

V&B ATTORNEYS

BOARD CERTIFIED ACCIDENT & INJURY LAWYERS

the Newsletter

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by Brian Beckcom

Getting Away



Attorneys, and lots of other professionals, and just about everyone who works for a living has all experienced the co-worker who grinds out 14 hour workdays, seven days a week, month after month, year after year, and brags about not taking time off from work for years.

In fact there was a time in my life when I was that person.

I remember when I was a young lawyer at a big firm, one of the partners bragged to me about how he went to trial instead of spending time in the hospital with his wife during the birth of their first child. He was telling me the story to teach me a lesson about how hard you need to work to succeed as a trial lawyer. I remember being scared to death about the prospect of working so hard that I would miss the birth of my first child.

The older I get, the more I am convinced that the whole "work until you drop" idea is complete nonsense. In fact, I think it makes you worse at your job (along with being worse at home, with your family, with your loved ones, etc.).

That's not to say it's not important to work hard—if you want to be

successful at just about anything, you've got to work at it. No doubt. The vast majority of people I know who are successful work very hard.

But you know what else most successful people in common? They are great at working hard AND playing hard. It's absolutely imperative that you step away at regular intervals, unwind, spend time with your loved ones, enjoy your hobbies, and let your brain re-focus on things.

I find that when I step away at regular intervals, I tend to do my best work immediately after a rest period. For example, I like to fly fish. I don't get to do it as often as I'd like, but when I do, for me at least, my mind "loosens up," my energy levels increase, my motivation skyrockets, and when I get back in the office I think I do a much better job for my clients than when I've worked for 3 straight months without any rest periods. I'm a better lawyer when I re-charge my batteries.

The problem is that our culture makes us feel guilty about taking time away from our work. This month, I want to encourage you to get some time away from your job—step away from the rat race at regular intervals, spend time with people you love, pursue your passions and hobbies, and you'll be amazed at how much better you perform when you get back to the office.

As one famous person once said, *"I've never heard of anyone on their deathbed saying they wished they spent more time at the office."* ■

Here's to your success,

Brian

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V&B Trivia
Question
& Prize

I'm giving away a \$100 Starbucks gift certificate...

to the first person that sends an email to Brian@vbattorneys.com correctly answering the following question (Brian's family and members of the firm are NOT eligible!)

What meal has Brian had for his birthday dinner every year for the last 28 years?

Hint: You may be able to find the answer on Brian's Facebook page.

First person to respond wins!



It's That Time of Year Again—Football Season!

Football fans waited anxiously wondering if they would be able to watch their favorite teams this year. The football lockout lasted over four months, which is the longest in the league's history. The good news for players, owners and, of course, NFL fans, is that the game will go on.

Now is the time to start thinking about football parties. Is a BBQ in order? How many people should you invite? These are just some of the things you will need to think about as you start planning those football get-togethers.

Here are some tips to hosting a great football party:

- **Make food ahead of time.** This will help alleviate your stress and ensure that you won't miss the game. Also, keep your dishes simple. No gourmet cooking is required for a good old-fashioned football party.
- **Have plenty of seats in the TV room.** If the room is a little tight, you might need to consider temporarily rearranging your furniture. Be sure to bring in more

chairs if necessary. You want to make sure that everyone has somewhere to sit to watch the game.

- **Place a radio or television outside on the patio.** Some of your guests might prefer to spend time outside. By putting a radio or television on the porch, they will still be able to keep up on the game even if they're not in the TV room.
- **Have fun!** The most important tip about hosting a football party is having fun. Don't stress too much if things aren't perfect. The whole idea is to gather your friends together to watch football. Everything else is only a minor detail!

Now, are you ready for some football? ■

“V&B took my case when no one else would, went out on a limb to help me, and I can never thank them enough. Curtis, who handled my case, was incredible and I would definitely recommend them if you want good, friendly lawyers that still treat you right.”

*Mason
Galley Assistant
Fishing Vessel
Houston, TX*



Don't “Fall” For This One With The Insurance Company

When you're in an accident or have sustained property damage in some form, it is an easy leap of faith to think that you will be fairly compensated by the insurance company.

If it was a car accident, you probably felt comfortable believing that the at-fault driver's insurance company would do the right thing and pay for your damages. After all, someone they have been insuring hurt you.

It's not always that cut and dry.

Inexperienced adjusters are notorious for outright denying claims or relying heavily on computer-generated settlement amounts.

When dealing with any kind of insurance claim, it is important that you step back and assess the situation for a moment. The insurance company is a business. Their goal is to make a profit. The more claims they pay, the lower their profit. Can you see a possible issue here with your situation?

One of the many things that insurance companies do is hire inexperienced claims adjusters. This is true even among some of the bigger insurance companies. Don't fall for this one. If you feel that the adjuster doesn't know what he or she is talking about, trust your instincts. Inexperienced adjusters are notorious for outright denying claims or relying heavily on computer-generated settlement amounts.

You don't have to work with the insurance company on your own. Depending on the details of your situation, it might be worth it to bring in some legal help. Because when it comes to insurance claims, you have a lot to lose. ■



"Autumn vs. Fall" and Other Random Seasonal Facts

Do you prefer to say "autumn" or "fall" when describing the season? Is there a difference between the two?

