

HOW TO CHOOSE AN INJURY ATTORNEY

Bodily injury cases are serious matters. They often involve grave injury, permanent disability and even death. Survivors depend on the financial recovery they receive to cover their medical costs, replace permanently lost income, and to compensate for mental anguish, pain and suffering. Without a qualified, experienced bodily injury attorney, your odds of recovering fair and reasonable compensation, for your injuries and losses, goes down dramatically.

This is why it is important that survivors of bodily injury choose the right attorney for their representation. Here are a few things to consider in making your selection.

Choose an attorney who handles only injury cases.

You wouldn't see a foot doctor if you had a heart problem, so why would you hire a lawyer who doesn't concentrate on bodily injury cases? Your lawyer should be able to accurately assess the merits of your bodily injury case, approximate its monetary value, and determine the best strategy for pursuing a recovery. He or she should have extensive experience in the field. Further, because landmark cases can change the legal landscape, your lawyer should be one who keeps current with the latest developments in bodily injury law.

Choose an injury attorney experienced in dealing with insurance companies.

Insurance adjusters are trained professionals who are skilled in the art of defeating, or reducing the value of bodily injury claims. The insurance adjusters and their lawyers will seek to pay out the least amount possible to settle your case. Therefore, choosing a bodily injury lawyer with a proven track record of successful negotiations is essential.

Choose an attorney with trial experience.

Although most bodily injury cases are settled out of court, bodily injury lawyers sometimes obtain more favorable settlements by threatening to take cases to trial. The defendants are often willing to pay more money to plaintiffs to avoid expensive trials, negative publicity, or the chance a jury would award the plaintiffs more money. In this case experience is key: if your bodily injury attorney has never won cases in court, the defendant in your lawsuit may not take the threat of going to trial seriously.

Choose an attorney who is a Sustaining Member of the American Association for Justice and the Wisconsin Association for Justice.

Experienced attorneys focusing on the representation of injured people, should be members of professional organizations whose goals are to encourage safety in our society, while advancing the rights of injured people and their families.

For substantial injuries, choose an experienced injury attorney, not some associate.

Twenty-five years and responsibility for more than 2,000 successfully resolved injury cases is experience you can trust. With us you see what you get. Not some associate. Attorney Murphy will handle your claim directly with his paralegals.

Choose an attorney who respects you as a client.

Is your attorney willing to travel to meet with you in your home? Is he interested in getting to know you as a person, so he may better represent you as a client?

Remember that when you hire a bodily injury attorney, you are paying him for a service – and you should be satisfied with the quality of that service. Does the attorney make you feel your case is important? Does he or she respect your time as much as his own? He and his staff should return your phone calls promptly, communicate with you personally and keep you updated on the status of your case. He or she should also discuss the terms of your contract, including fees, up front (most bodily injury attorneys work for a contingency fee, meaning that they are paid out of your settlement. If you don't win, you don't pay.) If your attorney's performance is less than stellar, realize that you can still replace him or her at your own discretion.

Choose an attorney who offers "the most competitive contingency fees", which may save you hundreds, if not thousands, of dollars!

Attorneys operate their practices like any other business.

Attorneys with big advertising budgets for television and yellow pages; multiple partners and associates; and multiple or finely appointed offices, are operating a business with **high overhead!** Someone has to pay for all those expenses - the clients!

On the other hand, injury attorneys with small offices and low overhead are able to offer lower contingency fee rates, which directly benefits the clientele by increasing their net recovery upon settlement or verdict.

Choose an attorney who has a proven track record of successfully resolving serious injury cases.

What is the attorney's style of handling an injury case? Does he or she believe in pursuing settlement negotiations directly with the insurance company before filing a civil lawsuit in Circuit Court, or do they litigate first and ask questions later? Choose a lawyer whose style fits your own preferences and wishes.

Litigation is very expensive and time-consuming. Ask the attorney his or her thoughts on how your specific case should be handled. If you are satisfied with the "game plan" for your file, this is an attorney you should be able to communicate with and work with on a positive basis.

Above all, obtain legal advice from a bodily injury lawyer.

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Murphy & Pressentin
2801 International Lane, Suite 211
Madison, WI 53704

Toll Free: 866-230-2282