

DAMAGES

by Brock C. Akers

CHAPTER 1 - GENERAL

Introduction

§ 1.1 PRE-LITIGATION

A. General

- A Message to the Client About Damages
- Client Interview Form Checklist (Personal Injury)
- Physical Examination—Questionnaire
- Health Questionnaire (Toxic Tort)
- Psycho-Social Assessment Checklist
- Checklist of Assistance Needs (Spinal Cord)
- Assessment of Need for Attendant Care
- In-Home Nursing Services Checklist
- Questionnaire for Mothers With Silicone Breast Implants
- Client Interview Form (Wrongful Death)
 - Checklist for Death of Minor Child
 - Checklist for Death of Adult Child
 - Checklist for Death of Parent
 - Checklist for Estate of Deceased
 - Checklist for Death of Spouse
- Information to Be Provided to Economist

B. Authorizations

- HIPAA-Compliant Authorization, Use, or Disclosure of Protected Health Information
- Employment Record Authorization
- General Authorization (Wrongful Death)
- Insurance Authorization
- Employment Commission Authorization
- Medical Authorization for Defendant
- ERISA Authorization
- Request for ERISA Plan
- Request for Copy of Tax Return (Form 4506)
- Request for Transcript of Tax Return (Form 4506-T)
- Request for Social Security Statement
- Request for Social Security Earnings Information

C. Investigation

- Investigation Checklist (Damages)

D. Information Sources

- Newspapers
- Television Stations
- Radio Stations
- Police
- Insurance Adjusters
- Photographs
- Medical Illustrations
- Medical Records
- Business Records
- Military Records
- The Internet



Social Media
Request Pertaining to Military Records
Perpetual Calendar
Table of Days
Leap Years
Life Expectancy
Case Notes
Earnings and Unemployment Rates by
Educational Attainment
Diagnostic Codes
Insurance Billing Codes

E. Experts

Treating Physician
Other Physician
Physiatrist
Anesthesiologist
Psychiatrist/Psychologist/Social Worker
Pathologist
Physical Therapist
Economist
Employment Expert
Nurse
Biomechanical Engineer
Vocational Expert
Life Plan Expert
Property Damage Expert
Admissibility of Scientific Expert Testimony—
The Impact of *Daubert*

F. Lay Witnesses

Client (Personal Injury Case)
Beneficiary/Client (Wrongful Death Case)
Fact Witness

G. Discovery

Medical Records Affidavit (Hospital)
Medical Records Affidavit (Doctor Records)
Affidavit for Services
Affidavit for Services (Doctor)
Letter to Hospital or Doctor (Wrongful Death)
Letter to Hospital or Doctor (Personal Injury)
Motion Requesting to Disclose its Experts

§ 1.2 TRIAL

A. Trial—Introduction

Pleadings Checklist—Damages—Personal Injury
Pleadings Checklist—Damages—Wrongful Death
General Checklist—Proof of Damages (Personal Injury)
Pleadings Checklist—Property Damage
Motion in Limine
Voir Dire Examination
Opening Statement
Jury Argument

B. Jury Charge

Wrongful Death
Personal Injury Damages

Exemplary Damages
Injury of Spouse
Property Damage
Motion for Remittitur
Response to Motion for Remittitur

§ 1.3 ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION

- A. Mediation
- B. Mini-Trial
- C. Summary Jury Trial
- D. Binding Arbitration
- E. Court-Annexed Arbitration
- F. Other Forms of ADR
- G. Conclusion
- H. ADR Internet Sites

CHAPTER 2 - WITNESS CHECKLISTS

Introduction

§ 2.1 LAY WITNESSES

- A. Lay Witness Foundation
- B. Injured Party
- C. Spouse (Personal Injury)
- D. Employer/Supervisor (Personal Injury)
- E. “Before and After” Witnesses (Personal Injury)
- F. Beneficiary (Wrongful Death)
- G. Friends and Acquaintances (Wrongful Death)
- H. Employer/Supervisor (Wrongful Death)
- I. Fellow Employee (Personal Injury)
- J. Fellow Employee (Wrongful Death)
- K. Accident Scene Witnesses
- L. Defendant

