



# The Road to Justice Starts Here

## Play It Safe with a Post-Accident Medical Checkup



It's not just major, violent auto collisions that lead to injuries to drivers and passengers. Seemingly minor fender-benders can cause significant injury, too.

Injuries sustained from an auto crash might not be noticed initially—sometimes for hours, days, even weeks—for a variety of reasons. A car crash induces a rush of adrenaline and endorphins, chemicals that raise a person's energy level and frequently block pain. Once the "high" dissipates, pain may kick in.

Soft-tissue injuries cause harm to tendons, muscles, and ligaments and are precipitated by sudden, jarring stops, and when bodies get tossed around inside the car. Whiplash injuries are common. Soft-tissue injury symptoms—pain, swelling, and reduced mobility—might not present themselves immediately, and injuries are not visible on X-rays.

Concussions occur when the brain strikes the inside of the skull with great force. Some concussion symptoms are obvious from the outset. Others may be subtle and/or delayed.

An appointment with a medical doctor is highly recommended following a collision. He/she will assess your overall physical well-being, help you monitor symptoms of potential injuries, and document your condition, which is vital to possibly filing a future medical claim. Procrastination diminishes your chances of success.

Insurance adjusters also know that injury symptoms are sometimes delayed. They may pressure you to agree to an early settlement, before symptoms have manifested themselves. If you sign a release and symptoms occur afterward, you can no longer ask the insurance company to pay for your treatment.

If you have been injured in an auto accident, contact our office today for a free consultation. ●



### February 2016 News



# Welcome Caitlyn

We are pleased to announce that Caitlyn Stern has joined our office as our intake coordinator. Caitlyn is a 2015 graduate of the University of South Carolina with a major in Criminal Justice. She is also a graduate of Blythewood High School.

Although she is new to our office we have already learned that she is very smart, and very serious about providing excellent services to our clients. Do you have a friend or family member that needs help with a legal matter? Feel free to refer them to Caitlyn by calling (803) 753-1476. ●



## Legal Question of the Month



*James Snell, Esq.*

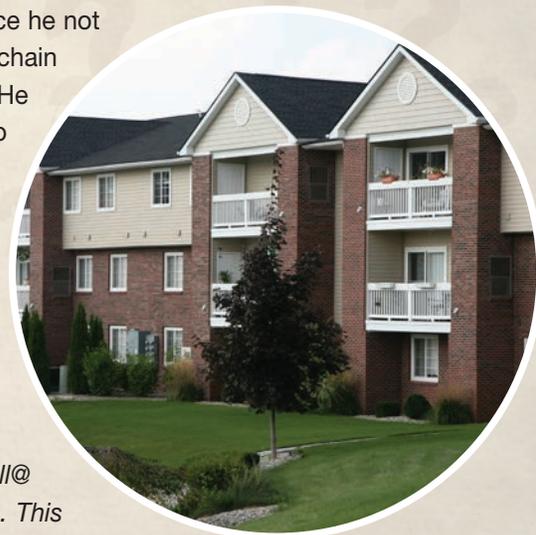
**My adult son lives in an off-campus apartment complex. Last week two uniformed police officers came to my son's door. They knocked very loudly and woke my son up. When he opened the door they pushed it completely open and came inside. They walked through the entire apartment and even looked in his closets and cabinets. My son didn't give them permission to enter and they didn't have a search warrant. They didn't find anything and they just left. This seems very wrong to me. What rights do we have?**

I am very sorry that your son had this negative experience with the police. Unfortunately, this type of police conduct is very common in student and low-income apartment communities. What they police did was illegal, and violates your son's 4th Amendment rights under the United States Constitution. Police can only enter a private residence when they have permission to do so, a warrant, or there is an emergency situation.

My advice to anyone in your son's position is that unless he needs help from the police he not let them inside. To prevent the police from forcing their way in again he should use a chain lock. Politely but firmly let them know they can't be allowed inside without a warrant. He also has a right to simply decline to acknowledge the police at his door. If the police do not have a warrant, they will eventually leave.

At a minimum your son should consider filing a formal complaint with the police department regarding the officer's conduct (do this by mail as we have clients in the local area arrested at the police station for trying to file a complaint). Technically the officer's conduct also violates the civil laws against trespass, and your son could potentially file a lawsuit against the officers personally as well as their department.

*Do you have a legal question that you'd like to see answered here? E-mail it to [jamesnell@snelllaw.com](mailto:jamesnell@snelllaw.com). If your question is used you will receive a \$25 Starbucks gift certificate. This month's question comes from Dana in Lexington. ●*



# Special Recognition



Every month our office makes a donation to a worthy cause. Recently Jim Snell was recognized our support of the Scottish Rite Temple Historic Preservation Foundation. The Scottish Rite is active in the Columbia area and operates a RiteCare Center on Garner's Ferry Road. We support the RiteCare Center's mission to provide speech and language therapy to children and are making them our charity again this month. •

## Be Wary of Misinformation from Adjusters



The insurance adjuster who contacts you after a wreck is a professionally trained negotiator whose job is to assist in maximizing the insurance company's profits. A common story from them is that there is a "maximum" legal amount you can be paid for pain and suffering or any injuries. This is a

tactic they use to try to trick people in settling their cases sooner and for less money than might be in their best interest. South Carolina law sets no such "maximum". If you hear this it is a red-flag that you should consult with an attorney before making any decisions about your case. •

## Current Staff Directory

Thanks to referrals from current and past clients we've been growing. Our staff now includes:

James R. Snell, Jr., (Jim) Attorney  
Johnson M. Snell, (John) Attorney  
Vicki Koutsogiannis, Attorney  
Lee Snell, Office Manager  
Shannon Williamson, Client Services Coordinator  
Caitlyn Stern, Intake Coordinator

February 2016 Important Dates

**February 2**  
Groundhog Day

**February 7**  
Super Bowl Sunday

**February 8**  
Chinese New Year

**February 9**  
Mardi Gras

**February 10**  
Vicki's Birthday

**February 14**  
Valentine's Day

**February 15**  
Presidents' Day



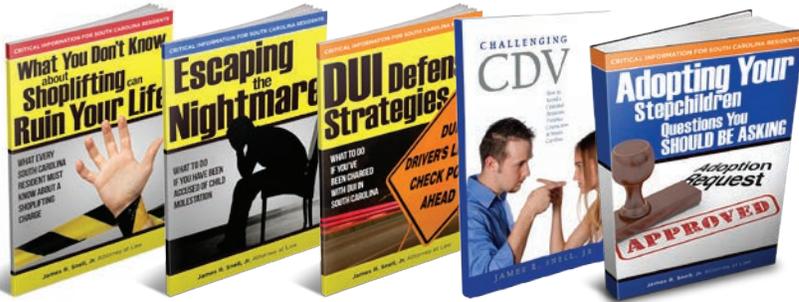
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## Recent Case Successes!

Attorney **John Snell** recently settled an automobile accident case on behalf of a single mother with three young children. The final amount of the settlement was over three times the insurance company's initial offer.

Attorney **Vicki Koutsogiannis** recently received a not-guilty verdict from a Lexington County jury. Her client was a truck driver who had been accused of making an illegal turn.

Attorney **Jim Snell** obtained a \$61,000 Workers' Compensation settlement.

*Any result the lawyer or law firm may have achieved on behalf of clients in other matters does not necessarily indicate similar results can be obtained for other clients. •*