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PRACTICE AREAS

Workers Compensation
Personal Injury
Motor Vehicle Accidents
Wrongful Death

Apologize and Reduce the Chance of a Lawsuit

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Growing up, our parents always told us to apologize for our wrongs. Perhaps it's high time we applied that childhood lesson to real life, not only because it's the right thing to do, but because, as a new study shows, it may reduce the likelihood of lawsuits.

The study was conducted at the University of Illinois. The conclusion reached by the study flies in the face of conventional legal advice, which dictates that it is unwise to apologize, since doing so is an admission of liability.

Instead, it appears that apologizing may in fact reduce the chance that a lawsuit will be filed as a result of the potentially tortious conduct.

As explained in this University of Illinois [article](#), apologies help to placate the injured parties, thus reducing the likelihood of litigation:

Jennifer Robbennolt says her studies show that apologies can potentially help resolve legal disputes ranging from injury cases to



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wrongful firings, giving wounded parties a sense of justice and satisfaction that promotes settlements and trims demands for damages.

Of course, as we learned as youngsters, the nature of the apology matters. Simply apologizing for the fact that the incident occurred rather than accepting blame is an unsuccessful strategy. Acknowledging wrongdoing is the key to an effective apology.

Although lawyers are traditionally reluctant to encourage apologies, in part out of concern that it may later affect the strength of the case, many jurisdictions are now recognizing the value of apologies. In fact, as explained in the article "(s)tatutes that make at least some apologetic statements inadmissible at trial are now on the books in 35 states, most enacted in the last decade."

This is an issue that personal injury attorneys should keep in mind when negotiating on behalf of and advising their clients. Apologies may not advance their client's interests in all cases, but in some cases, it might just be a good idea.