

Unite Personal Injury Legal Services

LONDON & EASTERN

Autumn/Winter 2013

Legal Helpline 0800 709 007



Apprentice compensated after serious injuries

A TALENTED apprentice, who suffered multiple injuries when a car ploughed into his Ford Fiesta as he waited at a junction, has received substantial compensation after help from Unite Legal Services.

Scott Dennis from Essex was housebound for four months following the accident on Purfleet Road. A BMW hit him when its driver swerved to avoid a van.

Scott, who was on his way to college where he was taking a toolmaking apprenticeship with Ford Motor Company, suffered serious injuries including a fractured pelvis, a fractured vertebra, a traumatic head injury, a fractured lower right leg and neck injuries.

Unconscious

He was knocked unconscious and was in hospital for three weeks. When he was discharged, he was housebound and in a wheelchair for four months. After intensive physiotherapy he relearnt how to walk and was able to return to work on light duties after eight months.

Five years on, he has now completed his apprenticeship and is working for Ford but still suffers pain in his back and needs extra time to complete his work.

He also suffers from memory loss, which affects both his work and personal life. He is unable to play football or take part in his hobbies of BMX-ing and skateboarding.

Unite Legal Services instructed Thompsons Solicitors to claim compensation against the van driver's insurer. The driver admitted liability and the insurers paid a substantial sum in compensation. He was also convicted of dangerous driving.

In agony

Scott said: "When I woke up in hospital in agony I had no idea what had happened. For the first few weeks I thought I'd never walk again. I was terrified. The last few years have been tough but I've been able to finish my apprenticeship."

Peter Kavanagh, Regional Secretary for Unite, added: "Unite's legal service offers free advice to our members regardless

of whether they were injured in the workplace or in their own time. Our member suffered appalling injuries through no fault of his own. Scott has shown sheer determination and bravery by completing his apprenticeship against all odds and continuing his working career as a toolmaker."

Kam Singh, for Thompsons, said: "The van driver was driving in a dangerous manner and as a result of this accident caused multiple serious injuries to Mr Dennis. Mr Dennis has shown great tenacity in the way he's dealt with his injuries."

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**FREE legal help and advice is
available to members and
their immediate families**

Exposed to excessive vibration

A UNITE member recovered £15,000, with the support of Unite Legal Services, for hand arm vibration syndrome he developed while working for the Defence Support Group (DSG).

He had worked as a motor mechanic for the DSG since 1969. He had to use various types of vibrating equipment and developed “blanching” in both hands. He experienced whiteness and coldness in his fingers and a burning sensation as they started to warm up, but thought this might be due to poor circulation.

It was not until he had a check up at work in July 2008 that he was diagnosed with vibration white finger.

Unite Legal Services referred the claim to Thompsons Solicitors. The MoD eventually admitted it had breached its duty to protect the member from excessive vibration and, after medical evidence confirmed that the tools caused his condition, the employer agreed to settle the claim.

Peter Kavanagh from Unite said: “The effects of vibrating equipment have been well publicised for several years and still many employers fail to assess and limit

the risks that their employees are being exposed to from working with vibrating equipment for prolonged periods of time.”

“Many employers fail to assess the risks employees are being exposed to from working with vibrating equipment”

Worker cut his thumb through lack of training

A TEAM leader, who needed surgery on his thumb after cutting it with a Stanley knife as he tried to unjam a labelling machine, has received compensation with the support of Unite Legal Services.

Another employee had put the labels wrongly into the machine, which caused it to jam. The member had not been trained in how to free a jam and there was no procedure for how to do so. When he tried using the knife it slipped and he was cut.

The employer admitted liability, although it initially tried to argue that the member was partly to blame.

Thompsons argued that there was a lack of training and safe working practices and the defendant accepted 100 per cent responsibility.

The member made a full recovery from his injuries and was awarded £4,000 in compensation.

Thompsons' Regional Serious Injury Team

IF YOU, a family member or friend suffers a serious or 'catastrophic injury' life is likely to become difficult.

- Spinal injuries, brain injuries, severe burns, amputations and fatalities change lives forever.
- 24-hour care may become a necessity.
- Special equipment, adaptations to the home and months of rehabilitation may be required.
- Sadly, for some people, their serious injury will mean the end of their working lives.

Cases involving serious or 'catastrophic injury' often lead to multi-million pound settlements and can take many years to conclude, so a relationship that you trust really matters.

Thompsons Regional Serious Injury Team can provide specialist advice and representation, and start to help you immediately with what you need.

We will also work closely with Unite to ensure that a link is maintained with employers and work colleagues whilst you or your family member make progress with medical treatment and rehabilitation.

In addition to our expert legal advice we can also offer and advise on:

- Hospital Visits
- Family visits at home or in hospital
- Needs assessments
- Rehabilitation support
- Financial support/welfare benefits
- Advice on health and social care services
- Practical and emotional support
- Capacity and decision making

For more information about the Regional Serious Injury Team and how we can help you please contact:

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Did you know?

As a Unite member you have the benefit of the union's free legal scheme which includes:

- Personal injury claims at home, work or abroad
- An Extended Personal Injury service for members' immediate families who are not in employment for non-work related accidents or diseases
- Initial advice on any legal subject
- Free wills for you and your partner
- Reduced price conveyancing
- Employment and criminal advice