



The Road to Justice Starts Here

Stop, Look, and Listen



Every year people in South Carolina are seriously injured and killed due to accidents occurring at railroad crossings. There are no minor accidents between a train and a car, truck or motorcycle.

As soon as an accident occurs the railroad will deploy its team of investigators and experts to try to establish evidence that the accident was the fault of the vehicle driver. They will look for evidence of distracted driving, trying to beat the descending gates, stopping on the tracks, or of an impaired driver.

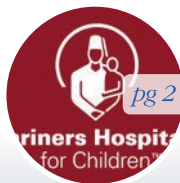
However, many accidents are in fact caused or contributed by circumstances under the control of the railroad, or of the government agency charged with maintaining the nearby road. This can include failures to ensure a proper line of sight down the track, properly-working warning lights, or an improperly-designed crossing. In addition, train crews have an obligation to operate the train at a safe speed, and to sound the horn when approaching crossings.

The best way to avoid a train collision is to stop, look and listen. Always be mindful when crossing railroad tracks. Don't bet your life that crossing arms and warning lights will always work. A little awareness can go a long way to protecting your life and the lives of your passengers.

In the unfortunate event of a collision however it is important that the family involved takes immediate steps to protect their legal rights. It is also important that those impacted not sign any documents until they have first consulted with an attorney. •



July 2015 News



New Domestic Violence Law

Domestic violence has become a hot political topic. Although South Carolina has had existing specialized laws in place for some time, area politicians thought that more needed to be done. As a result the legislature passed the South Carolina Domestic Reform Act. It went into effect on June 4, 2015.

The law creates a tiered system, including new criminal charges of Domestic Violence 3rd Degree (up to ninety days in jail), Domestic Violence 2nd Degree (up to 3 years in prison), and Domestic Violence 1st Degree (up to ten years in prison). This only changed the law for new cases (after June 4th), older cases will still proceed under the old law.

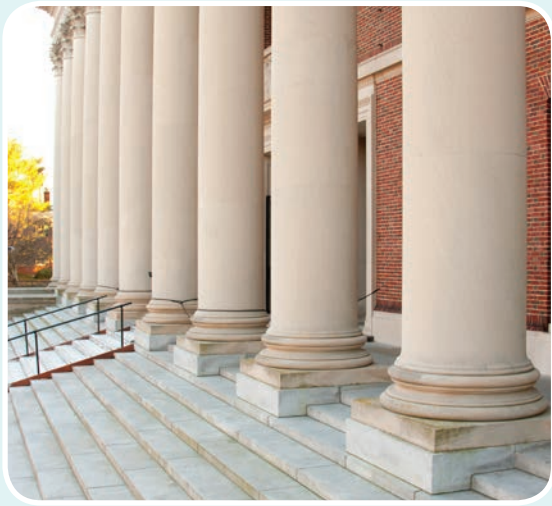
We anticipate representing hundreds of individuals under this new law, and in fact started seeing cases with the new charges the very next day the law went into effect. While the law drastically increases the possible penalties for anyone charged with CDV, there are no additional safeguards put in place to protect families against false or unfair charges. Expect to see extremely high bonds and lengthy “no contact” orders put in place even in cases with no physical injuries and where no one is pressing charges. As a result, it is more important than ever that anyone charged with domestic violence consult with an attorney before going to court.

Jim Snell is the author of the book “Challenging CDV”, the book on South Carolina’s domestic violence law. You can download a copy today by visiting our website www.FreeLegalReports.com, or call us and we’ll be happy to mail you a printed copy. You can also visit our domestic violence defense website at www.CDVLawyer.com. •



Our Firm Charitable Contribution
Of the Month Is Being Made to:
Shriner’s Hospital for Children

Lawyers to Attend Harvard Summer Session



Lawyers Jim Snell and John Snell, both members of the National College of DUI Defense, will be attending the college's 2015 summer session to be held at the Harvard Law School in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

The program agenda includes presentations on trial practice including opening and closing statements, and cross-examination of the arresting officers. Additionally there will be training on laboratory analysis, and workshops to practice courtroom defense strategies with some of the top defense attorneys from around the country.

July 2015 – Important Dates

July 1
World UFO Day

July 3
Office Closed

July 4
Independence Day

July 14
Bastille Day

July 19
Jim's Birthday

Check out our next issue to see some pictures from their trip to the Harvard campus and Boston. ●

Adopting Your Stepchildren – Questions You Should Be Asking

We are pleased to announce the latest report written by Jim Snell. This report is designed to provide helpful information to anyone who may want to consider whether or not a step-parent adoption is right for their family.

This report answers questions such as:

- What are the benefits to a step-parent adoption? (P. 4)
- How does an adoption protect your family more than a Will? (P. 6)
- What happens at the court approval hearing? (P. 12)

If you would like to receive a free copy of this report please visit our website at www.FreeLegalReports.com or call our office at (803) 753-1476. ●





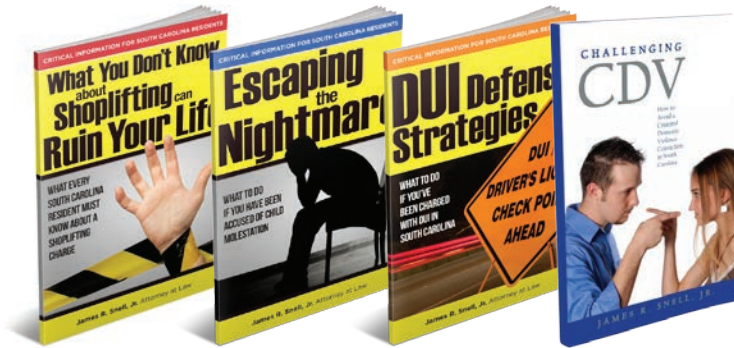
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Legal Question of the Month

My mother died earlier this year. She didn't have a will. How is her property divided up? Do we need to go to Probate Court?

Dying without a will is known as intestate. Under South Carolina law in an intestate situation one-half of their property will go to their surviving spouse (if any) and the remainder is divided among the children. So for example if your mother was married at the time of her death, and had four children then 50% would go to her husband and each child would receive 12.5% of her estate.

It will be necessary to go to Probate Court in the event that your mother left any assets, including bank accounts in her name only, vehicles, or real estate. If your mother's estate is very small and doesn't involve real estate, then you may be able to handle Probate Court on your own. If the estate is more substantial, there is a disagreement between heirs, or it involves real estate you'll want to consult with an attorney.

Have your own legal question you'd like to see featured? E-mail it to us at jamesnell@snelllaw.com. If your question is featured we'll send you a \$25 Starbucks gift card! •

