# What Every Georgia Slip & Fall Victim Needs to Know About Premises Liability

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# Introduction

In the following pages, you'll find some basic information about slip-and-fall law, or premises law, as it applies to victims of slip-and-falls in Georgia.

Because this can be only a very broad overview that covers just the basic of premises law, we recommend you talk to a lawyer about your case. Premises law cases can be more fact-specific than even car accident cases. The difference between winning and losing a slip-and-fall case can hinge on whether a manager or employee was in the area, whether it was raining, where in the store a victim fell, or even something as simple as what the victim was doing when he or she fell.

Therefore, nothing in this book should be taken as legal advice; however, after understanding the basics of slip-and fall-law, if you think you might have a claim, consult with an attorney who practices specifically in this legal area.

I wrote this book because a significant portion of my personal injury practice involves slip and falls. My clients ask me the same questions repeatedly, so I wrote this book to answer these questions for the public.

Additionally, people frequently hesitate to hire lawyers. I want to give them information so that while they're considering hiring a lawyer they don't do anything that might hurt their cases. This applies in particular to granting recorded interviews to claims

adjusters and "spoliation" letters, critical elements in slip-and-fall cases. One of the big box retailers keeps its surveillance videos for only thirty days, so you or your lawyer have to get a spoliation letter out to its insurance company within thirty days; it requires the defendants to preserve evidence that might otherwise be destroyed.

This book covers the basics of slip-and-fall law in Georgia; you can find much more information on my Web site as well:

www.shanesmithlaw.com.

There you can navigate to the slip-and-fall practice area.

## What Is a Slip-and-Fall Case?

Basically, slip-and-fall law boils down to someone being injured on somebody else's property, for instance, a customer in a store or a patron at a restaurant. Either could walk into the store or restaurant and slip on water, food, oil, cooking grease, spilled products, or even an overly waxed floor.

Trip-and-fall cases revolve around situations when a business has left something dangerous in an aisle and a customer trips over it.

This also applies to parking lots wherethat a store has failed to maintain properly, for example, by failing to patch a hole or correct other potentially dangerous situations.

## What Makes a Claim?

Basically, slip-and-fall cases require two elements. A store must have created or ignored a dangerous condition the victim did not see, and it caused the victim to fall and be injured.

The "value" of these cases depends heavily on the significance of the harm suffered by the injured party. How badly was he or she hurt? Some can suffer very serious injuries in these types of cases, including torn ligaments in the knees or herniated or slipped discs in the back or neck.

## What Has to Be Proven?

Georgia slip-and-fall law requires the proof of two basic elements: Did the store know, or should it have known, of the dangerous situation? Would a reasonable customer or patron have spotted the dangerous condition?

## Proving the Knowledge of the Store

Slip-and-fall cases that involve actual knowledge tend to be simple. Did one of the store's employees see a situation, perhaps a wet floor, and report it to management, but it never was taken care of?

This is actually a rare situation; what is much more common is the question of whether the store had "constructive" knowledge, that is, would a reasonable store have had knowledge of the defect? Did it have employees in the area? Did it have appropriate inspection procedures? Was it following those inspection procedures? If the store used surveillance cameras, were they being monitored? How long had the spill or obstruction been there? These sorts of questions that revolve around the store's "constructive" knowledge are the most important questions in this area of law.

In such lawsuits, stores generally argue that they had inspection procedures that were being followed. We'll take this very strongly into consideration: did the store have inspection procedures, and was it following

them at the time of an incident?

***1. Were a store's inspection procedures reasonable?***

We will dig into whether a store's inspection procedures were reasonable procedures also followed by, say, big-box retailers. Generally, inspection procedures are going to be perceived as reasonable, at least in big department stores, because they've been through this over many years, but that doesn't mean they are necessarily reasonable.

We sometimes prove that in light of a special event, or the creation of a high-traffic area, or the fact that a store was having a special in a particular area that their inspection procedures should have been more than they normally were. Think about Black Friday, for instance, right after Thanksgiving—standard inspection procedures might not be adequate at that time because a store may have created high-traffic areas that required an increase in its inspection procedures.

