

## AT THE SCENE

by Brenda L. Sherbondy, Paralegal

You always think it will never happen to you, but you've just been in an accident. You are understandably shaken; nonetheless, it is important to stay level-headed and gather the necessary information at the scene. Here are some suggestions:

**WE SUGGEST THAT YOU CUT OUT THIS FORM AND PUT IT IN THE GLOVE BOX OF YOUR VEHICLE.**

### **IF YOU HAVE BEEN INJURED IN AN AUTO ACCIDENT:**

- Call the police and let them investigate.
- Be sure to report any injuries you sustain to a police officer or ambulance personnel at the scene.
- Do not refuse to be checked for injuries by the ambulance crew and follow through with their medical directions, including traveling to the emergency room, if necessary.
- Before leaving the scene get the names, addresses and phone numbers of all other drivers or passengers and witnesses. (All too often, clients know there was a witness who would support their position, but failed to get any information from them, making them impossible to locate later.)
- Write down a description of the other vehicles, including make, model, color, and license number, noting if the vehicle is registered out-of-state.
- Note any statements made by other drivers.
- Notify your own insurance company about the accident as soon as possible.
- If you are struck and injured by a vehicle that leaves the scene of the accident without stopping, (sometimes called a phantom vehicle), you must report the accident to the police within 30 days of the accident to comply with your insurance requirements.
- Take photographs of the scene and cars as soon as possible. (Roadways change and skid marks fade, altering forever the condition of the scene as it was at the time of the accident.)

### **IF YOU HAVE FALLEN OR BEEN INJURED ON SOMEONE ELSE'S PROPERTY:**

- Report the incident to the property owner and have them complete a written accident report, if applicable.
- Note any statements made by the property owner.
- Gather the names, addresses, and phone numbers of any witnesses.
- Write down a short summary of the accident as soon as possible.
- Seek immediate medical attention.
- Follow through with your physician's instructions.
- Take photographs of the scene as soon as possible (sidewalks and buildings may be repaired quickly, changing forever the scene of the accident.)

### **IN ALL INSTANCES THE OLD SAYING, "A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS!" STILL HOLDS TRUE:**

- If you are unable to take the photos, ask a friend or family member to do so.
- Take photos of all visible injuries (bruising, lacerations, casts, etc.) both immediately after the accident and as the injuries progress.

**ALL OF THIS INFORMATION IS INVALUABLE AND IF YOU DO NOT OBTAIN IT AT THE TIME  
OF THE ACCIDENT IT MAY NEVER BE AVAILABLE AGAIN .**

***IF YOU FEEL YOU NEED ASSISTANCE, CALL QR AT (724) 837-0080.***