

When You Hear About a Personal Injury or a Personal Injury Lawsuit, What Does It All Mean?

A personal injury is a type of harm that an individual suffers as a result of someone else's wrongful act or omission (failure to act when they should have). The types of injuries suffered vary depending on the circumstances and can include, among others, broken bones, lost sight, severed limbs, and death. Also, the wrongful injury causing event could be something caused without fault or intentionally. An example of an unintentional harm is when somebody accidentally rear ends the car in front of them because they simply were not paying attention. This is commonly referred to as negligence. Negligence, in a nutshell, means that a person either did something or did not do something, which resulted in someone else getting hurt. The actual legal requirements are a little more complex, but this simplified explanation will work for now.

Regarding personal injuries caused by the intentional or reckless acts of others, intentional acts include rape, assault, battery, and other types of physical and emotional abuse. Examples of reckless conduct that can cause harm to innocent people are drunk driving, discharging a firearm in public or detonating explosives in public places.

Whether we are talking about personal injuries caused by negligent, intentional or reckless acts, the law generally provides that victims of such conduct who suffer harm are entitled to compensation. And in some instances, victims are also eligible to receive punitive or exemplary damages to ensure that the person or business that caused the harm in the first place does not repeat its bad conduct. More about punitive damages in a minute. For now, let us talk about injury compensation.

What can the law do for you if you have suffered personal injuries caused by someone else? In a perfect world, the need to bring a lawsuit to receive compensation for your injuries would not be necessary because the person who caused the harm would apologize and then endeavor to pay for the damage they caused. The current Court system requires, and actually prefers, that those responsible for harming someone else accept responsibility and pay to the victim reasonable compensation. Reasonable compensation includes such things as lost wages, lost future wages if the hurt person can no longer do their job, the payment of past and future medical bills, and the costs of future and ongoing care if the person can no longer care for themselves. There are additional items that constitute reasonable compensation but the list can be infinite because each person and each harm is unique.

Regarding punitive damages, the imposition of punitive damages is designed to prevent more people from getting hurt. The prevention aspect of punitive damages is to create a "sting" to the defendant. A proper "sting" is only effective if the defendant feels it financially. Stated differently, generally, punitive damages are determined on an ability to pay basis. So do not be surprised when you hear or read about a jury that made a big punitive damage finding because it likely means that someone got hurt real bad or died, the defendant did something really bad, and the defendant has the financial wherewithal to pay the damages.

As a public service announcement, be leery of the argument and those promoting it that customers pay when there are big punitive damages awards. This is not really accurate because safe business practices actually save money in the short and long terms. And do not forget, we live in a civilized society and quick profits should never trump personal safety and well-being. Pass it on.

Why personal injury or victim compensation lawsuits? A lawsuit is necessary because sometimes those responsible for causing harm do not take responsibility for the harm. The Court case is designed to address issues of fairness. If the bad person caused the harm, the jury is empowered by law to tell that bad person to fix it. The concept is simple and injury victims should not be frowned upon because they were forced to file a lawsuit in the first place. After all, they did not ask to get hurt.

One more thing, if you have been hurt by someone else, or you know of someone who has been hurt by someone else, make sure medical attention is the first thing on everyone's mind. Take care of the injuries first. Worry about lawyers and lawsuits as a last resort and trust that the person or business that caused the harm will fix it. If not, then call a lawyer. To ensure that you receive what the law provides for your situation and injuries, be sure to seek the assistance of a lawyer.



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The Re-View

Merv Hecht

Send comments to editor@smdp.com

Restaurant Snapshot: Charlie's Kabob

GENERAL COMMENT: The new food court in the Santa Monica Place is a lot of fun. There are two Japanese restaurants, one taco place, a chicken and rib joint that needs improvement, a crepe place, one pizza place (and it was tasty), a typical Chinese, and best of all, Charlie's Kabob. The boss, John Mahgadi is right there to watch over you, and lots of his friends show up.