§ 2.2 EXPERT WITNESSES

- A. Comment—Basis of Expert Opinion
- B. General Expert Checklist
 - 1. Retaining an Expert
 - 2. Preparing the Expert Witness
 - 3. Direct Examination of the Testifying Expert
 - 4. Foundation Checklist Expert Opinion—Federal Practice
- C. Medical Doctor/Osteopath (Personal Injury)
- D. Medical Doctor/Osteopath (Wrongful Death)
- E. Neurologist (Quadriplegic Injury)
- F. Doctor’s Report (Quadriplegic Injury)
- G. Physical Therapist (Spinal Cord Injury)
- H. Muscle Examination (Used by Physical Therapist)
- I. Psychologist
- J. Biomechanical Engineer (Personal Injury and Wrongful Death)
- K. Rehabilitation Consultant
- L. Vocational and Career Counselor (Amputation)
- M. Vocational Evaluator (Orthopedic Injury)
- N. Vocational Rehabilitation Consultant (Spinal Cord Injury)
- O. Employment Expert (Personal Injury and Wrongful Death)
- P. Economist

Introduction

§ 3.1 PERSONAL INJURY: ELEMENTS OF DAMAGE

- A. General
- B. Physical Pain
- C. Mental Anguish
- D. Loss of Earnings and Earning Capacity
- E. Disfigurement
- F. Physical Impairment
- G. Medical Expenses
- H. Loss of Consortium
 - 1. Spouse's Claim for Loss of Consortium
 - 2. Parent's Claim for Loss of Living Child's Society
 - 3. Child's Right to Claim Loss of Consortium for Living Parent
 - 4. General Considerations
- I. Loss of the Enjoyment of Life
- J. General Considerations

§ 3.2 BYSTANDER RECOVERY—PERSONAL INJURY AND WRONGFUL DEATH

- A. The Plaintiff Must Be Near the Scene of the Accident
- B. Bystander's Sensory and Contemporaneous Perception of the Accident
- C. Requirement That There Be a Close Familial Relationship
- D. Foreseeability of Bystander Plaintiff's Presence Near Accident
- E. Belief in Serious Injury or Death
- F. Serious Injury or Death in Fact
- G. Emotional Distress Must Be Serious
- H. Miscellaneous

§ 3.3 ZONE OF DANGER CASES

§ 3.4 THE TORT OF NEGLIGENT INFLICTION OF EMOTIONAL TRAUMA

§ 3.5 WRONGFUL BIRTH CASES

- A. Wrongful Birth (Failure to Inform)
- B. Wrongful Birth (Abortion)
- C. Wrongful Birth (Faulty Sterilization Cases—Child Born Deformed)
- D. Wrongful Pregnancy or Wrongful Conception

§ 3.6 WRONGFUL LIFE CASES

§ 3.7 PRENATAL INJURIES

§ 3.8 EVIDENCE OF INJURY

- A. What is an "Injury"
- B. Proof of Injury
- C. Enhanced Risk of Contracting Disease
- D. Emotional Distress from Enhanced Risk—"Cancerphobia"
- E. Medical Surveillance or Monitoring Damages
- F. When Does an Injury Occur
- G. Aggravation of Pre-existing Condition

§ 3.9 WRONGFUL DEATH

- A. Death of Fetus
- B. Death of Adult Child
- C. Mental Anguish of Parent
- D. Loss of Consortium/Companionship of Child
- E. Effect of Remarriage
- F. Damages to Decedent's Estate

