



CHRISTENSEN LAW

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*certiorari, *noun*. From late Middle English Law Latin 'to be informed' originally occurring at the start of a writ

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A Step-by-Step Guide to a Personal Injury Lawsuit

Over the course of the next few months, we'll be detailing the process of filing a personal injury lawsuit here in Michigan. Thankfully, many people aren't aware of what happens when and what's expected along the way because they've never had to deal with it. However, if you've been injured due to the negligence of others, you may have a case. We'll dive in to explain the proceedings, following the typical path from first call to award and disbursement.

First Steps: Choosing the Right Lawyer

Selecting the right attorney is crucial to ensuring you receive the compensation you deserve after an accident caused by someone else's negligence. If you need legal representation, consider the following factors when selecting a lawyer to help with your case.

Experience

It's essential to choose a firm with proven experience handling personal injury cases, and with expertise in your specific injury type. Ask about the firm's track record and trial victories, including how many cases they've taken to trial. Trust your future to a firm with a long history of multimillion-dollar settlements and trial success. You deserve it.

Communication & Comfort

Effective communication is key when working with a personal injury attorney. You should feel comfortable discussing the details of your case, as your lawyer needs to understand the full extent of your injuries and how they impact your life. Pay attention to how well the attorney listens and whether they seem genuinely interested in your situation. The right lawyer will get to know you so they can better guide you through the process, answer your questions, and keep you informed at every stage of your case.

Questions to Ask

When meeting with potential attorneys, come prepared with a list of questions to assess their ability to handle your case. Ask about their experience with your specific type of injury, the resources they have available, anticipated costs, and any potential challenges your case might face. Be sure to discuss the lawyer's success

in securing compensation, and whether they will seek a settlement or recommend litigation. A brain injury case poses special challenges and should only be handled by a professional that has tried and won many such cases before a jury.

Fees: Free Unless We Win

Personal injury attorneys work on a contingent fee basis, meaning they don't get paid unless you win your case. Once the case is won, the law firm is paid a one-third percentage of the settlement amount. The law firm also advances all the expenses while the case is going on, and is reimbursed from the settlement. This arrangement allows injured people to obtain the very best lawyers that many could never afford to pay to by the hour. Most important, working on a percentage motivates the lawyer to get the largest settlement for the client because this increases the law firm's fees, too. The client and the attorney are rowing in the same direction.

Realistic Expectations

A good personal injury lawyer will set realistic expectations about the potential outcome of your case. Beware of firms that make promises of an amount you will get. The truth is that we never know for sure what is going to happen in a case - and beware of the attorney who tells you otherwise in the beginning. The right attorney will help you understand what is achievable and develop a strategy tailored to your case to maximize results.

Choosing the right attorney will make a significant difference in the outcome of your case. Take the time to research and find a lawyer who can provide the expertise, support, and resources necessary to help you through this challenging time.

7 new year, new restaurants: detroit & beyond

SUGAH PLEASE

150 W. Jefferson Ave, Detroit
sugahplease.com

New Orleans-inspired brunch spot in downtown Detroit serves comfort food, craft cocktails, and espresso drinks.

HIROKI-SAN

Book Tower, 1265 Washington Blvd, Detroit
hirokisandetroit.com

An immersive soulful Japanese dining concept deeply rooted in tradition and technique.

FIXINS SOUL KITCHEN

1435 Randolph St, Detroit
fixinssoulkitchen.com

Fixins offers soul food classics with a vibrant, music-inspired atmosphere.

Calculating Auto Accident Claims

Michigan car accidents can lead to significant stress, with painful injuries and mounting medical bills, destroyed vehicles, and daily life disruptions. Many wonder how they can pay their bills, and how they can find fair compensation for their suffering. We assist by managing these complexities, helping you understand the true value of your case.

Factors that Can Determine Your Settlement

Injury Severity: Serious injuries typically lead to higher settlements due to significant life changes that a serious injury can inflict, lost earnings, and emotional suffering.

Fault: Michigan's comparative fault law (Mich. Comp. Laws Ann. § 600.2959) plays a role. If you're partially at fault for the accident, your settlement may be reduced based on your percentage of liability. If you're more than 50% at fault, you will be unable to seek compensation for your pain and suffering. You may be compensated for your out-of-pocket expenses and lost earnings, but these will be proportionally reduced. We work hard to obtain the highest and fairest settlement, regardless of your level of fault.

Insurance Coverage: Your auto insurance policy and coverage levels you selected can influence the final amount you recover.

