write down the names, addresses, and phone numbers of all potential witnesses to any accident or injury.

DO contact your health, homeowner's, and/or automobile insurance companies, as appropriate.

DO take photographs of all of the following, as applicable, as soon as possible after the accident: The scene of the accident, from all angles. The surrounding area. The product or animal that caused your injuries. Your injuries. Any property damage.

DO contact an experienced accident and injury attorney.

THE DON'T's

DON'T move your vehicle after an automobile accident, unless necessary for safety or required by law.

DON'T subject yourself to further injury by standing or waiting in an area near traffic or other safety hazards.

DON'T leave the scene of an accident until the police tell you it is okay to do so.

DON'T throw away any potential evidence in the case, such as defective products, important documents, or torn or blood-stained clothing.

DON'T engage in discussions of fault with anyone, and make sure you don't

apologize

for anything -- doing so can be considered evidence that you may have been legally at fault.

DON'T agree to settlement terms without discussing the matter with your attorney.