

DAVID E. GORDON

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Service animals are on the job

Service animals are specially trained to aid people with disabilities in their day-to-day life. They are almost always dogs and can be identified by the vest that they wear. Service dogs help with many disabilities, including

visual impairment, hearing impairments, mental illnesses (such as post traumatic stress disorder), seizure disorder, mobility impairment, and diabetes. Among the most common breeds trained to be service dogs are Labrador Retrievers, Golden Retrievers, Labrador Retriever/Golden Retriever crossbred dogs, and German Shepherd Dogs.

The Department of Justice defines a service animal officially as follows:

Service animals are defined as dogs that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. Examples of such work or tasks include guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling a wheelchair, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, reminding a person with mental illness to take prescribed medications, calming a person with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) during an anxiety attack, or performing other duties. Service animals are working animals, not pets. The work or task a dog has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person's disability. Dogs whose sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support do not qualify as service animals under the ADA.

Service animals are usually allowed wherever the general public is allowed. A person with a disability is not allowed to be asked to remove their service animal from a public location unless the dog is out of control and the handler does not take effective action to control it or the dog is not housebroken.

If you see a service animal it is important to remember that the animal is working. Since it is on the job, you should not pet, call to, or distract the animal in any way. If and only if the human gives you permission should you interact with the dog. Service animals perform an important function by allowing disabled individuals to do things they would not otherwise be able to do. We should treat them with the respect they deserve at all times.



Pedestrian safety is a growing concern

When an auto accident involves a pedestrian, the pedestrian is at an obvious disadvantage. Over the last several years, experts have noticed a disturbing trend - a sharp increase in pedestrian fatalities. In a highway safety report released by the Governors Highway Safety Association in 2016, it was found that pedestrian fatalities increased 10% from the prior year, the largest increase since record keeping began in 1975. This matches other reports confirming the trend.

Experts say the increase is due to several factors, including an increase in cell phone use while driving and walking, an increase in the number of cars on the road, and an increase in the number of people walking in high traffic areas.

Some of the safety measures being pursued by officials across the country include identifying high-risk areas, using targeted traffic enforcement, running public information campaigns to increase awareness, and installing traffic calming measures like bigger curbs. Each of us can help to improve safety by decreasing distractions while driving and walking. Pedestrians should avoid cell phone use just like drivers.

If you or a loved one has been injured in a pedestrian/auto accident, contact our office for a free consultation. We are here to help.



What would you do if you were T-boned by a national weather service vehicle? Your shoulder and neck injuries will keep you off work at the steel mill for at least a month. You call the Law Office of David E. Gordon. That's what Bobby Winchester did after a crash in April of 2016. Bobby was issued a \$55,000 settlement check from the United States Treasury. Bobby and his wife, Rhonda, have three children. Bobby can again take care of his family and resume his hobbies of golf and hiking. It was our pleasure to assist him.

Watch for **water-related problems** to protect your home

When it comes to your home, preventing problems is much cheaper than fixing them. That's why it is important to watch for warning signs of damage to come and take care of any problems before they become catastrophes. One of the most common causes of serious home damage is water. Below are three things to watch for so you can make sure your home stands strong for the long term.

- 1. Overflowing gutters.** If clogged or corroded gutters and downspouts are allowing for a rush of water pouring off your roof, you should tackle the problem as soon as possible. Rampaging roof water can erode the soil, deteriorate siding and foundation walls, and eventually find its way inside your home. To prevent problems, remove any clogs and replace any damaged gutters. Also make sure the soil around your home's foundation slopes away from the house at least one inch per six feet.
- 2. Leaky roofs.** Watch for cracked, curled, or missing shingles as well as cracks in the flashing around chimneys and rubber boots around vents. If water makes it through the roof and into your home, you can find yourself with rotting drywall and insulation and significant water damage. Replacing a shingle or two and patching minor leaks can help in the short-term, but a leaky roof will most likely need to be replaced.
- 3. Mold and mildew.** Musty smells, dank air, and black mold are signs of trouble with mold and mildew. Left unchecked, a mold or mildew infestation can cause allergic reactions and asthma attacks. Caught early, mold can be cleaned with a mixture of one cup bleach per one gallon water. Larger outbreaks may require professional assistance.



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A truck hit us and totaled our car. That threw life as we knew it, into a topsy-turvy spin. An accident completely inverts your life. Calling David Gordon was like the weight of the world had been taken off our shoulders. It was very important to know that he was board-certified. He treats your claim, no matter how large or small, like it's the most important thing in the world to him.

-Bill D.



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The information included in this newsletter is not intended as a substitute for professional legal advice. For your specific situation, please call the appropriate legal professional.

Smile! You may be on camera

It is a common practice for insurance companies to hire private investigators to gather evidence that claimants are faking or exaggerating their injuries. If you are involved in a personal injury or workers' compensation case, be aware that anything you do or say in public may come back to haunt you.

A private investigator will follow a claimant, taking photos, video, and audio, hoping to find a moment that proves the injury isn't as bad as reported. Any damaging evidence they turn up can be used in court. If, for example, someone files a workers' compensation claim because of a back injury, a PI will try to capture evidence of that person lifting something that they should not be able to lift with their injury. If you think this type of surveillance is illegal, you are mistaken. Photographing, taking video, and recording audio in public is legal.

Online snooping is another cause for concern. If you are involved in an injury case, the best thing to do is suspend your social media accounts. Even if you're not currently posting, things from your past can be used against you by a skilled attorney. If you've checked all your past posts and decide to keep your account active, set all your privacy settings to the most restrictive and be extremely careful about anything you post. Even private posts and your friends' posts can be used against you in court.