***2. Did a store actually follow its inspection procedures?***

This is critical, because frequently a store has a written document, but everybody knows that doesn't mean things always get done that way. For instance, we were talking to one of the pet stores that allow you to bring your pets in. Its inspection procedures dictate that as employees are performing their tasks they are supposed to look for pet waste on the floor. For one case, we asked an employee during a deposition if she had been doing this, and

she actually said, "Well, you would think I was …" That alone implied to us that the store's employees weren't performing inspection procedures as they were supposed to.

Inspection procedures at times require employees to check everything every fifteen minutes and create or sign documents supposed to show this. Just because such documents exist doesn't necessarily mean that the procedures were followed. A video might show an employee entering a restroom and exiting within a minute; this could indicate that the employee could not have checked everything on a checklist, so he or she did not follow the prescribed procedures.

### *3. What is the fifteen-minute rule?*

We frequently hear employees at stores mention that there was a fifteen-minute rule that they followed. Fifteen-minute rules call for inspections every fifteen minutes, and if they had taken place, the default attitude is that the store was being reasonable. But did the employees really conduct their investigations? Just because a form is checked off or initialed doesn't mean the employees actually did what was required.

The default position is that if a potentially dangerous substance, such as water or a spilled product, was on the floor less than fifteen minutes, it is presumed that the store should not have known. Once again, however, this is very fact-specific.

***4. Did the store have cameras and video?***

Video cameras can record critical information about how long an item was on the floor and that the customer did in fact fall and are injured for that reason. Such cameras can also show what a victim was doing at the time: was the victim behaving in a reasonable manner?

In our practice, we collect all the videos throughout the entire store to ascertain if an employee had seen the substance and reported it to management.

***5. Plain View***

The concept of "plain view" is that if a substance such as water or a spilled product is in plain view, any slip and fall could have been the customer's fault. If, for instance, a red substance was spilled in plain view on a white floor, it could be assumed that if someone stepped into it, that person was negligent. There are occasional exceptions to this—a customer may have been distracted, or the store may have done something to distract them.

***6. Recurring Leaks***

Many times in Georgia, we have to figure out the source of whatever it was that caused someone to fall and get injured and explain how it got there. Sometimes that's pretty easy. At times, another patron of the store may have spilled a product. When it comes to water on a floor, however, we have to figure out where it came from; it could be

a recurring leak due to a malfunctioning freezer or air conditioner. In such a situation, we would obtain the maintenance records. Did the store know about a recurring leak but simply chose not to repair it? We know of a grocery store with a meat cooler that leaked so much and for so long that the tile was actually cracked, but the store had just made an economic decision not to fix it, strong evidence in favor of the case of an injured customer.

### *7. Heightened Burden due to High Traffic Areas*

Case law in Georgia says that if a store creates a high-traffic area, it has a constant duty to inspect it. High-traffic areas are those that attract a large number of people; think about the area just in front of a fast-food store counter at lunchtime. Because of the high traffic, spills are much more likely to happen there than elsewhere in the restaurant, so it needs to be inspected much more frequently. Greeters at the entrance to some big-box retailers are not there to say hello to you but because it's a high-traffic area that needs continual inspection.

## Spoliation Letters

A spoliation letter is basically a letter sent to an insurance company of a store or restaurant where a slip and fall has occurred that requires the insurance company to preserve all documents and materials listed in the letter. This is meant to preserve information that could help in litigation.

Spoliation letters are very important in Georgia slip-and-fall cases; at times they can be the difference between winning or losing.

Our firm has a very detailed spoliation letter meant to preserve all the evidence we can to help our clients. Such letters can stop the big-box retailers from destroying evidence after thirty days, which is their standard procedure.

I have frequently found that if some bit of evidence is very detrimental to a client's case, it will be kept a long time, but evidence helpful to a client's case will be destroyed as normal practice.

