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LAW FIRM

The Road to Justice Starts Here



Distracted Driving Awareness Month

According to 2018 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention statistics, over 2,800 Americans were killed in crashes involving distracted drivers, and approximately 400,000 were injured. Nearly 500 fatalities involved pedestrians and bicyclists.

Distracted driving has become a national epidemic. The three types of distractions include **visual** (taking your eyes off the road); **manual** (taking your hands off the wheel); and **cognitive** (letting your mind wander).

Texting while driving receives the lion's share of attention, as it involves all three distractions simultaneously. Its dangers can't be overstated. At 55 mph, a texting driver will travel the length of a football field in just four seconds. A lot can go tragically wrong.

But people can be distracted in numerous ways apart from their cell phones. Eating and drinking; applying makeup; adjusting the stereo, temperature, or GPS; interacting with passengers (talk to but don't look at them); gawking at something or someone outside the car; and being in deep thought are among the possibilities.

In most states, the banning of texting while driving is a primary law, which means a driver can be cited without any other traffic offense being involved. It's a mixed bag when it comes to handheld phone calls.

Tips to avoid distracted driving:

- If you need to use your cell phone, pull off the road at a safe place.
- Set your radio and GPS prior to hitting the road.
- Finish grooming, dressing, and eating before you leave home.
- If you're a passenger driving with a distracted driver, speak up! Kindly remind them to focus on their driving.

If you are injured by a negligent driver, contact our office to protect your rights. •



April 2021 News



Slow-Cooker Vegetable Minestrone Soup

Servings: 8; prep time: 30 mins.; cooking time: 6 to 8 hrs.

This crock-pot version of minestrone is heavy on the vegetables and light on the pasta, keeping carbs in check while providing plenty of flavor.

INGREDIENTS

- 4 large carrots, peeled and chopped
- 3 stalks celery, chopped
- 1 small red onion, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 cups fresh green beans, trimmed and cut into 2-inch pieces
- 2 cans (15-ounce) no-sodium-added red kidney beans, rinsed
- 2 cans (15-ounce) no-sodium-added diced tomatoes, undrained
- 6 cups no-sodium-added vegetable broth
- 2 tablespoons Italian seasoning
- 1 teaspoon crushed red pepper
- 3/4 teaspoon salt, divided
- 1/2 teaspoon ground pepper
- 1 large zucchini, chopped
- 4 ounces whole-wheat pasta elbows or other small pasta (about 1 cup)
- 1/2 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese

DIRECTIONS

Step 1. Combine carrots, celery, onion, garlic, green beans, kidney beans, tomatoes, broth, Italian seasoning, crushed red pepper, 1/4 teaspoon salt, and pepper in a 6- to 8-qt. slow cooker. Cover and cook on low for 6 to 8 hours.

Step 2. Stir in zucchini, pasta, and the remaining 1/2 teaspoon salt. Cover and cook on low until the pasta is tender, 15 to 20 minutes more. Serve immediately, topping each serving with about 1½ tablespoons Parmesan.

EQUIPMENT

6- to 8-qt. slow cooker

Recipe courtesy of the EatingWell website, www.eatingwell.com. •



Plumbing the Depths of the *Titanic* Tragedy

On April 14, 1912, the *Titanic* struck an iceberg and sank in the North Atlantic the following day. Much of what people know about the ill-fated trip was gleaned from the 1997 movie, but you can't cover everything in three hours and 15 minutes.

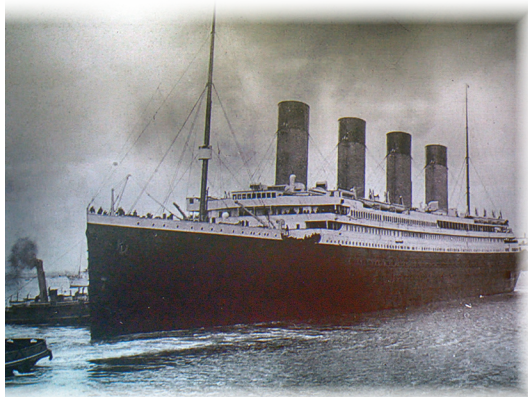
Author Morgan Robertson wrote a novella in 1898 titled *The Wreck of the Titan: Or, Futility* about an ocean liner that collided with an iceberg, lacked enough lifeboats for everyone on board, and had been touted as "unsinkable." Eerily prophetic.

Milton S. Hershey, of chocolate company fame, had a ticket for the *Titanic*'s maiden voyage but didn't make the trip. If he had, the chocolate empire had already been up and running since 1905; however, his many later philanthropic works may have been jeopardized.