§ 3.10 MISCELLANEOUS CONSIDERATIONS

- A. Jury Argument
- B. Prejudgment Interest
- C. Bifurcated Trial
- D. Shortened Life Expectancy
- E. Ad Damnum
- F. Interspousal Immunity
- G. Remittitur
- H. Admissibility of Defendant's Net Worth
- I. Mitigation
- J. Damages for Negligently Caused Indirect Economic Loss
- K. Liability of Intentional/Negligent Transmission of Sexual Disease
- L. Loss of Chance
- M. Lost Profits
- N. Tort Reform
- O. Caps on Damages
- P. Conditional Medical Authorizations
- Q. Exemplary (Punitive) Damages
- R. Taxation of Personal Injury Recovery
- S. Derivative Claim vs. Independent Claim—Bystander Recovery
- T. Dignitary Torts (Defamation, Intentional Infliction of Emotional Distress, etc.)
- U. Abuse of Process
- V. Quantum Meruit

§ 3.11 ELEMENTS OF PROPERTY DAMAGE

- A. Diminution of Value or Cost of Repairs
- B. Loss of Use
- C. Diminution of Value After Repairs Are Made
- D. Subrogation
- E. Impact of ERISA on Medical Expense Subrogation
- F. Mitigation of Damages
- G. Bad Faith

§ 3.12 THE COLLATERAL SOURCE RULE

- A. History and Present Applications
- B. Collateral Source Checklist for Motion in Limine

§ 3.13 USE OF AN ECONOMIST

- A. Subject Matter of Economist Testimony
- B. Who May Testify
- C. Role of Economist
- D. What Economist is Entitled to Consider

§ 3.14 LAY WITNESSES

- A. Federal Rules of Evidence
- B. Application of Federal Rule of Evidence 701 in Federal Courts

§ 3.15 SCOPE OF EXPERT TESTIMONY

§ 3.16 FEDERAL TORT CLAIMS ACT (28 U.S.C. § 2671-§ 2680)

- A. State Damage Limitations
- B. Punitive Damages
- C. Loss of Enjoyment of Life
- D. Wrongful Death

§ 3.17 RECOVERY OF ATTORNEY'S FEES

- A. Generally
- B. Recovery for Litigation Support Staff
- C. Disputed Rates
- D. The Lodestar Method- Fee Shifting
- E. States

CHAPTER 4 - SETTLEMENTS

Introduction

§ 4.1 EVALUATION AND SETTLEMENTS STRATEGY

§ 4.2 TAXABILITY OF PUNITIVE DAMAGES

§ 4.3 SETTLEMENT BROCHURES

- Catastrophic Injury—Exemplar
- Wrongful Death—Exemplar

§ 4.4 DAY-IN-THE-LIFE VIDEOS

- Exemplar Script—Day-in-the-Life Video/Settlement Brochure
- Predicate for Admitting a Day-in-the-Life Video

§ 4.5 TRUST AGREEMENTS

- Trust Agreements—Exemplar

§ 4.6 GUARDIANSHIPS

- Application for Letters of Guardianship
- Waiver and Renunciation
- Order Appointing Guardian

§ 4.7 STRUCTURED SETTLEMENTS

§ 4.8 ALTERNATIVES TO STRUCTURED SETTLEMENTS

§ 4.9 SETTLEMENT CHECKLIST

§ 4.10 NURSING CARE EVALUATIONS

§ 4.11 INTERNET SITES

CHAPTER 5 - SPECIAL CASES

§ 5.1 BURNS

- Introduction
- Potential Witnesses

- A. Background
- B. Assessment and Classification
- C. Early Management

D. Complications

1. Circulatory complications
2. Pulmonary complications
3. Contractures
4. Hypertrophic scarring
5. Pruritus (itching)
6. Psychological complications
7. Other complications

E. Damage Assessment

1. Medical expenses, past and future
2. Psychological counseling for victim and family, past and future
3. Loss of income and/or earning capacity, past and future
4. Religious perspective—pain and mental anguish
5. Physical impairment, scarring, disfigurement, and amputation
6. Loss of consortium, loss of services, and bystander's recovery

