



INJURY LAW TEAM

A photograph showing a person's hands holding a smartphone. The background is a blurred car accident scene with a white car and a red fire hydrant.

Get informed.

INFORMATION FOR
ACCIDENT VICTIMS

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If you have suffered an injury in a motor vehicle accident, then you may have a claim for damages against the negligent driver. This claim can include compensation for the injury, pain and suffering, loss of earnings, as well as the cost of housekeeping and other future care needs. A lawyer can discuss this with you in a free consultation.

It is important you do some research before you retain a lawyer. It is generally best to retain a local lawyer with whom you can meet and discuss your case on a regular basis. You should also retain a lawyer who is experienced with your type of case and who is prepared to do a full and complete assessment of your injuries in order to arrive at a calculation of fair compensation.

In most cases legal proceedings must be commenced within two years of the date of your claim or it will be too late to start an action.

It is important that you speak with legal counsel as soon as possible after an accident in order to maximize financial help available to you and ensure that a claim can be advanced on your behalf.

This booklet summarizes important information for accident victims.

PRACTICAL STEPS

1. You must advise your auto insurer of your injury within 10 days of the collision.
2. Contact your family doctor and book an appointment. Make sure to mention that you have been in an accident and ask whether your health care provider is aware of the diagnose and treatment protocol regulations. It is important that you follow the directions of your family doctor and attend any

further medical appointments, chiropractor, massage or physiotherapist appointments according to their advice.

3. If you have been in a major car accident and are seriously hurt, you or someone on your behalf should contact a lawyer right away.
4. Do not rush into a settlement! If you are fully healed within 90 days, you can negotiate a settlement with the insurance company on your behalf, or sue the defendant in Small Claims Court. However, to ensure you are completely healed we would suggest that at a minimum you wait six months after a collision before having settlement discussions.
5. If after 90 days you are not healed, and:
 - There is a dispute as to whether your injury is or is not minor, you can request a certified medical examination (you may have to pay for this); or
 - The injury continues to impair your work, schooling or normal activities of daily living past a six month period after the collision, you should retain a lawyer to assist you with your claim.
6. We recommend that you do not deal with the defendant's insurance adjuster, but only with your own insurance company.

PAYMENT OF MEDICAL EXPENSES AND DISABILITY

If you have been disabled from working as a result of an injury suffered in a motor vehicle accident there is money available to pay medical expenses and lost earnings.

If you have a health plan through your employer you should call and ask about your coverage.

If the accident happened during the course of your employment, you may be entitled to *Worker's Compensation Benefits*. Call 1.866.922.9221.

In addition there is funding available pursuant to the Section B no-fault benefits of your automobile insurance policy up to the sum of \$50,000 and disability benefits up to \$400 per week.

MINOR INJURIES

In respect of an accident, a "minor injury" means a sprain, strain, or a Whiplash-Associated Disorder (WAD) injury caused by that accident that does not result in a serious impairment. Generally injuries that last longer than 6 months will not be considered "minor injuries" by the Courts.

Determining whether you have a "minor injury" is important because there is a limit on damages recoverable on minor injuries, while there is no limit on damages recoverable for serious impairment. Do not accept that your injuries would be considered a "minor injury" until you have reviewed the matter with an experienced injury lawyer.

The minor injury cap is \$5,202 in 2019 and is increased by the Alberta Government gradually each year. You can also claim for income loss and out-of-pocket expenses on top of the cap amount.

If you think the *Minor Injury Regulation* is unfair, we encourage you to contact your Member of the Legislature Assembly of Alberta to Lodge a complaint.

SECTION B BENEFITS FOR MINOR INJURIES

Section B of your automobile insurance policy deals with accident benefits you are entitled to.

If you suffered a what is considered at the outset to be a minor injury, you are entitled to 10 or 21 physiotherapy treatment visits, depending on the categorization of your injury which will be paid directly by your insurance company through no-fault section B benefits. You can obtain additional treatment if your insurance company consents.

Any treatment after 90 days after the collision for "minor injuries" requires the approval of your automobile insurer.

SECTION B BENEFITS FOR SERIOUS IMPAIRMENT

If you have suffered a serious injury as a result of a motor vehicle accident, you can claim up to \$50,000 from your insurer for all reasonable medical expenses incurred within two years from the date of the accident.

Your insurer will pay up to \$750 for chiropractor treatment, \$250 for massage therapy and \$250 for acupuncture services. You may be able to exceed these limits if your insurer's medical advisor recommends it.

Your insurer has the right to have you assessed by their medical advisor after 90 days after the accident as to whether or not you require treatment, and if so, what type.

You should speak to a lawyer before you attend a Section B medical examination.

ADVANCE PAYMENTS FROM THE DEFENDANT'S INSURER

Once you have retained a lawyer and started a court action to recover losses or damages from a person covered by a motor vehicle liability policy, you can bring an application to the Court for an advanced payment from that person's insurer.

The Court may make an order for an advanced payment to you if the Judge is satisfied that as a result of the injuries, you are unable to pay the necessities of life or if he or she thinks the payment is otherwise appropriate.

Since personal injury cases can take years to settle or to get to trial, this option is important for you to know about in case you find yourself in a dire financial situation.

PAYMENT OF MEDICAL EXPENSES FROM THE GENERAL REVENUE FUND

In the event you have no other source of funding for payment of hospital, medical or ambulance expenses, an application may be made to the Administrator of the *Motor Vehicle Accident Claims Fund* pursuant to Section 17 of the *Motor Vehicle Accident Claims Act*. The fund may cover expenses up to \$95,000.

You can contact them toll-free by dialing 310.0000 then 780.427.8255.

FATAL ACCIDENTS

Close family members of a person who died in a motor vehicle accident due to the wrongful act or neglect of a person have a right to bring an action for expenses incurred for the care and well being of the deceased person between the time of the injury and death, including expenses of the funeral, travel, accommodations and grief counselling.

Under Section 8 of the Fatal Accidents Act, close family members of the deceased have a right to claim for compensation from the wrongdoer for grief, loss of guidance and care and companionship of the deceased person in the amount of \$82,000 to the parents of the deceased person to be divided equally, and \$49,000 to each child of the deceased person.

There are also additional claims which can be advanced for loss of dependency for surviving spouses and minor children or other dependents.

Section B of your insurance policy also provides for payment of a specified death benefit (depending on who died in the family) of up to \$10,000, funeral expenses up to the sum of \$5,000 and grief counseling up to \$400.

LAWYER'S FEES

Lawyers usually take on personal injury cases on a contingency fee basis, not on an hourly rate of pay.

Therefore, do not hesitate to contact a lawyer since you will not be required to pay any money up front. In fact, your lawyer will cover all fees associated with your claim up until its conclusion.

Lawyer's fees will be taken off of your settlement sum or court award at the conclusion of your matter.



INJURY LAW TEAM

For a free consultation please call
Toll Free: 1.888.531.7771

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**Our commitment is to ensure
your rights are protected
and you are treated fairly.**