

****ADVICE FROM YOUR ATTORNEYS****

SOCIAL AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA/NETWORKS- DO'S AND DON'TS

This information applies to ALL SOCIAL NETWORK SITES AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA, including MySpace, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Google Buzz, Linked-In, cell phone texting/ photographs, etc.

We have seen an increase in electronic surveillance of these accounts and sites by insurance companies, investigators, defense attorneys, prosecutors and law enforcement for purposes of embarrassing and humiliating clients, and used as evidence that your injury was exaggerated or even caused by anything other than the incident to your claim or as evidence against you in a criminal matter and/or family domestic matter such as divorce or child custody. Insurance companies, defense attorneys and prosecutors have successfully used such information, even against those considered innocent, harmlessly joking between private “friends” to convince a judge and juries that clients have been dishonest! Please always be aware of what you say or post, including any photographs or videos, in any format on your computer, internet or cell phone may be brought into or affect your case. Also, be aware that the insurance companies or attorneys may be entitled to request all information contained within your home computers, laptop hard drives, internal hard drives, and other storage devices including memory sticks and cell phones. *They may also be able to ask a judge to grant them access to your social media pages, sites or cell phones, even if you have the highest privacy settings established and they haven't been able to access them to that point.*

We cannot emphasize strongly enough how much these things have the potential to affect your case, so PLEASE FOLLOW OUR ADVICE!

DO:

1. **DISCONTINUE USING!:** Consider taking down your Facebook or other social media pages, profiles completely.
2. **HIGHEST PRIVACY SETTINGS:** If you don't take down your social media pages and profiles, make sure your privacy settings are at the highest levels. This means making sure that only friends can see ANY of your information, and NOT friends of friends or the general public.
3. **BE CAREFUL WHO YOUR “FRIENDS” ARE:** Create “Friends Lists” which can help you further narrow what even your general friend's list has access to. You can create lists so that only certain friends can see your photo albums and status updates. **ONLY ACCEPT FRIEND REQUESTS FROM PEOPLE YOU ACTUALLY KNOW!** Remove people you have as “friends” currently who are only acquaintances or people you don't or barely know.
4. **MAKE YOURSELF “INVISIBLE”:** Remove yourself from Facebook search results by selecting “only friends” under search visibility in your profile settings. Remove yourself from Google by going to your Internet Privacy Settings and unchecking the box for Public Search Listing.

5. **TAKE DOWN PHOTOS/VIDEOS/UNTAG YOURSELF/BLOCK TAGGING BY OTHERS:** Consider removing all photos of yourself from social media pages/networks. If you are not prepared to do this, untag all photos of yourself from Google by going to your Internet Privacy Settings and unchecking the box for Public Search Listing.
6. **BE CAUTIOUS!:** Assume ANYTHING you write on your social media pages OR TEXTS ON YOUR PHONE will be seen at some point by someone which may affect your case. This may be seen by attorneys, a judge or jury who doesn't know you. Think about how things can be perceived differently than how they truly are, especially when taken out of context.

Be aware that Facebook's new settings publish your interests, even if they are private.

DON'T:

1. **DON'T ASSUME YOU ARE SAFE:** Sometimes "friends" can unintentionally pass along information to strangers who may be working on behalf of an attorney, insurance company or law enforcement. Sometimes "friends" can also have different interests, be mad at you and want to settle a score or have a grudge against you and willingly disclose information to attorneys, insurance companies or law enforcement and may pass on information which can hurt your case.
2. **DON'T SEND EMAILS OR TEXTS REGARDING YOUR CASE:** Do not send emails or texts to anyone except your lawyers regarding your case and its progress, your health or activities.
3. **DON'T JOIN WEB/CHAT GROUPS: You do not own the information you post online and it is highly searchable!** Do not enter insurance websites, post on message boards, participate in or comment on blogs, go in to chat rooms about your claim or case related issues. Do not create your own website or start your own blog or group about your experience.

****Once again, we strongly encourage you to stop participating in social media forums and advise you take down all pages, profiles and accounts until your matter has been resolved.**