

Choosing the Right Personal Injury Lawyer: 5 Red Flags to Watch Out For

I'd like to think that all lawyers are only on the side of truth and justice. While many of them are, unfortunately I've personally run into some attorneys that most certainly are not. Some lawyers aren't interested in truth or justice, but rather simply in filing a personal injury claim that maximizes payout, no matter the validity. And this is something claimants must watch out for when choosing the right personal injury attorney.

The best protection against personal injury fraud is to become familiar with the legal process, and to understand the warning signs of potentially deceptive lawyers so you can avoid them altogether.

Here are 5 red flags to watch out for, in case you ever need, or think you might need, a personal injury attorney.

1. Avoid personal injury lawyers that flash big numbers.

Most personal injury lawyers will be weary of throwing out figures, especially when it comes to how much money you stand to make from the case. Because, let's be honest, it's never certain.

Attributing a monetary value to a case before looking into it thoroughly is inaccurate and unprofessional. A personal injury lawyer that only talks about how much money a case is worth should signal you to question the relationship.

2. Beware of personal injury lawyers that NEVER want to go to trial.

This is a huge red flag. While there are some good reasons why a personal injury lawyer may negotiate a settlement before trial, it's not acceptable for a personal injury lawyer to always avoid trial.

If a lawyer decides not to take your case to trial, this may result in a lower settlement than what the case is actually worth. Perhaps the attorney doesn't really believe in the case and is only in it for the quick buck.

There is something to be said for an honest attorney, who doesn't think trial is a good idea to due to the particular circumstances, as he or she may in fact be right. But be wary of personal injury lawyers that rarely or never go to trial; it may cost you a lot of money.

3. Watch Out for Guarantees.

Guarantees make us feel good; they let us make choices with the perceived security that if anything should go wrong, we can go back and fix it—*guaranteed*, right?

Unfortunately, a lawyer that makes claims of certainty is a likely scammer. In addition to being totally unethical, it's also illegal to make such claims. While some personal injury cases appear easy or obvious, it's never wise to be in the counsel of people who *guarantee* a certain outcome.

Find a personal injury lawyer that talks a straight game, offering all the potential outcomes, without claims that can't possibly be validated.

4. Be cautious of people (doctors, lawyers, etc.) that suggest injuries are worse than you suspect.

Personal injury fraud is an offense committed when false claims are reported for injuries that did not occur, or for claiming excessive injury to a mild case.

This is personal injury fraud, but it can also happen when individuals, such as attorneys or experts, push or advise a client that their injuries are more extensive than they actually appear to be.

If a lawyer believes your injuries are more extensive than you think they are, it's wise to get a second opinion, to ensure the lawyer isn't attempting to commit fraud.

5. An attorney should provide documentation.

Let's say you've hired a personal injury lawyer and no warning signs or red flags appear during the investigation and settlement proceedings. Unfortunately, some personal injury attorneys can be crafty when it comes to splitting up the awarded payout in the event that you win a settlement.

Typically the money awarded to a client is also used to pay the attorneys, the medical providers, and any other subrogation interests, like insurance companies. If you are not provided with documentation that explains how the money is allocated, you may be getting scammed.

Always ask for and understand how the money is divided to any awarded party. If you don't ask for this information up front, it's possible you may not receive the information at all. So always ask for documentation, and if an attorney scoots around the issue...run for the hills!

The more you're aware of these warning signs, the easier it will be to find a respected and trustworthy personal injury lawyer for your case in the event of an accident.

Use these tips to avoid scams and stay safe while finding a personal injury lawyer.