Probably the most important matter to handle after getting proper medical care in a slip and fall is sending a good spoliation letter to the insurance company. This is one of the first things my firm does, because we have found that without spoliation letters, these cases can be very difficult to litigate successfully.

Spoliation letters need to be mailed and received within thirty days to preserve evidence, including video; customer accounts; store layout; people in the area, including employees and management—

basically anything you can think of that will help your case. The insurance company needs to be put on notice that a case is expected to go litigation.

I cannot emphasize enough the difference between winning and losing slip-and-fall cases routinely hinges on spoliation letters that preserve evidence.

Georgia judges can get very upset at stores that receive correct spoliation letters but choose not to follow them. Georgia law allows judges in such cases to not allow the defense to win motions for prejudgment, which is very helpful to the plaintiff's case because such motions can at times destroy it, keeping it out of the hands of a jury.

Additionally, the judge will instruct the jury on spoliation law, telling it that a defendant chose not to follow this letter and destroyed evidence. This can work greatly to the benefit of the plaintiff.

Spoliation letters should never be late, so this means they have to be sent almost immediately after any accident. This is the first thing your attorney should do; a very detailed spoliation letter can be a critical part of your case.

A major consideration in slip-and-fall cases is whether the customer saw, or whether a reasonable customer would have seen, whatever it was that caused a slip and fall. Normally, stores won't try to prove that a customer purposely stepped in whatever caused the accident, but sometimes this comes up in video recordings; if it looks as though someone specifically looked at a substance on the floor and

purposefully stepped in it, that could be considered at least reckless behavior if not fraud.

A common argument defendants will make is that a "reasonable" customer would have seen a potential hazard such as a puddle of water and that the victim wasn't paying attention or was in a hurry and running through the aisles. If the victim had been paying attention, defendants will say, the victim would have seen a spill that was obvious to others.

Common Sense and the law says that you have to take reasonable precautions for your safety—you have to pay attention to where you are—but slip-and-fall case law does not say you have to be looking down while you shop in a store. It takes into consideration the fact that customers look for items on shelves and are not necessarily on the lookout for spills. So the fact that a victim did not see something on the floor is no reason for him or her not to pursue a case.

A store customer, however, does need to take reasonable precautions and not run through aisles or get distracted with, say, an argument with a spouse or a cell phone conversation.

## Distraction Doctrine

Georgia law says that even though a victim might bear some responsibility for an accident, some of that burden can be lifted if the store had done something to distract him or her. For instance, if an employee said something to a victim, if the store created something very flashy to draw all the attention to, say, a particular display, that could be considered a distraction.

We have all seen such distractions, frequently around the holidays, perhaps an animatronic blowup figure that pops up and down. Such a display could distract someone from normal shopping habits and cause him or her to overlook a puddle of water.

Our firm handled a pet store slip-and-fall case in which an employee came out with a pet for someone to see, distracting that person in the process.

However, your jury, if your case goes to court, will want to know what you were doing when you got hurt, so it's critical that you write down what you were doing, what you were looking at, when you fell.

We sometimes instruct our clients to write on a piece of paper "Attorney-Client Privilege—A Letter to My Attorney" and then write all the details of their accidents. This way, even if their cases drag on a year or two, their records will refresh their memories.

We instruct clients not to sign such letters, however. Signing it makes it much more a statement and therefore much more likely to be discoverable, that is, something that the defense can request a copy of.

## Can I Get a Copy of the Video or Incident Report?

Clients frequently ask us to request video records of their accidents. Under Georgia law, however, we cannot get the video right away. A store could voluntarily give it to us, but it doesn't have to until we file a lawsuit.

In cases that involve serious injuries, we may recommend not immediately filing a lawsuit because we won't know how bad a victim's injuries are. We won't know if he or she is going to have a sore back and neck for twelve weeks or if he or she is going to need knee surgery or suffer a herniated disc.

