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The Black Friday Parking Lot Blues

Black Friday—the kickoff to the holiday shopping season—can create chaos at retail stores and shopping malls. And the madness often starts in the parking lot. Although accidents are typically at low speeds, injuries can still be serious and property damage significant.

Handle a parking lot accident like a regular roadway accident. If there are potentially serious injuries, call 9-1-1. Even if there are no injuries, summon the police, who can gather all pertinent information at the scene and put it in a police report, which can be invaluable if you file a claim.

However, since parking lots are frequently considered private property, the police may decline to respond unless there are serious injuries; obvious, substantial property damage; or public-safety issues involved. Instead, you may be instructed to exchange insurance information with the driver who hit you. If so, also take pictures of the accident scene if possible; document the other car's make, model, and license plate number; and obtain the other driver's name and phone number, as well as those of witnesses. Then call your insurance company.

Gather this information even if damage or injury is not immediately apparent. For instance, a car's damaged suspension might not become noticeable for weeks or months. Whiplash injuries sometimes take days to flare up.

A store or shopping mall could be liable for parking lot injuries, too. Store owners are responsible for poorly configured parking lots, missing traffic signs, unmarked construction, uneven pavement, etc.

Parking lots can seem like the Wild West for drivers and pedestrians, especially during the holiday season. If you are injured or suffer property damage, contact an auto accident attorney to protect your rights. •



Making a Safer Home for Seniors

Home is where the heart is; and it's where many of the people you love reside, as well!

If you are caring for an older individual or someone who might have problems with balance and stability, you want their home to be one that reduces risks of falls and injury. Even if someone feels confident where they live, the home remains where most accidental falls occur.

There are some easy steps you can take to help lower the risks of such an accident happening in the home. It's all about having a watchful eye:

- **Eliminate obstacles.** Cluttered hallways and corners should always be kept clear of obstacles, especially anywhere on or near staircases.
- **Provide handrails and bars.** Staircases and bathrooms are a must for these simple but saving devices. Make sure they are securely installed and ask for the help of an experienced contractor if you doubt your confidence in installing them yourself.
- **Fix potential hazards.** Sometimes, parts of the home itself can be in enough disrepair to increase the risk of a fall. This can include loose carpeting (and don't forget that rugs may also cause problems), uneven floor boards, and other fixtures that can become obstructions.
- **Increase visibility.** Well-lit areas are less likely to be the scenes of accidents. Install brighter bulbs where needed and add night lights in areas that may receive traffic at night (such as in bathrooms, and between bathrooms and bedrooms).



Further precautions you can take may depend on the specific needs and conditions of those in your home. Following these few tips will help make sure that everyone in your home is as safe as can be. •

Later School Start Times



According to the National Sleep Foundation, teenagers on average need 8-10 hours of sleep each night to achieve optimal performance. Trouble is, 87 percent of them fall short. Many of them also experience what the medical community calls “phase delay”; they have more trouble falling asleep earlier in the night than in their pre-high school days, possibly due to hormonal changes, which means they want to sleep longer in the morning.

There's one big problem: Many schools start classes at roughly 7:30 a.m. If you give a kid one hour to get ready, that's a 6:30 a.m. wakeup. Go back 8-10 hours and you arrive at a bedtime of 8:30-10:30 p.m. For many, teens especially, that's not realistic.

A new study in SLEEP, published by Oxford university Press, shows beneficial results when starting times were delayed by just 45 minutes. The study reported lower rates of absenteeism and tardiness, improved academic performance, improvement in depressive symptoms and mood, healthier weight, increased levels of safety (e.g., driving to school), and a diminished incidence of health issues and poor decision making.

Pushing school start times forward by an hour sounds simple enough, but there are obstacles to overcome. Community life often revolves around school schedules. Changing school starting times can affect traffic flow, daycare hours, businesses that employ high-schoolers, and coordination with other schools that start earlier (e.g., sports and other extracurricular activities), among other considerations.

