



We All Have A Wonder Woman Waiting To Escape!

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It is really amazing the way a good movie can stir up feelings of sadness, guilt, excitement, love, etc. I just saw the newest installment of the Hunger Games movies – Mocking Jay Part 1. While I always have felt encouraged to fight for what is right and protect people's rights, I left the movie that night feeling even more empowered.

You are all my neighbors and as such we are connected. We shop at the same stores, eat at the same restaurants, and pass each other on the road. The need to pass on information that could potentially prevent one of my neighbors from being injured was coursing through me. I felt like that

image of Wonder Woman that we're all so familiar with.



I'm not saying I was ready to go home and put on an outfit like that though.... I was ready to empower you with information - the more Wonder Women or Mocking Jays the better!!!

Speak Up About Dangers that Could Hurt our Neighbors

My father, Paul R. D'Amato, is my law partner. He grew up in Atlantic City and Margate. We had a woman call our office recently who was severely injured when she fell on a sidewalk that she had never been on before. As she described the sidewalk Paul vividly remembered it from his childhood. He had remembered that it had been in a dangerous condition for years. If you see a dangerous crack on a sidewalk tell the responsible party! Put them on notice of that danger.

Who do I Call?

If the sidewalk abuts a commercial establishment, like a store, send a letter to the property owner. If the sidewalk abuts a residence, your letter must go to the public entity that owns the street that abuts the sidewalk. What was that now?! The law is such that if you or a loved one were to fall and become injured on a residential sidewalk, the claim is not against the owner of the house that has the property in front of the sidewalk. The claim is against the public entity that owns the road that abuts the sidewalk. Don't stop reading – this really is the law! So what can you do to make our neighborhood safer? Alert the public entity that there is a dangerous condition on the sidewalk. The public entity is the town, state or city that owns the street. So for example, if there is a dangerous condition on a sidewalk that abuts a State road, your letter should go to the Attorney General of the State of New Jersey. If the sidewalk is adjacent to a County or City owned road, call or send a letter to the Engineer or the Public Works Department and let them know about the condition.

How Could Making a Phone Call or Sending a Letter Save the Day?

As in many situations, the urgency required to make a difference does not arise until a fire is lit in the right spot. In the first example I gave you, the homeowner may not have fixed the sidewalk because no one complained about it. The liability rests with the public entity, but the duty to repair the sidewalk rests with the

homeowner. As such, the public entity can fix the dangerous condition on their own and bill the homeowner for it. Maybe not enough people alerted the City that the sidewalk was in such disarray so there was no urgency to make the homeowner repair the area.

What Happens When there is Notice but No Action Taken?

When our neighbors are injured in situations that should have been prevented, I step in. I represent a woman who sustained horrific injuries in a fall off a bicycle. There were huge potholes that existed in a street that she had never been on. She was riding her bike and due to a recent rain this enormous hole was covered by water. It wasn't until after I filed a lawsuit on her behalf that we discovered that there had been five or six complaints from residents about this specific area. That dangerous condition was repaired, but unfortunately, it took my client being severely injured before action was taken. I can tell you now my client would rather have her life back than bring a lawsuit. This injury should have been prevented. It is an honor to represent this woman and her family to take that message to the public entity in an effort to make sure something like this does not happen to another one of my neighbors.

Knowledge is Power!

My parent's always taught me growing up that "information is powerful" and "knowledge is the one thing no one can take away from you". Just at Katniss

Everdeen fights against the Capital for the sake of the citizens of Panem, it is your civic responsibility to protect the other people that live in your community. If you see a dangerous condition in the road or on a sidewalk, report it! That small simple act of making a phone call or sending a letter to your Public Works Department could prevent other people from becoming injured. Then you've unknowingly saved the day, like Wonder Woman. GO ON GIRL!!!!



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