When a client's medical condition is under control, after he or she is stable, will have a much better idea of what we have to work with. The extent of injuries will give us a good idea of whether we can call on experts and depositions in the preparation of a case. It wouldn't be feasible to run up huge fees for expert testimony if a case will not warrant that expense because the injuries are not that extensive and the potential payout not that much.

Though we cannot demand copies of videos until we actually file a lawsuit, a well-crafted spoliation letter can protect such evidence so when we do file a lawsuit, we can get it.

## What about a Fixed Object?

A type of case different from slip-and-falls is a fixed-object, a static-object, case. "Static" here refers to something that's not changing, such as a hole in a parking lot, a big crack in a sidewalk, or a deck with a design defect.

One of the main things we struggle with in such cases is whether it was an open and obvious hazard—could everyone have seen it? A three-foot hole in a stretch of sidewalk is open and obvious, but a small crack that catches a woman's high heel and causes her to fall may not be open and obvious. The same goes for a hole in a lawn obscured by growing grass.

A major consideration here is whether a victim had prior knowledge of the area, whether it's a parking lot, a sidewalk, or a lawn. Had he or she been in the area before? Walked on the sidewalk numerous times and never gotten hurt? Such information can be critical; if a victim had prior knowledge of a danger in an area but chose to continue, that could be very detrimental to a case.

The concept of "prior knowledge," however, has some exceptions. For instance, a dangerous path might be the only way for someone to get somewhere. Think of crumbling steps in front of an apartment building that tenants simply have to use to come and go. Such a situation can overcome the "prior knowledge" concept that says someone knew the steps to be dangerous but continued to use them.

If, however, an alternative existed, such as a second set of steps, this could be detrimental to a case, as the victim presumably had an option that he or she chose not to take.

## What about a Ramp Case or a Design Defect Case?

Ramp and defective design cases are specialized cases that are very expensive. Think about stairs or ramps that look okay—no holes or missing railings, for instance. A victim of an accident on a faulty ramp or staircase has to show it had been designed improperly in an unsafe manner. These are very difficult cases because of the need to hire design and safety experts to analyze the construction.

These cases can come about when someone in a wheelchair or an elderly person gets hurt on a defective ramp or stairway. These are very fact-specific and labor-intensive cases, so the injuries have to be significant to justify such case's expenses. Otherwise, only the experts get paid.

Also, frequently in these cases the victim had prior knowledge of the area, a matter that an attorney has to delve into deeply.

## What if I Had Been Hurt Before?

Many times, those who suffer the most physical harm in slip-and-fall cases are those with prior medical conditions. Someone with a slightly bad back may herniate a disc in a fall and sustain worse injuries than someone who had a healthy back to begin with. Claims adjusters will search high and low for such preexisting medical conditions and argue that they were the cause.

Well, that doesn't work in Georgia, which has what's called an "eggshell plaintiff" rule, which requires taking somebody as he or she is. If, say, an elderly woman with brittle bones to begin with breaks a bone in a fall at a store, it's on the store, regardless of her previous medical condition.

However, this doesn't mean the prior medical condition doesn't come into play; the store could be held responsible only for the aggravation to the prior medical condition.

For instance, someone might have a bad knee that did not require medical or physical therapy but prevented the person from playing basketball, jogging, and engaging in other such activities. If that person gets into an accident and needs surgery, the party responsible for the accident could be held responsible for the aggravation of the knee problem. The responsible party has no liability for the fact that the person could not jog but could be responsible for surgery needed because of the accident.

In these cases, getting a physician to document the aggravation of the medical condition can be critical.

## How Can I Get a Store's Procedures?

A store's inspection procedures and manuals can be critical in slip-and-fall cases, but we cannot obtain such procedures and manuals until a lawsuit is filed. In the discovery process, we ask the store for certain things, and the store's lawyers ask our client for certain things.

We ask for the store inspection procedures and copies of manuals and training guides, those sorts of things, so we can adequately prepare and possibly learn that the store had not followed its established procedures. The spoliation letter requires them to save these items from the time of the accident.

