



What is a personal injury claim?

If you are hurt because someone else did not do their job properly or because someone else made a mistake, you might have a personal injury claim. If you think you might have a personal injury claim, ask yourself: Have you been hurt in an automobile accident? Did you slip and fall because someone else did not keep their property clean and in safe condition? Have you been sick because you were exposed to dangerous substances? Are you hurt because someone else did not do their job properly? If so, you might have a personal injury claim.

Personal injury cases can sometimes result in a settlement with the other side. Other times a judge or jury may decide to award the injured person money for their damages. In some cases, the judge or jury may even decide to award more money to punish the other side and encourage them to be more careful.

Because personal injury cases can result in this type of compensation- that pays for more than the exact amount of money you lost- our funding does not allow us to help with this type of case.

Where can I get help?

If you think you might have a personal injury claim, you should consult with a private attorney. If you need help finding the right type of attorney for your case, you might consider contacting a lawyer referral service. This service connects people to the right type of attorney for their particular type of issue.

They charge \$20 for an initial 30-minute consultation. Then, if you decide that you need to hire the attorney to represent you or draft any particular paperwork, you and the attorney would discuss and arrange to pay separate fees based on whatever work needs to be done.

- [State Bar of Texas Lawyer Referral Service: \(800\) 252-9690](http://www.tlsc.org)

What should I do to prepare my case?

In most cases, you should prepare by writing down all the facts of your accident. Write a timeline of events before, during and after the accident as soon as possible so that the details are still fresh in your mind. Update this timeline if your injuries get worse. You can use this timeline to help you while you talk to the various insurance companies involved in your claim.

You can also use this timeline or record of the facts when you consult with different attorneys. Remember, you should be completely honest with your attorney. Generally, what you discuss with an attorney is covered by attorney-client privilege.

What if I cannot afford an attorney?

The damage of an unexpected accident may leave you unable to pay an attorney upfront even though you would be willing to pay for an attorney's help if you could afford it. For this reason, some attorneys will make special payment agreements with you. Payment options may include payment plans or contingency fees that give the attorney a certain percentage of the money you win in the case.

Proving all of the required elements of personal injury is not easy and tort reform legislation has made it harder to recover damages than it was in the past. In fact, there are laws against filing bad personal injury claims and penalties for taking someone to court without good reason. This means that it is very important to know that you have a good claim before filing your case.

Try contacting five different attorneys to talk to them about your case. If none of them want to take your case, you may not have a solid claim. If only 1/5 of those attorneys agrees to take your case then you will want to be sure that you understand when you are expected to pay before you move forward.