

# Personal Injury Law



## What is Personal Injury Law?

Personal injury lawyers are civil litigators that represent clients seeking financial compensation for injuries sustained at the result of negligence of another individual or group. Personal injury lawyers represent the plaintiff in such cases and seek to prove that the defendant is liable for the injury. These cases are civil, not criminal, so the cases result in monetary compensation for the plaintiff, not jail time for the defendant. Common types of negligence include a driver who failed to exercise reasonable care and injured another driver, a passenger, or a pedestrian; a manufacturer of a defective product; or false imprisonment. Other common personal injury cases involve slip and fall accidents, injuries at work, and legal and medical malpractice. Some personal injury lawyers specialize in a particular kind of injury. Personal injury lawyers are also called plaintiff's attorneys or trial lawyers. Personal injury law is a branch of tort law ([American Bar Association](#)).

While personal injury lawyers are litigators, they also usually handle much of the pretrial work, as well. They prepare witnesses, prepare exhibits, conduct depositions, and coordinate discovery in their cases. Personal injury lawyers also advocate for their clients in settlement negotiations. Most personal injury lawyers work on contingency. This means that these lawyers are compensated only after a successful trial or settlement. Typically, personal injury lawyers are paid a certain percentage of their clients' court-awarded compensation or settlement deal ([Danzon](#)). The amount in monetary compensation plaintiffs receive varies, as the severity of certain injuries can be difficult to prove ([Davis and Ward](#)).

## Where Do Personal Injury Lawyers Work?

Private firms of all sizes might handle personal injury cases  
Some large firms exclusively handle personal injury cases

## Resume Boosters for Personal Injury Law

Join the Moot Court Board  
Intern or extern with a firm that handles personal injury cases

## What Classes Should I Take?

Appellate Advocacy  
Civil Procedure I, II  
Consumer Law  
Discovery  
Evidence  
Insurance Law  
Legal Drafting: Litigation Drafting  
Negotiation and Mediation  
Pre-Trial Litigation Practice  
Products Liability  
Remedies  
Torts I, II  
Trial Advocacy

# Personal Injury Law Resources



## Professional Associations

### American Bar Association

All University of Memphis law students have free membership to the [American Bar Association](#). Their website provides routinely updated information and interest-specific career advice. Join different sections to find out what they offer. [Check out the resources page on Torts](#) and the [Tort Trial and Insurance Practice Section](#).

### American Association for Justice—The Association for Trial Lawyers

The [American Association for Justice](#) advocates for trial lawyers and provides continuing education resources for trial lawyers.

## Personal Injury Law Links

### [“My Client’s Finger Was Bitten Off and the Judge Banished Me From Approaching the Bench”](#)

This article by Sam Segal describes an unexpected event in his personal injury law career. American Bar Association, April 8, 2020.

### [“Recovering Damages from Accidents Involving Uber Drivers”](#)

In this article, Mala Sharma, a personal injury attorney, discusses the complicated and new process of handling personal injury cases involving ride share companies. American Bar Association, December 9, 2019.

### [“‘When I Was a New Lawyer’: TortSource Interview with TIPS Leader Jim Wells”](#)

This interview outlines the career of torts attorney James A. Wells. American Bar Association, July 31, 2018.

### [“How Data from a Plaintiff’s Wearable Technology Can Make a Difference in Personal Injury Cases”](#)

This article by Clint Cowan and Elizabeth Smithhart highlights how emergent technologies are reshaping the field of personal injury law. American Bar Association, November 9, 2017.

### [“Taking Depositions Like an Experienced Attorney”](#)

This guide by Suzanne E. Billam provides information and tips about taking your first deposition. American Bar Association, February 14, 2017.