

Initial Client Interview

Form 2.7 INFORMATION FOR THE CLIENT EXPLAINING THE ENTIRE LEGAL PROCESS IN LAYMAN'S TERMS STARTING FROM THE INITIAL CLIENT INTERVIEW TO TRIAL

We are pleased you have chosen us to represent your interests in this case. Since you probably do not know what to expect, we would like to acquaint you with the general pattern of how we handle cases of this type. We believe this will be helpful to you and to ourselves.

The Initial Interview

When you are first interviewed, general information regarding the accident is obtained. You will be given a questionnaire, which should be filled out and returned to the office as soon as possible. Certain other materials relating to things you should or should not do will be furnished to you. You will be requested to sign certain authorization forms that will allow us to obtain necessary information. You will meet part of our team (lawyers and legal assistants) and be given the names of the persons whom you should contact if you have any questions.

As soon as you return the questionnaire, the legal assistant assigned to your case will arrange an interview and obtain supplemental information and material to help us better evaluate your case.

Investigation

We will notify the other party's insurance company that you have retained us as your attorneys.

Letters will be sent to all physicians and hospitals involved in the case, requesting medical information regarding injuries. Any police officers who may have been involved will be interviewed, witnesses will be contacted and photographs will be taken. Additionally, any necessary information from the Director of Internal Revenue, employers, schools or other persons will be obtained.

Evaluations

It is important to know that no case is settled until liability and damages have all been determined and all investigation has been completed. It generally takes several months to gather the necessary information. If a trial becomes necessary, it can take several years to complete the case. One of the most difficult requests we must make of you is to have patience.

As soon as our investigation is completed and sufficient information obtained, we will make an evaluation of your case, discuss it with you and attempt to arrive at a proper settlement figure. No settlement figure is ever submitted without the client's consent. We will then prepare a settlement package to submit to the insurance company.

Starting a Lawsuit

If settlement cannot be reached with the insurance company, we will consider the advisability of filing a lawsuit. In some cases, however, it is important to start a lawsuit as soon as possible. No lawsuit, however, will be started without your permission.

A lawsuit is generally started by the sheriff upon serving the other party a paper called a complaint, which indicates that he or she is being sued as a result of the accident. The other party is referred to as the defendant and you are referred to as the plaintiff. The defendant takes this paper to his or her insurance company, which delivers it to its lawyers. The lawyers then send us a paper called an Answer. At that point, the case is at issue.

We want to point out that, although a lawsuit may have been started, settlement is always possible and is often made just before trial.

Discovery

Once the lawsuit has been started, both sides have the right to obtain information about the case by discovery deposition and interrogatories.

Discovery Deposition is the testimony of some party or witness given under oath in the presence of attorneys for both plaintiff and defendant, and before a court reporter who takes down the testimony.

Interrogatories are written questions which either attorney may issue and which have to be answered in writing under oath within 30 days of being received by them in the mail.

We generally use both interrogatories and depositions to help us investigate the facts. The defendant's attorneys also have the right to take testimony and submit interrogatories.

At any time throughout this period, the possibility of settlement may come up again. If anything concrete occurs, we will advise you promptly.

Trial

If your case cannot be settled for a fair amount of money, we will, with your permission, proceed to trial. The last several weeks before the trial date are spent in detailed preparation of your case. What is expected of you at trial will be explained to you in minute detail well in advance of your going to the courthouse.

Once again, the vast majority of cases are never tried even though a lawsuit has been started. Often, however, they are not settled until a few days before the trial date.

Conclusion

Please inform this office immediately of any changes of address and/or telephone number. Inform us of anything you think has a bearing on the case.

Be sure to send or bring to our office all receipts, canceled checks, bills and any other papers connected with your case pertaining to medical treatments, automobile repairs, loss of earnings, damage to other personal

Initial Client Interview

property or other expenses in any way related to your accident. We must have all of these things both for settlement or for evidence in the event it is necessary to go to trial.

DO NOT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES DISCUSS YOUR CASE WITH ANYONE, EXCEPT MEMBERS OF THIS OFFICE.

You will be informed of any offer that is made to settle your case.