



HARMAN LAW

THE HARMAN HEADLINE

Personal Injury, Workers' Compensation, SSDI, and Employment Lawyers



What Time Has Taught Me

There's something about summer that changes our perspective. The days seem a little longer, schedules become a little less predictable, and many of us make time for vacations, cookouts, or simply being outdoors with the people we care about most. It's a season that naturally encourages us to slow down, even if only for a little while.

For me, this summer has also been a reminder of how quickly time passes.

Every now and then, I catch myself thinking about what I would tell my younger self if I had the chance.

Ten years ago, I probably thought the key to success was having the right answers, making the right decisions, and waiting until I felt completely ready before taking the next step. Looking back, I've realized that some of those beliefs were holding me back more than helping me move forward.

If I could offer one piece of advice, it would be this: stop waiting for everything to be perfect.

For a long time, I found myself caught in analysis paralysis. I wanted every decision to be the right decision before I was willing to make it. Over time, I've learned that waiting often carries a greater cost than making an imperfect choice. The mistakes I've made have almost always taught me something valuable. The opportunities I've missed because I hesitated are the ones I remember most.

I would also tell my younger self that it's okay to ask for help. For many years, I felt like I needed to have everything figured out on my own. What I've come to appreciate is that the strongest teams, businesses, and relationships are built when people are willing to trust and rely on one another. None of us succeed alone.

Perhaps the biggest lesson, though, has nothing to do with business at all. As I've gotten older, I've realized how easy it is to assume there will always be more time.

More time to take the trip. More time to call a friend. More time to be present with family after work settles down, or life becomes a little less busy.

The recent loss of a friend reminded me just how fragile life can be. The older I get, the more I realize that time is the one thing we always assume we'll have more of, until one day we don't.

That realization has changed how I try to spend my time. It doesn't mean I've figured out the perfect balance. Like most people, I'm still learning. But I've become more intentional about being present for the moments that matter, whether that's coaching a game, attending a school event, sharing dinner with my family, or simply putting the phone down for a while.

Success is still important to me. I care deeply about serving our clients well and continuing to grow our firm. But today, I define success a little differently than I once did. It's not only about the business we build or the goals we accomplish. It's also about the relationships we invest in, the memories we create, and whether we're present enough to enjoy them along the way.

As another summer ticks on, my hope is that I'll continue putting those lessons into practice. I hope you'll find opportunities to do the same. Whether it's taking the trip you've been talking about, spending an extra evening with family, reconnecting with an old friend, or simply slowing down enough to appreciate an ordinary day, I hope this season brings you time well spent with the people who matter most.



- Michael Harman

More Than a Win



When someone comes to us after an accident, a denied disability claim, or a wrongful termination, they are not just looking for legal representation. They are looking for someone who understands what they are going through and takes it seriously.

Winning a case matters. But success looks different for every person we represent. For one client it may mean maximum compensation. For another it may mean getting back to work quickly, or simply having closure after a long and difficult fight. That is why we listen first. Understanding what a successful outcome actually means to each individual shapes everything about how we approach their case.

That is the standard we hold ourselves to. Not just favorable outcomes, but an experience that treats every person who walks through our doors with the care and respect they deserve. Because the result only tells part of the story. How we got there tells the rest.

IF YOUR SSDI CLAIM WAS DENIED, IT IS NOT OVER



In North Carolina, more than 60% of initial SSDI applications are denied. That number surprises most people, but a denial at the first stage is not a final answer. It is the beginning of an appeals process that gives many claimants a real path to approval.

WHY CLAIMS GET DENIED

Denials happen for a range of reasons beyond just medical evidence. The SSA evaluates whether you can perform any work existing in the national economy, not just jobs available in your local area. This means even if your specific skills are unmarketable in your region, you may still be denied if the SSA determines you can perform other work. Income levels and incomplete applications are also common factors.

THE APPEALS PROCESS

If your claim is denied you have 60 days from the date you

receive the denial letter to file an appeal. The first step is reconsideration, where a different examiner reviews your case. If denied again, you can request a hearing before an Administrative Law Judge where you can present new evidence and make your case in person.

WHAT STRENGTHENS AN APPEAL

Updated medical records, detailed physician statements, and new documentation not included in the original application can all shift the outcome at the appeal stage. Continuing to attend medical appointments throughout the process is also critical, as gaps in treatment can be used against you.

DO NOT WAIT

Missing the 60 day deadline means starting the entire process over. If your claim has been denied, contact Harman Law today.

Who Is Liable When Someone Gets Hurt at a Pool or Water Park?

Summer means more time around water, and unfortunately, more injuries too. When someone gets hurt at a pool or water park, the question of who is responsible is not always straightforward.

HOW LIABILITY WORKS IN NC

Pool and water park injuries fall under premises liability law. Property owners, whether a private homeowner, hotel, apartment complex, or commercial water park, have a legal duty to maintain a safe environment for visitors. If a hazardous condition caused your injury and the owner knew or should have known about it, they may be held liable.