F. Outline

G. Glossary of Terms

H. Significant Cases

§ 5.2 SENSORY IMPAIRMENTS

Introduction

Potential Witnesses

A. Olfactory Impairments

1. Background
2. Cause
3. Loss of earning capacity
4. Human losses
5. Outline

B. Auditory Impairments

1. Background
2. Diagnosis
3. Damages
4. Outline
5. Glossary of terms

C. Visual Impairments

1. Background
2. Eye injuries
3. Legal blindness
4. Damages
5. Outline
6. Glossary of terms
7. Abbreviations

D. Significant Cases

§ 5.3 POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

Introduction

Potential Witnesses

A. Background

B. Diagnosis

1. Exposure to traumatic event
2. Persistently re-experiencing event
3. Persistent avoidance of stimuli and numbing of general responsiveness
4. Persistent symptoms of increased arousal

- C. Proof
- D. Defense
- E. Types of Cases
- F. Expert Testimony
- G. Outline
- H. Significant Cases

§ 5.4 SPINAL CORD INJURIES

- Introduction
- Potential Witnesses (Expert)

- A. Overview
- B. Checklist for Proof of Nature and Extent of Damages
- C. Exemplar Outline of Care
- D. Long Term Goals
- E. Short Term Goals
- F. Cost of Care
 - a. Medical equipment
 - b. Transportation
 - c. Supplies
 - d. Medications
 - e. Home environmental modifications
 - f. Miscellaneous adapted equipment
 - g. Attendant care
 - h. Tendon transplant surgery
 - i. Evaluation center
 - j. Additional expenses
 - k. Training by occupational therapist
- G. Living Environment Modification for the Impaired
- H. Recent Developments in Prostheses, Assistive Devices, and Equipment for Persons with Spinal Cord Injuries
- I. Significant Cases

§ 5.5 BACK INJURIES

- Introduction
- Potential Witnesses

- A. Overview
- B. Kinds of Back Injuries
- C. Anatomical and Other Factors Bearing on Back Injuries
- D. Herniated Disc
- E. Diagnosis of a Herniated Disc
- F. Tests Used in Back Injury Cases
- G. Neurologic Deficit
- H. Objective vs. Subjective, or Signs vs. Symptoms
- I. Sprains vs. Strains
- J. Conservative Treatment of Back Injuries
- K. Grading System for Intervertebral Disc Injury
- L. Disability Ratings
- M. Form—Initial Back Pain Evaluation
- N. Medical Drawings
 - Pelvis, lumbar vertebrae, and nerve roots
 - Lumbar vertebra
 - Vertebral ligaments

- Vertebral column
- Dermatomes
- O. Significant Cases

§ 5.6 HEAD INJURIES
Introduction
Potential Witnesses

- A. Background
- B. Diagnosis
- C. Proof
- D. Defense
- E. Peripheral Injuries
- F. Outline
- G. Glossary of Terms
- H. Significant Cases

§ 5.7 REFLEX SYMPATHETIC DYSTROPHY SYNDROME (RSDS)
Introduction
Potential Witnesses

- A. Comments on RSDS
- B. Checklist
- C. Case Law
- D. References
- E. Questionnaire #1 Statistics

§ 5.8 PROPERTY DAMAGE
Introduction
Potential Witnesses

- A. General Checklist
- B. Witness Checklist
- C. Case Law

CHAPTER 6 - COLLECTING THE JUDGMENT

Introduction

- § 6.1 POST-JUDGMENT DISCOVERY
- A. Plaintiff's Discovery in Aid of Enforcement of Judgment
 - B. Motion to Compel Answers to Plaintiff's Discovery in Aid of Enforcement of Judgment and for Sanctions
 - C. Order to Show Cause
 - D. Motion for Contempt
 - E. Letter Requesting Service of Writ of Execution
 - F. Plaintiff's Application for Writ of Garnishment After Judgment

§ 6.2 CIVIL REMEDY (Plaintiff's Original Petition)

§ 6.3 CASE LAW

INDEX