

March Newsletter

This month we focus on safe driving, disabilities, and veterans

Spring break traffic and driving safe



With Daytona's Bike Week and thousands of spring break visitors to beaches and tourist attractions, March has seen a strongly increased number of out of state drivers on the roads throughout central Florida. According to the Florida Highway Patrol's 2010 [Crash Statistics report](#), holiday times (including spring) see an increase of car accidents throughout the state. More fatal accidents happen per day - 8 per day instead of 6 per day during non-holiday periods - and a higher percentage of accidents that happen during holiday periods involve alcohol.

A key issue to being safe when on the roads is **conspicuity** - your ability to be seen by other drivers. When [driving at night](#), you want to make sure that your head and tail lights are clean and functioning so that other drivers can clearly see you without issue. You also want to be sure that you can see other drivers, motorcyclists, and pedestrians without trouble. Make sure that all your mirrors are clean, unbroken, and properly adjusted, and be sure that you don't have items inside your car which block your view out windows. [Motorcycles](#) can be particularly hard to see because of their size and the positions where they can get into in a car's blind spot. Motorcycle riders need to be especially careful to make sure that they are aware of drivers' blind spots and maintaining a safe reflective tape on their helmets, jackets, or other gear.

With the increased amount of traffic the level of danger and potential for accidents increases as well. Especially considering that people may be drinking and driving everyone needs to take an increased level of responsibility to making smart choices and being safe drivers. Driving under the influence is one of the most [common causes](#) of car accidents, and across the country it contributes to thousands of deaths each year. Be the safest driver you can - never drink and drive.

If you are involved in a [car accident with someone from out of town](#), make sure you know what to do. Always exchange insurance information, document the scene and damage with your [cell phone](#) or other camera, and be aware of what you might need to do differently if you are in an accident with a [teenage or young adult driver](#) who may be driving a car owned by their parents or may be on their parents' insurance.

Welcome our new PI case manager, JR Alvarez

[Case manager](#) JR Alvarez joins our personal injury department with a wealth of knowledge and experience in a variety of areas of law. Born in Puerto Rico, JR's family moved to Brooklyn, New York where he attended high school and completed his AS in paralegal studies at Kingsborough College. JR worked for several prominent law firms throughout NYC, handling workers' compensation, civil litigation, personal injury, and corporate merger cases. In 1990 he and his family moved to Florida where JR continued his education with an additional AS in Business Management from Valencia Community College. In the central Florida area, JR has been a paralegal and office administrator in various law firms, serving clients' needs in the areas of criminal law, insurance defense, mass torts, and personal injury. JR has been very involved in educating the local Hispanic community regarding auto insurance rights and responsibilities, speaking on a number of occasions. He has volunteered with the Hispanic Association of Orlando as well, and spent time as a ministry leader for the boys ministry of his religious organization. A father of four, JR enjoys travel, visiting the beach, swimming, bicycling, and salsa dancing in his spare time.



Legislation for back-up cameras in all vehicles

A hot topic in the news recently has been the proposed federal regulation to install mandatory back-up cameras in all passenger vehicles - cars, trucks, SUVs, and buses - by 2014. This legislation is designed to serve as a preventative measure to help lower fatalities and [injuries to children](#) and other pedestrians that can occur from drivers who may not see them when they are backing up their vehicles. According to a recent article in [US News](#), as many as 100 pedestrians each year are injured or killed when drivers mistakenly back over them. It may also serve to lower the number of insurance [property damage](#) claims filed by drivers who back-up over objects or into items such as bicycles, posts, mailboxes, and other things that can be out of the driver's line of sight.



The proposed legislation brings up key issues, namely drivers paying attention to their surroundings. It is extremely important to know and pay attention to what is around your car before backing up in order to avoid being involved in an accident either with an object or a person. Every driver wants to be as safe as possible, especially when it comes to small children, and taking a moment to check the surroundings of your vehicle before backing up can help you avoid these types of accidents.