Building Your Case

The amount of your settlement is built on the strength of the case that is constructed and presented to the insurance company, or to a court. The best settlements are obtained by professionals that do this every day. The best results come from attorneys that have deep experience, hire experts, and delve deeply into the client's damages so the full story of the harm can be conveyed to the insurance company or the court.

Insurance companies recognize the attorneys that have a strong history of trial success, and those firms obtain the highest settlements for their clients. We handle the heavy lifting of marshaling the evidence and experts to bring the maximum result for your future. That includes a thorough investigation into many factors:

Documenting Economic Losses: The financial aspect of your claim is easier to substantiate with records like medical bills, receipts for medications, assistive devices, transportation costs, and wages you may lose due to injuries. In many cases, your future medical care costs must be evaluated so your future is protected. We gather all the necessary documentation and consult experts and your care team to estimate future economic losses.

Establishing Non-Economic Losses: Non-financial damages, such as pain and suffering, can be more difficult to calculate. Keeping a journal of how the accident affects your daily life and relationships can help. Additionally, speaking openly with medical professionals and your attorney about your physical, emotional, and mental struggles allows them to provide supporting evidence for your claim.

Rely on a highly experienced professional. Calculating a Michigan car accident settlement requires an expert understanding of both tangible and intangible losses, as well as Michigan No-Fault law and PIP, among other factors.

We're here to help navigate a lawsuit or claim on your behalf to ensure you get the maximum compensation you deserve.

Your Christensen Law Attorneys



Stephanie Arndt, Dave Christensen, Sarah Stempky-Kime, Dustin Hoff
Brandon Abro, Nora Hanna, Jeremy Knox, Michael Laurila

If you or someone you love was seriously injured in an accident, it's common to feel overwhelmed and uncertain about what to do next; however, you don't have to face these challenges alone. Our experienced attorneys are here to provide much-needed advice about your legal rights and options at no cost to you.

Claw Ed

Learn from our experts about matters affecting you. Here, Stephanie talks about the potentially dangerous situations that could cause a slip and fall accident, and about the liability of premises' owners.

Check out our video resource center for more information:

[click for link](#)



BRUNCH HOUSE

820 Forest Hills Ave SE Grand Rapids
brunch-house.com

Now serving omelets, benedicts, skilletts, pancakes, waffles, and French toast.

MUSKEGON BREWING COMPANY

500 Adelaide Circle Muskegon
muskegonbrewery.com

Muskegon Brewing Company returns after 70 years, offering craft beer, wings, mussels, sandwiches, burgers, and entrees like steak.

PERIDOT

118 W Liberty St, Ann Arbor
peridota2.com

Peridot offers elevated Vietnamese dishes and innovative cocktails, featuring classics and fresh twists in a stylish downtown setting.

THE JACKSON

104 N. Adams Rd, Rochester Hills
thejacksonrestaurant.com

A new restaurant in Rochester Hills, inspired by Jackson Pollock's *Number One*, offers dishes as edible masterpieces.

Understanding the Statute of Limitations in Michigan

TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE

When you're seriously injured due to someone else's negligence, they should be held accountable, including compensating you for your injuries and the resulting losses. However, if you attempt to file a lawsuit after the statute of limitations expires, your case may go nowhere. Michigan's statute of limitations includes some important exceptions, and a personal injury lawyer can explain what might apply to your case.

Michigan law, outlined in Mich. Comp. Laws Ann. § 600.5805, allows personal injury victims **three years from the accident date** to file a lawsuit. Though three years might seem sufficient, many times people let it expire. For example, you may have thought your injuries were minor and you did not pursue legal action, but several years later you are still treating for the pain, and perhaps surgery becomes necessary. This is not unusual. If the deadline passes, the court will bar your case, leaving you without any options for justice.

To ensure you stay within the statute of limitations, consult an attorney who can help you determine when the clock started ticking. Seeking prompt medical attention after an accident is also vital to safeguard your right to compensation and establish a clear medical record.

Filing a Lawsuit Isn't Always Necessary

Not every personal injury case ends up in court. Some cases are settled through negotiations with insurers before reaching trial. However, you shouldn't assume this will happen in your case. Sometimes, insurers refuse to settle fairly, requiring you to pursue a trial to seek adequate compensation. Finding a law firm committed to representing you through the entire process is essential, even if it ultimately doesn't go to trial.

Exceptions to the Statute of Limitations in Michigan

Michigan law includes exceptions to the standard three-year limitation, which may allow for a delayed start:

- **Mental incapacity (the 'insanity' provision):** If a victim has a mental health condition that prevents them from understanding if they may have a claim, they have one year from the date they're deemed "sane" to file. In this context, insanity means an inability to understand one's rights.
- **Children:** When the injured person is a minor under 18 at the time of the accident, the statute doesn't start until they turn 18. They then have one year to file their claim.



