

Shannon Law Group, P.C.

Where Compassion Meets Justice

Little Sleep and Big Trucks— *A Dangerous Combo*

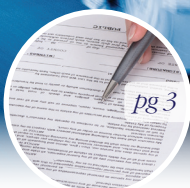
Over 30,000 Americans lose their lives on our roadways each year, including nearly 4,000 who are involved in collisions with large commercial trucks. Many factors play roles in triggering accidents, but one that's become more prominent in recent years is fatigued driving.

Studies have shown that fatigue is a critical factor in up to 30 percent of fatal truck crashes and 15 percent of crashes involving serious injury. Fatigue is dangerous no matter what size vehicle is being driven, but the sheer size and weight of a large commercial truck—which, including cargo, may weigh up to 80,000 pounds—magnifies the destructive force of a crash.

When drivers are fatigued, reaction time suffers, judgment is impaired, and drivers are often unaware of their diminished performance. A truck driver not sleeping for 24 hours is equivalent to having a blood-alcohol concentration of .10, which is over twice the legal limit for truck drivers in most states.

Driver fatigue has many sources. Lack of sleep, long hours, stressful work with tight schedules, nighttime driving (when the body wants to be sleeping), monotony, physical labor in addition to driving, poor health and fitness, medication, and sleep disorders (e.g., sleep apnea), among other circumstances, all contribute to fatigued driving.

There are federal laws to regulate hours on the road, required break times, and so forth, but that doesn't mean drivers will automatically get quality sleep, or that some companies or drivers won't push the legal limits on work regulations. At Shannon Law Group, P.C., we concentrate much of our practice to this area. ●



Asbestos Exposure and Mesothelioma

Many people today have heard of the dangers of asbestos exposure in the home or workplace. The most serious of asbestos-related diseases may be mesothelioma, a rare but aggressive form of cancer affecting the lining of the lungs and abdomen. Exposure to asbestos is the primary cause and risk factor for mesothelioma.

The dangers of asbestos exposure have been well known for over eighty years. Despite this knowledge, many companies continued using it extensively in products and workplaces well into the 1970s. These corporations ignored the deadly nature of asbestos for decades, willfully putting the safety of their workers and the general public behind these companies' own profits.

One of the hallmarks of mesothelioma is that the disease remains latent in the body for a long time before a doctor can definitively diagnose it. Mesothelioma can lie dormant in the body for anywhere from 10 to 50 years, with most latency periods being between 30 to 45 years. Because of the extended latency period, many victims of mesothelioma and other asbestos-related diseases (such as lung cancer) are older individuals.

Asbestos-related mesothelioma cases must be filed within a certain timeframe. If you or a loved one is considering filing an action, review the statute of limitations closely.

This issue hits close to home with us. We handled a case for a friend of the family who was diagnosed with mesothelioma after a lifetime of service to the automobile industry. It is imperative that the attorney in these cases identify the sources of the asbestos and act quickly to seek a remedy for their client. ●



January 2016 Important Dates

January 1 New Year's Day **January 6** Naperville North Spring Semester begins
January 9 Johnny Carmine premier basketball game **January 10** St. Joan
6th grade girls vs. All Saints **January 10** Notre Dame Spring Semester begins
January 21 Benet swim team at St. Viator **January 31** Univ. of Illinois
basketball vs. Wisconsin



Did You Know?

The tomato is the world's most popular fruit. And yes it is a fruit, not a vegetable. More than 60 million tons of tomatoes are produced per year. The banana happens to be the second most popular fruit with apples coming in third.

When tomatoes were first introduced to the Europeans in the mid-1500s, the French called it "the apple of love" and the Germans dubbed it "the apple of paradise". Tomatoes are rich in vitamins A and C and fiber, and are cholesterol-free.

We use tomatoes in many food products, such as, tomato sauce (ketchup), pasta, and pizza sauce. Remember, don't store ripe tomatoes in the fridge, cold temperatures lessen the flavor in tomatoes. ●

Not All Powers of Attorney Are the Same

In basic terms, a power of attorney (POA) is a legal document granting authority to another person to act on your (the “principal’s”) behalf. The person you appoint is called the “agent” or “attorney-in-fact.” The following POAs are the most common:

Nondurable power of attorney. A nondurable POA is generally effective for a limited period of time and frequently for a specific transaction when the principal is unable to be present (e.g., the principal is traveling outside the country or is ill). Once the transaction has been completed or the principal becomes incapacitated, a nondurable POA ceases to be in force.

Durable power of attorney. The authority granted with a durable POA can be as wide-ranging or narrow as the principal chooses. A durable POA takes effect the moment the POA is signed and notarized. It stays in effect even if the principal becomes incapacitated and ceases upon their death.

Springing power of attorney. This POA becomes effective at a future date when a specific event, condition, or date triggers it—such as the incapacitation of the principal. Sometimes a formal determination of incapacity may be challenged, delaying the agent’s ability to carry out actions on the principal’s behalf and piling up extra court expenses.

Healthcare power of attorney. This POA enables the agent to make healthcare decisions on behalf of the principal if he/she is mentally incompetent, unconscious, or otherwise unable to make their own decisions. Mental incompetence is generally determined by the presiding physician or a consensus of physicians.

If you are contemplating utilizing a power of attorney, contact an estate attorney to guide you through your options. ●



New Blood Test May Detect Children’s Concussions

Any child involved in athletics runs the risk of eventually sustaining a concussion. Concussions are brain injuries caused by a high-force bump, blow, or jolt to the head that sends the brain crashing into the interior surface of the skull.

Concussions in children are often diagnosed based on symptoms alone, such as headaches, blurred vision, sensitivity to light, vomiting, grogginess, and balance issues. However, in a significant percentage of incidents, neurologists order computerized tomography (CT) scans to diagnose concussions—which is becoming somewhat controversial.

Many neurology-related organizations have declared CT scans minimally effective in evaluating and managing concussions. In addition, they are expensive, and kids undergoing multiple CT scans have been found to be at elevated risk of developing certain cancers later in life due to radiation emission.

But researchers from Orlando Health, a nonprofit healthcare company, have claimed to develop a blood test that can detect concussions with 94-percent accuracy. When the brain sustains injury, glial fibrillary acidic protein (GFAP), which is found in cells that surround neurons in the brain, is released into the bloodstream and is easily detectable. The amount of GFAP detected can also determine the severity of the injury.

Besides vastly reducing the use of CT scans, the blood test may soon be able to be employed immediately within the course of a sporting event to determine a player’s concussion status.

Researchers hope to have the blood test available for general use within five years. In the meantime, if your child has sustained a blow to the head, have him/her examined by a doctor. If a CT scan is recommended, make sure it’s actually necessary. ●

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New Year's Greeting 2016

As the holiday season is upon us, we find ourselves reflecting on the past year and those who have entrusted us with your business. It's been our privilege to serve you.

May the coming year hold an abundance of health, wealth, and joy for you and yours.

**Seasons Greetings and
Happy New Year!**