The only Japanese passenger aboard the *Titanic*, Masabumi Hosono, boarded a lifeboat, was rescued, and lived to tell the tale. When he returned to Japan, however, the press and government officials cast him as a coward for not going down with the ship. He lost his job and was discredited in future textbooks.

The *Titanic* featured some lavish accommodations, including the second heated swimming pool (saltwater) on the high seas, Turkish baths, a library, and a squash court. However, over 700 third-class passengers had to share two bathtubs. Sneaking into the heated pool was likely a strong temptation.

Binoculars would have been handy for iceberg lookout duty but were locked in a storage locker. Second Officer David Blair was in charge of the key; however, he was reassigned at the 11th hour and forgot to leave it with his replacement. A spare key might have changed the course of history. •





Getting Dogged While Running

April 2021 Notable Dates

April 1

Opening Day
of Cardinals Baseball

April 4

Easter Sunday

April 8

Home Opener of
Cardinals Baseball

April 21

Administrative
Professionals Day

May 9

Mother's Day

May 31

Memorial Day

Many runners have canine tales of woe. A runner may trigger a dog's hunting instinct, be perceived as a territorial challenger, or a dog might simply be ill-tempered.

Runners can lower their odds of joining over 4.5 million dog-bite victims in the U.S. each year, 20 percent of whom require ER visits. Scout new road routes via car prior to running. Note off-leash dogs, dog signage, open gates, etc.

To improve awareness, ditch your headphones or earbuds (at least lower the volume). If you see an untended dog in the distance, cross the street or take a detour.

Carry a small air horn for emergencies. It unleashes a high-decibel sound that jolts a dog's sensitive hearing and may send it scurrying. Pepper spray can be beneficial, but a miss might escalate the situation; wind can make things tricky, too.

If you encounter an aggressive dog — some combination of bared fangs, growling, tense body, erect ears, stiff tail (or held high, wagging faster than normal):

- Stop running; stand still with arms folded across your chest; stay calm.
- Avoid direct eye contact.
- Turn sideways and utilize peripheral vision.
- Vocalize firm commands such as "Go home!"

Most dogs will eventually get bored or befuddled — or sometimes obey! — and retreat. However, if the dog attacks:

- Unleash the air horn or pepper spray.
- Place something between you and the dog: water bottle, cap/visor, towel, etc.
- In a sustained attack, punch, kick, knee, and yell for help.
- Getting knocked down can be life-threatening. Curl up in a ball, chin and knees tucked, and cover your ears and neck with your arms (clench your hands).

Following an attack, seek medical attention, call animal control and/or the police, and contact our office. Unless you provoked the dog or were trespassing, the dog's owner will likely be responsible for your injuries and damages. ●



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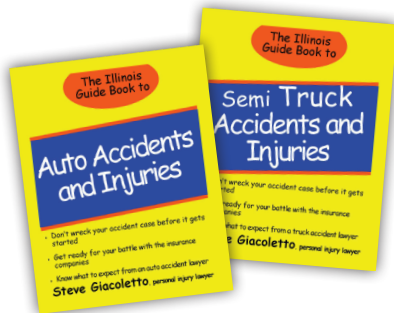
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Making It Safely to the Other Side of the Tracks

According to the Federal Railroad Administration, our nation's railroad crossings were the scenes for 2,216 collisions, 293 fatalities, and 807 injuries (many catastrophic) in 2019. A motorist is 20 times more likely to lose their life in a train collision as they are with another motor vehicle.

A single, empty boxcar weighs roughly 80,000 pounds (equal to a big rig packed to the gills); one diesel locomotive tips the scales at 200,000 to 400,000 pounds. At 55 mph, a 100-car train needs at least a mile to stop completely — with full emergency braking. The physics doesn't bode well for a car driver.

In 2018, over one-third of railroad-crossing fatalities resulted from drivers attempting to outrun a train or drive around the drop-arm crossing gates. However, a train owner/operator, track owner, train designer or manufacturer, and/or municipality are sometimes at fault, too.

Approximately 80 percent of railroad crossings **lack warning signals** outside of a simple sign, frequently due to budgetary considerations in rural areas. **Defective warning signals** defeat their purpose.

Operator error covers the same ground as motor vehicle driver error: speeding, operating the train while impaired by alcohol or drugs, and distracted driving.

Track defects can lead to derailment and other dangerous situations. Obstructed views caused by debris or trees and other plant growth need to be dealt with so lines of sight are clear.

Mechanical defects, faulty brakes in particular, are a menace. **Lack of proper roadway maintenance** leading up to the crossing sometimes plays a role, too.

If you or a loved one is injured (or killed) at a railroad crossing due to another party's negligence, contact our office to protect your rights. ●