One reason we want the store to hold its manuals and safety procedures that were in effect at the time of the accident is that sometimes they change. They might have a new procedure by the time we get to court, but we want to know what procedures were in place at the time of an accident.

Are lawsuits filed in such cases? Most slip-and-fall cases result in a lawsuit, as opposed to car accident cases, which are usually settled without a lawsuit.

Do most slip-and-fall cases go to court? No, they don't. They typically go through the discovery process, after which the defense attorneys usually file a motion for summary judgment, an attempt to get a case kicked out of court. They hold that the plaintiff can't prove his or her case.

If the defense wins its motion for summary judgment, the case is kicked out of court—the end. However, when the plaintiff has sent a proper spoliation letter and gathered evidence, it's much harder for the defense to do this.

If a client's case survives the motion for summary judgment, many times these cases are mediated and settled without going to a jury trial. But many more of these cases go to a jury than do car accident cases.

## Will the Store Automatically Pay My Bills if I'm Hurt on Its Property?

The answer to this question is a resounding **no**. Stores will not pay your medical bills just because you were hurt on their property. Many people, however, think so, and even some big-box store managers will tell victims to contact the store's insurance company, which will take care of everything.

This, however, does not mean the store will pay your medical bills or will cooperate with you. Even if a manager is trying to be sympathetic, sorry that you got hurt, the insurance company, which can be in a different state, is not going to be so sympathetic. The insurance company will fight you on these issues because most claimants are slow to hire attorneys and many attorneys are slow with spoliation letters, so the insurance company knows it will win a lot of these cases.

## Can a Store Be Unreasonably Dangerous?

Can a store be so dangerous that it's almost presumed accidents are its fault? The law doesn't presume accidents are always a store's fault, but the law can drastically help you overcome some of these burdens. This can make it easier for a plaintiff to prevail and harder for the store to win.

Any store that allows pets to come in, for instance, will know that pets can leave behind their waste, and this can create a much more dangerous condition than you'd find at another type of store.

As well, a bar that sells alcohol real cheap or gives away drinks and therefore draws crowds has created a much more dangerous condition because it's more likely its customers are going to spill drinks. These cases are, however, very fact specific and require an experienced attorney.

## What if It's Raining?

Weather can play a critical role in slip-and-fall cases. Georgia law basically says that if it's raining, store owners ought to know that their customers will track some water in and have to be more aware of the possibility of puddles. So just because it's raining outside doesn't mean that someone who slips and falls inside does not have a case. Where did the slip take place? What had the store done to take care of the situation? Did it put any extra mats near the front? Was the victim near the front of the store or in the back? If the victim was outside or very near the entrance, it could be a difficult or impossible case to win. If, however, the victim was further into the store, the better his or her case could be. Though weather is not always a determining factor, it can play a part in such cases.

## Did I Exercise Reasonable Care for My Own Safety?

The concept of "reasonable care" frequently comes into play when someone does something strange that, in hindsight, was a bad idea. For instance, a victim of a slip and fall might have tried to jump over a puddle rather than walk around it. This could easily happen in a parking lot, for instance, and a judge might say that the plaintiff did not exercise reasonable care for his or her safety.

## What about Lighting?

Lighting can be critical in slip and falls. Lighting conditions in a store or an apartment complex can be very important. Lights could be burned out, or turned down low, or just not be enough for people to walk in an area safely. All such details can be very important to a case, and an attorney will need to know them.

Say, for instance, a burned-out light contributed to a fall. An attorney's spoliation letter can preserve maintenance records, and witnesses can be interviewed quickly.

Gathering such evidence is so important because a year later nobody's going to remember such details, and none of the witnesses will be around.

## How Does the Process Work?

What goes into a slip and fall case? Initially, when somebody gets hurt, he or she should report it to the store manager at the scene—this simple step can make these cases much easier.