WHAT CAN MAKE AN OWNER RESPONSIBLE

Liability typically comes down to whether the owner took reasonable steps to prevent foreseeable harm. Broken equipment, poor maintenance, inadequate signage, lack of

supervision, and unsafe pool drains are all conditions that can support a premises liability claim.

THE CONTRIBUTORY NEGLIGENCE ISSUE

NC follows a strict contributory negligence rule. If you are found even partially at fault for your injury, you may be barred from recovering anything at all. This makes documentation critical. Photos of the hazardous condition, witness statements, and maintenance records can all be essential to building a strong case.

WHAT TO DO AFTER AN INJURY

Report the injury to the property owner or manager immediately and seek medical attention right away. The sooner you document what happened, the stronger your case will be.

SUDOKU

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8			6					
			3		4			7
3		8		5		6		
		4			6		1	
	8	3	5	6	9		2	1
9	1					5	6	8
		2	8	1				4

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SUMMER IS PEAK SEASON FOR PEDESTRIAN ACCIDENTS

More people are outside during the summer months, and that means more pedestrians sharing the road with drivers who are distracted, hurried, or impaired. In 2024, more than 2,500 pedestrians were injured or killed in North Carolina traffic accidents alone, and pedestrian fatalities in the state rose 12% from the prior year.

WHY SUMMER IS SO DANGEROUS

Longer days, more foot traffic, holiday weekends, and increased alcohol consumption all contribute to a spike in pedestrian accidents during summer.

The most dangerous days on NC roads are holidays like Memorial Day, Fourth of July, and Labor Day, when crash numbers climb significantly.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT FAULT

Pedestrians do not always have the right of way in NC. Drivers must yield at crosswalks and intersections, but pedestrians are also required to follow traffic laws. This matters because NC follows a strict contributory negligence rule. If you are found even partially at fault as a pedestrian, you may be barred from recovering any compensation at all.

IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU LOVE IS HIT

Seek medical attention immediately, even if injuries seem minor. Document the scene, gather witness information, and report the accident. Pedestrian accident injuries tend to be severe, and having an attorney involved early can make a significant difference in the outcome of your case.

Frequently Asked Questions

What if my child was injured at a summer camp or recreational facility?

Camps and recreational facilities have a legal duty to keep children safe. If your child was hurt due to poor supervision, faulty equipment, or unsafe conditions, the facility may be liable. Even if you signed a waiver, it does not protect camps from staff negligence. Document the incident, seek medical attention, and speak with an attorney about your options.

How long does the SSDI process take from start to finish?

The initial decision alone takes an average of six to seven months. If your claim is denied and you need to appeal, each additional stage can add another six to nine months, pushing the total timeline to two years or more. Filing early with complete medical documentation helps avoid unnecessary delays.

What counts as a hostile work environment in NC?

Not every difficult workplace meets the legal standard. In North Carolina, a hostile work environment requires harassment based on a protected characteristic such as race, gender, age, religion, or disability that is severe or pervasive enough to interfere with your ability to do your job. General rudeness or a difficult boss typically does not qualify. Document everything and report it through your employer's internal channels first.



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Sudoku Solutions

1	4	6	9	3	5	8	7	2
7	3	5	4	2	8	1	9	6
8	2	9	6	7	1	4	5	3
5	6	1	3	9	4	2	8	7
3	7	8	1	5	2	6	4	9
2	9	4	7	8	6	3	1	5
4	8	3	5	6	9	7	2	1
9	1	7	2	4	3	5	6	8
6	5	2	8	1	7	9	3	4

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- Seasonal Recipe: Carolina Style BBQ Pulled Pork

Carolina Style BBQ Pulled Pork

Nothing brings people together at a summer cookout quite like slow-cooked Carolina pulled pork. This recipe stays true to the tangy, vinegar-based tradition that North Carolina is known for, and it is worth every minute it takes.

Ingredients:

For the pork:

- 4-to-5-pound bone-in pork shoulder
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon smoked paprika
- 1 tablespoon garlic powder
- 1 tablespoon onion powder
- 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 teaspoon black pepper

- 1 tablespoon salt
- For the Carolina vinegar sauce:
- 1 cup apple cider vinegar
 - 1 tablespoon brown sugar
 - 1 teaspoon red pepper flakes
 - 1 teaspoon black pepper
 - 1 teaspoon salt

Instructions:

1. Mix all dry rub ingredients together and coat the pork shoulder generously. Cover and refrigerate overnight if possible.
2. Preheat oven to 300°F or prepare your smoker. Cook low and slow for 6 to 8 hours until the meat reaches an internal temperature of 200°F and pulls apart easily.
3. While the pork cooks, combine all vinegar sauce ingredients in a small saucepan over low heat. Stir until

sugar dissolves and set aside.

4. Once the pork is done, let it rest for 20 minutes before pulling it apart with two forks.

5. Pour the vinegar sauce over the pulled pork and toss to coat. Serve on buns with coleslaw and extra sauce on the side.



Why Our Clients Trust Us



EXCEPTIONAL LAWYER, GREAT COMMUNICATION

Michael is a fantastic attorney! Gives you all the facts and represents you very well, prompt at messaging back, whenever the day or night, he will get right back to you.

John T.