

Staver Accident Injury Lawyers, P.C. Personal Injury Scholarship

In the widely popular novel "The Jungle", Upton Sinclair tells the narrative of a Lithuanian family, the Rudkuses, living in the Industrial Revolution, who immigrate to the United States in pursuit of a better life. However, the Rudkuses gain employment at a Chicago meatpacking facility where they undergo long hours in unsafe, abusive, and insanitary working conditions. During this shift from an agrarian to industrial labor market, workers faced unprecedented injuries in crowded factories with adverse working conditions. Although this labor shift did not mark the beginning of personal injury (PI) law, it did serve as a critical turning point for the field. Many of today's workplace standards, like sanitation rules, breaks, and other employee protections, exist because employers found it to be cheaper to foster safer environments than to deal with personal injury claims and their financial consequences.

When I was about nine years old, my father's health began to decline, the result of prolonged exposure to pesticides while he worked in the fields. He was an earnest worker, giving his all to his employer despite having respiratory problems, eyes discolored from chemicals, and burning skin from pesticide exposure. Notwithstanding years of worker complaints, the company swiftly implemented safety initiatives (i.e. heat and chemical protective gear) following a PI lawsuit resulting from a preventable onsite-injury. However, the work of PI lawyers has not just ensured employee safety, but also consumer safety. For example, companies like Johnson and Johnson concealed that their talc powder contained ovarian-cancer-causing asbestos and Ford had refused to spend ten dollars fixing their PINTO car model's gas tank that resulted in people burning alive in low-impact accidents. It was not until PI lawyers collected evidence to connect these events that these companies were held liable.

With the advent of modern technologies, we now have more distractions on a day-to-day basis, particularly with phones. Car manufacturers have even designed entertainment systems that alert us to real-time notifications on our phones. Disabling notifications while driving could prevent 1.6 million texting and driving accidents annually. We can further our civic responsibility by creating safer conditions in surrounding environments. For example, living in a rural-area, some individuals often come from surrounding areas to dump items from their beds onto roads instead of driving to the local dump. I either remove these myself or call the authorities as these path-obstructing objects can cause fatal accidents, particularly in adverse driving conditions. A few years ago, my 67-year-old aunt, who worked part-time at Walmart, slipped on a spill, resulting in a disabling back injury. Consequently, every time I see a spill, I promptly alert the staff. While these actions may seem small, they can prevent accidents resulting from simple negligence. PI lawyers often receive unwarranted criticism for only caring about their clients getting paid. However, it is the work of PI lawyers that has forced large companies and institutions to adopt safer practices. By establishing legal precedents and improving consumer and worker safety, they have contributed to improving our quality of life.

Resources:

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