Reporting at the scene normally requires someone to fill out an incident report. After that, the injured party should seek appropriate medical care as soon as possible; any delay can make it look as though he or she had not been hurt.

A victim should contact an attorney at this point. Once the matter of immediate medical care has been handled, the lawyer will give a "demand" to the insurance company that includes all medical bills and an offer to settle for a certain amount. The vast majority of these "demands," however, are denied by the insurance company.

As soon as our firm signs on to a case, we send a spoliation letter to the insurance company. This, as has been mentioned, is a critical step that can preserve evidence necessary for any lawsuit, since so many cases don't get settled through the demand phase.

Once a lawsuit has been filed, discovery takes place. The plaintiff's attorney will ask the store and its insurance company many questions and request copies of policy and procedure manuals, videos, and so on. The attorneys for the store, in turn, will ask the plaintiff many questions about prior medical conditions, what he or she had been doing at the time of the accident,

how it occurred, and so on.

After that, the plaintiff's attorney will "depose," or legally interview, certain people at the store, and the store's lawyers will depose the victim and any expert witnesses called in on the case.

At that point, the defendants will usually ask for summary judgment, arguing just as a matter of standard procedure that the judge should throw out the case.

Assuming the defense's request for summary judgment is denied, attempts at mediation and a trial will occur.

All in all, slip-and-fall cases take much longer than car accident cases because in the bulk of these cases people are injured more seriously and the cases result in lawsuits.

## Types of Injuries from Slip and Falls

We see a wide range of slip-and-fall cases, and many are very serious. Some of our clients have suffered torn ligaments and tendons in knees that require surgery, and others have suffered severe cuts they got when falling and hitting something. We've seen shoulder injuries and back and neck injuries due to herniated discs. We've seen head injuries caused by falls on concrete that have led to concussion and vertigo. A wide range of injuries are associated with slip-and-fall cases.

Insurance companies will always want to review any videos and get recorded statements of victims so they can argue that the injuries didn't come from the way the victim described the fall. Our firm suggests great caution in these matters; we do not recommend that our clients make any recorded statements without an attorney present or on the phone with them.

## Why Don't Most Lawyers Take Slip and Falls?

Many attorneys don't like to go to court or to trial due to lack of experience or plain fear. In addition, slip-and-fall cases are more expensive than car accident cases because they require filing a lawsuit, hiring experts, and taking depositions. Additionally, slip-and-fall cases take longer to settle because so many go to court. It's for these and other reasons many attorneys shy away from taking slip-and-fall cases.

Lawyers who have not handled slip-and-fall cases lack knowledge of the importance of solid, detailed spoliation letters and how that process works. All some of them are concerned about is getting their hands on the one video showing your puddle.

My law firm takes a significant portion of the slip-and-fall cases with which it is presented because it has the experience, has gotten good results, and has been able to help many people.

When talking to a lawyer, find out if he or she handles only personal injury cases or tries to do everything. Do you want an attorney who does a little bit of everything or an attorney who focuses on this specific area of law?

Discuss with attorneys their experience with slip-and-fall cases—how many they currently have and have handled in the past. Have they filed lawsuits in any of them? Do they do the filing themselves, or do they bring in another lawyer or refer the case to

another lawyer?

Talk to them about what you might expect as a result of your case—not necessarily a dollar figure, because this is almost impossible to do. Before your medical care is completely handled, it's hard to know how much that could be, and until the discovery process, it's hard to evaluate the strength of any case.

You want a lawyer who has handled many slip-and-fall cases and is forthcoming about what you can expect from his or her legal services.

## Conclusion

I hope this guide has answered some of your questions about slip-and-fall cases and has pointed you in the right direction.

If you have further questions, please contact my office at 770-487-8999 or look it up on the Web at:

www.shanesmithlaw.com

We will be happy to talk to you.

We also have a guidebook for Georgia DUI Victims we'd be happy to send you as well as our ***Seven Critical Mistakes Car Accident Victims Make*** informational pamphlet and ***Top Ten Ways to Wreck Your Georgia Car Wreck Case***, both available for the asking.

