

## The Road To Justice Starts Here

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## children's toys

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Best wishes

With the holidays just about upon us, many children are understandably excited about the prospect of receiving lots of toys. Unfortunately, many toys can be dangerous, and toy-related deaths and injuries continue to be a problem each year. (In 2007, U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission [CPSC] received reports of 18 toy-related deaths and estimated there were over 170,000 toy-related injuries to children under age 15 that required a trip to the emergency room.)

Our firm would like to urge parents and gift buyers to be extra careful when purchasing toys, making sure that your selections are as safe as possible and age-appropriate.

The CPSC, which issues annual holiday safety messages and alerts, has listed the top 5 toy hazards:

- Scooters and other Riding Toys – Riding toys, skateboards and in-line skates go fast, and falls could be deadly. Helmets and safety gear should be worn at all times and be sized to fit.
- Small Balls and other Toys with Small Parts – For children younger than age three, avoid toys with small parts, which can cause choking.
- Balloons - Children under eight years can choke or suffocate on un-inflated or broken balloons. Keep un-inflated balloons from children. Discard broken balloons at once.
- Magnets – For children under age six, avoid building or play sets with small magnets. If magnets or pieces with

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IMPORTANT TIP  
CONTINUE ALL  
THERAPIES

# after an auto accident

If you've had an auto accident and your physician has prescribed medical therapies, it is vitally important that you continue the therapies even if you start to feel better. This means that if your doctor has asked you to go for tests or x-rays, undergo physical therapy, or take certain medications, you need to follow through diligently.

Why is this so important? Because failure to do so can reduce your ability to recover damages for your injuries.

If you discontinue medical therapies, attorneys for the other driver's insurance company can make the argument that your injuries were never really that serious, and you may end up forfeiting your chance to recover compensation. ■

# did you know?



photo by ianerie - www.flickr.com/photos/serene

Beginning this month, travelers will be able to book a cruise on the biggest and most expensive ship ever built. Constructed for \$1.4 billion, Royal Caribbean's Oasis of the Seas will be the largest and tallest cruise liner in the world.

At 1,184 feet, the ship is nearly a quarter mile long and will feature a crew of over 2,000 people to man its 18 decks. The ship can carry over 5,000 people as well.

With a park the length of a football field (featuring 12,000 plants and trees), a boardwalk with restaurants, shops and a full carousel, an aqua theater with dive performances and numerous other perks, the ship's amenities will rival those of world-class resorts.

So what will it set you back to cruise in the lap of luxury on this massive ship? The average ticket for a seven-night cruise on the Oasis is \$1,000, which is about twice as much as Royal Caribbean's typical seven-night packages.

Initially, the Oasis will sail from Ft. Lauderdale, FL, to St. Thomas, St. Maarten, and the Bahamas. ■

## Am I liable if someone gets injured while trespassing on my property?

Generally, you are not liable if a person suffers an injury while trespassing on your property. However, there can be exceptions. One such exception might be if there are frequent trespassers on your property (maybe kids taking a shortcut to school), and you fail to notify them of a dangerous condition that could seriously injure them.

Another instance in which you might be liable would be if you engaged in willful misconduct, such as setting a booby trap on your property to intentionally harm someone. ■

# FAQ



# runaway-car incidents

With at least five fatal crashes in the U.S. over the last two years involving runaway Toyota and Lexus vehicles made by Toyota Motor Corp., the company has come under intense scrutiny from federal safety regulators and others.

The most recent fatal crash occurred on August 28 in San Diego when a 2009 Lexus ES 350 with four people aboard sped uncontrollably through the city, eventually struck another vehicle and then slammed into an embankment. Tragically, all four occupants in the Lexus were killed.

The August 28 crash is among hundreds of sudden acceleration incidents involving Toyota Motor Corp. vehicles reported to the company and the federal government. Toyota, the world's largest automaker, has blamed many of the incidents on its floor mats, asserting that if the mats are improperly installed, they can jam the accelerator pedal wide open.

In the wake of the acceleration incidents, Toyota recently issued the biggest recall in its history, which affected 3.8 million vehicles and included model years as far back as 2004.

Many auto safety experts, however, have concerns that Toyota's ignition, transmission, and braking systems may make it too difficult for a driver to combat sudden acceleration no matter what the cause. For instance, the ES 350 features a push-button start system which is activated by a wireless electronic fob that the driver carries and a button on the dashboard. Once the car is in motion, a driver must hold down a button on the fob for a full three seconds to shut off the engine.

In addition, the ES 350 has a complex automatic transmission that mimics a manual shifter, which can make it difficult for a driver to put the vehicle into neutral - a tactic often recommended for drivers of runaway vehicles. Most modern vehicles, including the ES 350, also have power-assisted brakes, which can be compromised when the engine is in full-throttle.

Ultimately, our civil justice system is working to hold Toyota accountable for the safety of its vehicles, as several lawsuits have been brought against the company because of the sudden acceleration incidents and fatal crashes. ■

*"Children's Toys" continued from page 1.*

- magnets are swallowed, serious injuries and/or death can occur.
- Chargers and Adapters – Charging batteries should be supervised by adults. Chargers and adapters can pose thermal burn hazards to children.
- Once children have opened up their toys, the CPSC recommends that parents:
- Immediately discard plastic wrappings on toys before they become dangerous play things.
- Keep toys appropriate for older children away from younger siblings.
- Pay attention to instructions and warnings on battery chargers. Some chargers lack any device to prevent overcharging.

With the increased popularity of second-hand stores and online auctions, gift-givers are also urged to be vigilant in avoiding purchasing toys that may have been recalled, banned or that don't meet current safety standards. ■

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# dangerous?



**READ ABOUT THE DANGERS  
OF CHILDREN'S TOYS *INSIDE!***

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*We Wish you a Merry Christmas  
and a Blessed New Year*

As 2009 draws to a close, our firm would like to take a moment to wish you and your family the very best during this holiday season and also wish you a healthy and happy 2010. We are humbled by the trust you have placed in us and thankful for the opportunity to have served you.

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