If you have ever wondered about autumn vs. fall or wanted to learn more about this time of year—you have just hit the jackpot! We have compiled a list of interesting fall-related facts that will be sure to make you the seasonal expert among your friends and family.

- **Autumn or fall:** Whichever word you choose to use to describe the season, they both mean the same thing. In North America, "fall" is the most popular word to use, while the British would rather say "autumn."
- **The autumn equinox:** This is the day of the year where the length of night and day is nearly the same. The autumn equinox is set to occur on September 23, 2011.
- **Fall is a widely loved season:** You hear people complain about spring allergies. The heat gets a little much in the summer. Winter brings the cold weather. There aren't a lot of complaints about fall. In fact, it is considered one of the most loved seasons.
- **Changing leaves:** How exactly do trees know it is time to change the color of their leaves? Without going into all of the scientific details, as the fall approaches the days get shorter. This sends a signal to trees that they need to prepare for the winter.

Take the time this year to enjoy everything fall has to offer! ■

The Leaves Are Changing, But The Insurance Companies Are Not

During the season of changes—leaves transforming from vibrant green to yellow, red and brown—one thing remains constant. Insurance companies.

Despite the millions of dollars that insurance companies spend on advertising, their ultimate goal is not to pay claims. You might see the commercial that implies it is as simple as picking up the phone to get the compensation you need following a loss. If only it were that easy. Reports have shown that insurance companies purposely deny claims and try to confuse consumers.

There are some other things you might not know about insurance companies.

The value of your claim could come down to a software program. Many insurance companies use standardized claims adjustment software to determine the value of claims. For the insurance companies, this software is ideal and a great way to cut back costs. For the claimant, it's a real pain. Each claim is unique and not all of the factors involved can be adequately calculated in a software program.

The insurance company has lawyers waiting to step in. Believe it or not, insurance companies typically keep law firms on retainer to protect their interests. As a claimant, this means that you could be up against an attorney as you attempt to get fair compensation for your claim. This might be news to you. Just know that it is one secret the insurance company doesn't want leaked out. ■

Despite the millions of dollars that insurance companies spend on advertising, their ultimate goal is not to pay claims.

Reminder About Our Firm's Communication Policy

Our goal when we are working on our clients' cases is to obtain the best possible result as quickly as possible. When we are working on your case, our lawyers do not accept unscheduled phone calls or respond to emails. We believe this allows our lawyers to be much more productive and provide fast and effective legal services to our clients. Remember, if you are a client of the firm, you can always call our firm and schedule an appointment to talk with a lawyer at any time about your legal matter.

We will call you back within 24-48 hours unless it is not possible to do so. We will also respond to your emails in the same time frame. We have found that focusing on our clients' cases helps us to provide the best service possible.

This newsletter is provided to clients, friends, and colleagues who have requested it. We provide information on a variety of topics we think our subscribers will be interested in. We do not provide legal advice in this newsletter and receipt of this newsletter does not create an attorney-client relationship with our firm. We are happy to discuss your legal case with you, and if you want to talk to one of our lawyers, don't ever hesitate to call us toll free at 877.724.7800. To add a friend to the newsletter, call us toll free at 877.724.7800. To be removed, call the same number.



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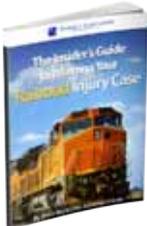
- *What most successful people have in common.*
- *Tips for a great football party.*
- *What you need to know about insurance settlement software.*



THANKS FOR YOUR REFERRALS!

Readers of this newsletter have referred 110 clients to our firm since 2009. Thank you so much!

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SUPERSTAR SPOTLIGHT

Maria Orozco



Maria is the firm's receptionist but she does so much more than answer phones. Maria is normally the first person people interact with when they call the office or come in for an in-office consultation. She's always friendly and helpful and ready to make our guests comfortable. Maria also ensures that each client gets to the proper team member to answer their questions. And Maria helps the Case Managers and Assistant Case Managers with various tasks on each client's case.

Maria also gets to give our clients their settlement checks, and she gets to see the big smiles on our clients' faces when they realize their hard fought legal battle are over and they've won.

Maria truly is a "superstar" in every sense of the word, and we're glad she's part of our team!

MARITIME INFORMATION:

Q: How long do I have to file a Jones Act claim?

A: *Generally speaking, Jones Act injury claims are regulated by a three year statute of limitations from the date the accident occurred.*

While this may seem to give you plenty of time to make the decision whether or not to sue, keep in mind that a lot of unexpected problems can come up that will drag the process out much longer than you anticipated. Witnesses can change their minds or pass away. Companies can change ownership or go out of business entirely. An inexperienced attorney or one from the wrong specialty who doesn't understand the maritime realm may file your case in the wrong venue—unfortunately this is a fairly common occurrence. Too often an injury victim will call the 800 number of the lawyer he or she sees on TV all the time.

Your pain may not be severe a few weeks after the injury but can flare up down the road, after it's too late to get the justice you deserve. ■