Another issue that the regulation brings to mind is the importance of discussing car safety with small children. Explaining to a child how to be safe around cars can be challenging, but it is well worth a parent's time to discuss the dangers and educate a child to be aware of simple things they need to do in order to be safe around moving vehicles. Of course, some basics such as discussing proper [seat belt](#) safety or looking both ways before crossing the street may have come to a parent's mind, but we should also take care to discuss driveway safety. Perhaps we should show them a car's taillights and explain that when the lights are on, it means the car is about to move and the child needs to get out of the way.

It is always a driver's responsibility to make sure to prevent injuries, and although a back up camera in every vehicle may certainly help that, a driver aware of their surroundings can go a long way in the meantime.

The importance of medical treatment during a disability claim

It's important to continue to receive medical treatment during your disability claim, even if you have limited funds with which to do so. We discussed this issue in a [recent blog](#), and would like to address it here as well to make sure that each client understands the nature of this issue.

When you're undergoing a disability claim you will need medical documentation to support your disability in order to strengthen your claim. Your primary care physician may have provided your initial consultation, and depending on the extent of your disability you may have been directed to specialists, had various tests completed, or have tried multiple treatment options. Including documentation of all this treatment in your case file is highly important to demonstrate to the Social Security Administration that your ability to work is impacted by your disabling condition.



Even if you have limited funds to seek this medical treatment it is vital that you continue to seek care. Our office is happy to provide you with a complimentary list of [resources](#), including [no and low cost medical and dental clinics](#) which may be able to help you get the treatment you need while you're waiting for your claim to be processed. We are also happy to discuss with you [other benefits](#) you may be entitled to during your disability claim process.

Without this medical documentation claimants may be in a catch-22 kind of situation. If you're too injured or ill to work, but don't go to the doctor for supporting documentation you could end up being denied the disability benefits which will help you since you cannot work. Speak with one of our staff members in our disability department to learn more.

Worker's compensation claims can expand into more

If you've been injured on the job you should seek immediate medical treatment through your [employer's worker's compensation](#) insurance. Worker's comp exists so that employees who become sick or hurt while performing their job duties can be treated for those injuries without having to pay for the treatment. According to the [state statute](#), worker's comp will also facilitate the employee's efficient return to the workplace, and allow them to receive disability coverage in the meantime. However, worker's compensation claims can quickly become complicated depending on the nature of the injury, the place and timing of the injury, the activity the employee was engaged in when they became injured, and the length of time the injured employee has to be out of work.



It happens often that a worker's comp claim can expand into far more, depending on these several factors. For example, someone injured at work on a particular job site may have a personal injury claim based on [premises negligence and liability](#) if the site was somehow unsafe for the visiting workers. Or, someone injured in a car accident while driving a company vehicle may have [multiple claims](#) through worker's compensation insurance, as well as vehicle insurances such as PIP.

Often, if someone has suffered an injury at work that causes them to be out of work for a long period of time, it can be beneficial to apply for [Social Security disability](#) benefits as well. Especially if the injury suffered is going to impair the person's ability to work for the rest of their life, disability benefits may be the best way for the injured employee to receive long-term compensation for lost wages and medical benefits.

Although your claim may begin with worker's compensation, it can definitely expand and end up as more than that depending on your situation. We would always advise you to speak with an attorney to ensure that you're receiving all the rights you're entitled to. Our office offers free consultations for worker's comp cases, and we'd like to hear from you no matter your situation. If you've been injured, you deserve to know what your rights and options are, and we want to make sure that every injured employee receives the representation and assistance they need.



The Coye Law Firm continues to represent consumers and employees in their claims for [personal injury](#), [workers compensation](#), and [Social Security disability](#) benefits. Call our offices today at [800-648-4941](tel:800-648-4941) to speak with someone who can evaluate your situation and determine if we can help you with your claim.

To learn more about our firm & practice areas, visit coylaw.com or coylawdisabilitycenter.com

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