Good nutrition and exercise is a mantra we live by to keep our children and teens in good health, but our mantra is missing an important component. When proper sleep finally receives its due justice, school districts and communities may be more willing to accommodate change. •

Squash Soup in Pumpkin Bowls

If you're in the mood for your pumpkins to hold more than candles or candy, try this recipe on for size.

Bowl Ingredients

- 4 small baking pumpkins, acorn squash, or sweet dumpling squash
- 2 tsp. sugar
- Kosher salt
- Soup Ingredients
- 3 tbsp. unsalted butter
- Half a small onion, chopped
- Kosher salt
- 2 sprigs of thyme
- 1 medium butternut squash (about 2 lbs.) peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 tsp. sugar
- Optional: 3 tbsp. heavy cream



Bowl Instructions

- Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.
- Cut a large circle around the stem of each gourd with a paring knife. Remove lid and scoop out.
- Sprinkle the inside of each with ½ tsp. each of sugar and salt.
- Place the pumpkins and lids on a baking sheet and roast 20-35 minutes, until tender.

Soup Instructions

- Melt butter in a large saucepan over low heat.
- Add onion and 1 tsp. salt.
- Strip thyme leaves into the pot.
- Increase heat to medium and cook about 5 minutes, stirring until onion is soft.
- Add squash and sugar.
- Cook, stirring, for 3-4 minutes, until glazed.
- Add 5 cups of water and bring to a boil.
- Reduce heat to low and simmer, uncovered, for 15-20 minutes, until squash is tender.
- Transfer soup to a blender in batches. Keep lid cracked to let steam escape and purée until smooth.
- Return to saucepan and stir in heavy cream, if desired. Season with salt and pepper, and add toppings such as croutons, paprika, chili powder, ham, or bacon as desired.



November 2018 Notable Dates

- Nov 1** – National Cook for Your Pets Day **Nov 4** – Daylight Saving Time Ends
Nov 7 – National Stress Awareness Day **Nov 12** – National Pizza with the Works (Except Anchovies) Day
Nov 15 – National Clean Out Your Refrigerator Day **Nov 19** – National Play Monopoly Day
Nov 24 – National Sardines Day **Nov 30** – Stay Home Because You're Well Day



The Black Friday
Parking Lot Blues
pg 1



This publication is intended to educate the general public about personal injury, medical malpractice, and other issues. It is for information purposes only and is not intended to be legal advice. Prior to acting on any information contained here, you should seek and retain competent counsel. The information in this newsletter may be freely copied and distributed as long as the newsletter is copied in its entirety.

T-Bone Crashes Among the Deadliest

T-bone crashes involve the front of one vehicle striking the side of another vehicle at a near-perpendicular angle. They frequently occur at intersections—for instance, one vehicle fails to stop at a red light and plows into another vehicle pulling out that has the right-of-way.

T-bones can be deadly even at low speeds. There is no crumple zone as there is for front and rear impacts, which absorbs some of the force of an impact and offers a protective barrier. With T-bones, the point of impact is mere inches away from the driver or passenger, with only a thin door and window in between. Many U.S. automakers offer side airbags on their vehicles, which offer at least *some* help; however, side airbags are not mandated by law.

Another danger of T-bones is that broadsided vehicles are frequently pushed into oncoming traffic or off the road, subjecting their occupants to further collisions or rollovers. Victims of T-bone crashes commonly deal with traumatic brain injuries; spinal injuries; and injuries to the ribs, shoulders, and internal organs.

The hazards of a T-bone crash are magnified when a large truck or tractor-trailer is involved, as their mass increases the force of a crash. A tragic example of this occurred this past spring, when the bus carrying the Humboldt Broncos, a Canadian junior hockey team, was struck from the side by a tractor-trailer. Sixteen people were killed, and 13 others were injured. Some sustained injuries they will have to grapple with for the rest of their lives.

If you have been victimized by a negligent driver, contact an experienced auto accident attorney to safeguard your interests. ●

