

What is the Value of My Automobile Accident Claim?

I have been handling exclusively personal injury matters, including serious automobile collision claims, my entire career. My practice is dedicated to representing those who have been seriously injured and family members of those who have been killed due to the carelessness of others. Oftentimes, the victims and their families want to know the protections they have under the law. I am also frequently asked, “What is my claim worth?” This article addresses that question.

A lawyer who claims to be able to tell you with precision the value of your case in the early weeks or even months after an automobile collision is a lawyer you should run away from as fast as possible. Why? Because no experienced lawyer can honestly answer that question so early in a case. Very often clients come to me for representation after they have visited other law firms. It is amazing how often I hear from these clients that their former lawyers told them, soon after the incident, what he or she believes the value of the client’s case to be. No two cases are alike, and each deserves its own special attention and thorough investigation. Moreover, the passage of time is often required in order to fully appreciate the extent of the injuries suffered by the client. To tell a client the value of a claim before the client reaches maximum medical improvement, or close to it, is an exercise in guess-work at best.

So when a client asks me shortly after an automobile collision what the case is worth, I tell the truth: “I don’t know now, but I promise to do the hard work necessary to figure it out.” Part of the investigation may take time because a client’s injuries, particularly the extent of the injuries, may be unknown until further treatment is obtained. For instance, I represented a woman who was run over by a bus as she was lawfully crossing the street—a truly tragic incident. The bus company wanted to settle the case immediately. My client was represented by another law firm earlier and her prior attorney urged her to negotiate a settlement quickly given the bus company’s eagerness to negotiate. Unfortunately, the woman still required multiple surgeries and she was understandably very scared for her future. She smartly decided to get a second opinion, and so she gave me a call.

I took over the handling of the woman’s case and my first piece of advice to her was to call off all settlement negotiations. The value of her case could not be decided at that time. I needed to take witness statements, investigate the accident scene, do background checks on the bus operator, monitor her health and treatment, and much more before I

could determine the full and fair value of her claim. Despite repeated overtures from the defendant bus company, my client listened to me and we did not begin negotiating a settlement until nearly a full year after the collision took place. Only then was it possible to fully appreciate my client's permanent disabilities, which are significant. I ended up resolving that case for the woman for a figure many times higher than the initial demand the prior lawyer wished to convey on her behalf. Put another way, her prior lawyer, who boldly told her what her case was worth early on, didn't have a clue as to the value of the claim.

My client wrote an article about her experience with the law and my law firm. You can read it by clicking [here](#). I will never forget her positivity and how wonderful it was to work for her. Her story is an inspiring one.

There are many factors that dictate the value of a case. Economic losses can sometimes be relatively clear, including medical bills and lost wages. Other times, the reasonableness of medical treatment and the accuracy of the alleged lost wages are not clear at all and are vigorously challenged by the defendants. How strong the allegations are depends in large part on how effective the lawyer is in preparing and presenting the claim. It also depends, of course, on whether conflicting evidence exists. An experienced and effective attorney knows what documents to obtain, with whom to speak, and how to otherwise investigate and then present a lost wage claim. An experienced lawyer also knows how to advise a client with respect to how a jury will perceive medical care and treatment. It is important for the attorney to stay in constant communication with the client throughout his or her treatment and time off of work, so that the record evidence strongly supports the ultimate allegations in the case.

The non-economic losses, including pain, suffering, inconvenience, frustration, loss of enjoyment of life, and inability to engage in certain activities as a result of the injuries sustained in the collision are damages much more difficult to quantify. The value of those harms and losses cannot be fully assessed until the client receives sufficient medical care and treatment so that it is known, medically, what the client can and cannot do for the rest of his or her life. Even then, lawyers must listen carefully to their clients in order to place a value on the damages the clients have suffered and will continue to suffer for the rest of their lives. No two people experience the same loss the same way. There are many intangibles that must be considered. Therefore, it is critically important that an injured victim seek counsel from an attorney who specializes in serious automobile collision cases.

My firm has the resources necessary to engage in all of the needed investigative work to fully determine the extent of all economic and non-economic harms and losses our clients have suffered, as well as the damages they will continue to endure throughout their lives. When necessary, we hire economists, vocational rehabilitation counselors, lifecare planners, medical experts, and other experts needed to quantify the harms and losses that resulted from the collision. We advance all of the costs for our clients and recoup nothing unless we successfully resolve the case through settlement or through a favorable jury verdict. In the end, our mission is to compassionately and strongly advance our clients' claims so that they achieve full and fair compensation for all of their damages. Every case is different, and I never lose sight of that fact.

So, if you want to know what your case is worth, please feel free to give me a call and I promise you that I will do what it takes to figure it out.

If you or someone you know has been involved in an automobile collision, please feel free to contact Mr. Zambri at szambri@reganfirm.com, or call him at (202) 822-1899.