WHERE: On the third level of the new Santa Monica Place.

WHEN: Seven days a week, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., 10 p.m. on Friday and Saturday nights, 8 p.m. on Sundays.

BEST DISHES: The Persian beef, enough for two, at \$9.95 is the best deal. All the kabobs are great, and the portions very generous. But the special treat here is the

Persian lamb shank, which is gourmet quality. Good pita bread, pita sandwiches and rice.

BEST FEATURE: Fast service, top quality, good tomato and cucumber salads on the side.

WORST FEATURE: Nothing negative if you don't mind eating in a food court.

WHAT TO DRINK: I had a root beer.

PRICES: Don't even worry about it.

BOTTOM LINE: Worth the voyage. And don't neglect the baklava for dessert.

Merv Hecht, the food and wine critic for the Santa Monica Daily Press, is a wine buyer and consultant to a number of national and international food and wine companies. He can be reached at mervynhecht@yahoo.com.

Speedy turkey and sides, fresh off the press

BY J.M. HIRSCH

AP Food Editor

Admittedly, I am totally late to the panini press party. But I've totally fallen for mine.

After purchasing one on a bit of a whim, then barely using it, I've suddenly discovered the many and often unexpected ways to use it to make my weeknight cooking faster, easy and less messy.

Boneless, skinless chicken breasts, for example, cooked so quickly and so well, there was no time for them to dry out. Bacon crisped up perfectly in no time. French toast on the panini press totally rocked. And don't even get me started about the hash browns.

So for this recipe, I decided to do the entire meal on the press — meat and a veggie side.

For the meat, I opted for turkey tenderloins sliced into thin medallions. If you'd rather do chicken, just get thinly sliced chicken breasts or slice regular breasts into cutlets. A quick Asian-style marinade effortlessly added tons of flavor and the medallions cooked in no time on the press.

For the side, I went with sliced portobello mushrooms and asparagus, both of which have the heft to stand up to the high heat of the press.

Panini press turkey medallions with mushrooms and asparagus

Start to finish: 45 minutes (15 minutes active)

Servings: 4

1/4 cup seasoned rice vinegar

2 tablespoons toasted sesame oil

2 tablespoons soy sauce

1 teaspoon garlic powder

1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger

Ground black pepper

1 1/4 pounds turkey tenderloin, cut into 1/2-inch-thick rounds

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 tablespoon hoisin sauce

1 bunch asparagus, bottoms trimmed, halved crosswise

2 large portobello mushrooms, cut into thick slices

1 tablespoon toasted sesame seeds

1/2 teaspoon kosher salt

In a medium bowl, whisk together the vinegar, sesame oil, soy sauce, garlic powder, ginger and 1/2 teaspoon black pepper. Add the turkey rounds, turning to coat each. Cover and refrigerate for 30 minutes.

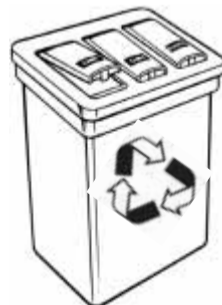
Meanwhile, in a second medium bowl, whisk together the olive oil, hoisin and 1/4 teaspoon black pepper. Add the asparagus and mushrooms, then toss to coat evenly. Set aside until the meat is ready.

Heat the oven to 200.

Once the meat has marinated, heat a panini press or other countertop grill.

Arrange the turkey rounds on the panini press, close it and cook for 3 1/2 minutes, or until browned on both sides. Transfer the rounds to an oven-safe platter, sprinkle with sesame seeds, then place in the oven to keep warm.

Arrange the asparagus and mushrooms on the panini press, close it and cook for 3 minutes, or until the vegetables are nicely seared and just tender. Sprinkle them with the salt, then cook for another minute. Serve the vegetables with the turkey medallions.



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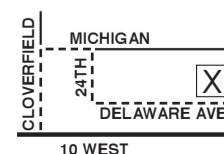
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