These exceptions can be complex, making it crucial to consult an attorney who can determine if they apply to your specific situation.

Additional Deadlines for Michigan Personal Injury Claims

Time sensitivity extends beyond the statute of limitations for filing a lawsuit. There are other deadlines you should keep in mind:

- **Insurance claim deadlines:** Insurers have their own timelines for filing certain claims. Waiting too long might allow them to deny your claim.
- **Personal Injury Protection (PIP) claims:** If you're injured in a car accident, you have one year from the date of the accident to file a PIP claim with your auto insurer under Mich. Comp. Laws Ann § 500.3145.
- **Uninsured and Under-insured Motorist Claims:** Many insurance policies set a shorter statute of limitations for these types of claims, and they may also require you to inform them of the claim (give them "notice") very quickly after the accident.
- **Wrongful death lawsuits:** If you're pursuing a claim due to a loved one's death, Michigan allows three years from the date of death to file suit.

Seek Legal Help as Soon as Possible

Given the various timelines and exceptions, it's best to seek legal advice early. A knowledgeable personal injury lawyer can ensure your case meets all deadlines, apply any relevant exceptions, and help you pursue fair compensation for your losses. Don't delay—acting quickly may improve your chances of a successful claim and the compensation you so rightly deserve.

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davidchristensenlaw.com

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LISTEN
PROTECT
it's what we do **WIN**™



BRIEF WORDS FROM FOUNDER DAVE CHRISTENSEN

As we enter the year 2025, I find myself reflecting on the remarkable journey our law firm has taken as we celebrated our 10th anniversary. We set out with the mission of providing compassionate and expert legal services to those who needed it most. It has been an incredible experience, and I am so proud of what we have achieved together. In that decade, we faced challenges, celebrated victories, and grew both professionally and personally.

From the very beginning, we made a pledge to our clients that we would always outperform the standards, ensuring that you not only receive expert legal representation but also the service, support, and care that you deserve. As we celebrate this milestone, we look back at the many successes that document this commitment - securing favorable outcomes for countless clients, helping families navigate life-changing events, and providing a steady hand in the face of adversity.

In 2024, we were honored to receive several prestigious awards that acknowledge the dedication and hard work of our entire team. These awards not only reflect our standard of excellence but also speak to the trust you have placed in us. It is because of your continued confidence in our firm that we have been able to grow and expand our impact. We are incredibly grateful for the relationships we've built with you, and we remain committed to providing the highest level of service in the years to come.

In our profession, we help families that have lost a loved one whose presence will forever be missed. These painful losses have taught me invaluable lessons in resilience, gratitude, and the transient nature of life. They remind me of the importance of cherishing the time we have and appreciating the people who make our lives meaningful.

Challenging times like these re-affirm how important our families and friends are, and

how we need to spend as much time with them as possible. Our clients' stories impact our lives in so many ways. We have watched parents support and love their children through horrendous injuries as they refuse to give up, and families overcome great odds.

Entering 2025, I am filled with hope and excitement about the opportunities that lie ahead. We are committed to not only expanding our legal expertise but also nurturing the personal connections that make our firm special. We will continue to evolve and adapt, ensuring that we meet your needs with the same passion and promise that has driven us for the past decade.

Thank you for being a part of this journey. Your unwavering trust and support have been the foundation of our growth, and we look forward to many more years of working together. Here's to a new year of peace, progress, and fulfillment for us all.

10 THINGS CHECKLIST

what you should keep track of during your case

- > **Accident Photos & Video** - *views of the scene, vehicles involved, debris field, witness photos or dash cam videos, video from nearby surveillance cameras*
- > **Injury Photos** - *at time of injury and as you progress through treatment*
- > **Witness Contact Info** - *names and contact numbers for any accident witnesses*
- > **Diagnoses, Treatment Plans & Physicians' Info** - *details of the injuries that were diagnosed, doctors' contact information*
- > **Accident-Related Medical Records & Bills** - *copies of all hospital/doctor paperwork, medical bills/statements, if available*
- > **Journal** - *keep a journal of how you are feeling each day, your activities, and significant changes in your pre-accident lifestyle*
- > **Lost Wages & Time Off** - *record all your time off work due to the accident, and how much earnings you've lost as a result*
- > **Miscellaneous Expenses Incurred** - *keep a list of all out of pocket expenses associated with the accident*
- > **Communication with Insurance Companies** - *keep copies of emails and letters you receive from the insurance company*
- > **Work, Family & Friends** - *stay in contact with your support network and your employer; keep them up-to-date as you recover*