# About the Author

Shane Smith calls Georgia his home. Shane graduated from high school in Fayette County, Georgia. Shane then attended the University of Georgia for two years. Shane then transferred to Georgia State University where he graduated Magna Cum Laude in 1997. During his undergraduate program he was active in ROTC, serving on the Color Guard, Ranger Challenge, and as the company commander of his ROTC Company. While at Georgia State, he also met his wife. After receiving his Bachelor of Science, he attended Georgia State's College of Law, where he graduated Cum Laude in 2000. During this time, he worked with Richard Hobbs, a local attorney in Fayetteville, and with the Fulton and Rockdale County DA offices as an intern. Additionally, he was active in the Student Trial Lawyers Association competing in a national competition.

After being admitted to the Georgia Bar, he then entered the United State's Army Judge Advocate General's Corps. He served at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, with the 101st Airborne (Air Assault) Division. While at Ft. Campbell, he attended and graduated from the Army's Air Assault School. This qualified him to wear the Army Air Assault Wings on his uniform. He also served at Fort Benning, Georgia. While in the Army, he practiced criminal defense throughout the Southeast. He has defended those accused of a wide range of charges although he primarily focused his representation on those accused of serious sexual assault crimes. He also acted as the lead attorney on the only military homicide in his multistate state district during his tour.

After leaving the army, Shane moved back to Peachtree City, Georgia. He then began practicing personal injury law at a major firm in Atlanta for four years. During this

time, he handled over 500 cases to completion, ranging from minor injuries to a serious tractor trailer collision. Shane has represented people with injuries ranging from mild soft tissue injuries to their back and necks, severe broken bones requiring surgery, people who have undergone lumbar fusions and a client who has an amputation because of his injury. During this time, he represented numerous clients who were struck by a driver who was DUI or intoxicated, and has helped many people who were pedestrians when they were struck by an automobile.

After working downtown for several years, Shane formed his own law firm to better represent his clients. Shane focuses his practice on helping those injured through no fault of their own. This can be someone injured in a car wreck, to someone injured on someone else's property, or other seriously injured people. Shane particularly enjoys helping his clients who have been struck by drunk drivers receive the compensation they deserve. Shane has worked hard to develop contacts and relationships with many specialist doctors in the Atlanta area to help ensure that his clients can receive treatment no matter how seriously they are injured.

In addition to practicing law, Shane is married and has two small children. He attends and is a member of Holy Trinity Church with his family. He is a member of the Knights of Columbus, the Masons, and the Shriners. Shane is admitted to practice law in all courts in Georgia and the Military Court System. Shane is also admitted to practice in the Middle District of Georgia.

**Education:**
University of Georgia Athens
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Georgia State University
Bachelor of Science
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Georgia State College of Law
September 1997 - May 2000
Juris Doctorate
Cum Laude

**Professional Honors & Activities:**
Army ROTC
Distinguished Military Graduate

Air Assault School Graduate

Numerous Academic Awards
(both Undergraduate & Law School)

**Presentations & Speeches:**
New Comers Briefing to Ft. Campbell, KY soldiers -
weekly briefing to approximatly 200 people every week

Legal Issues to Family Readiness groups in Ft. Campbell, KY

Ethical Issues in Practice to John Marshall Incoming
Law Students

**Publications:**

Georgia Guide to Property Damage for Car Accidents
Georgia Guide to Bodily Injury Claims for Car Accidents
"I was hit by a drunk driver, what do I do now?"
– Georgia's Guide for Drunk Driving Victims *Coming Soon

**Bar Admissions:**

State Bar of Georgia

**Court Admissions:**

Georgia State Court
Georgia Court of Appeals
Georgia State Supreme Court
All military courts
Federal Court of the Middle District of Georgia

**Community Activities:**

Active Member of Holy Trinity Church
Parish Council of Holy Trinity Church
F & A Mason
Knight of Columbus
Shriner