

INATTENTIVE DRIVER TURNS COACH INTO SPECTATOR.

Instant. Abrupt. Scary. This is how Mark Rinehart describes the events of May 14th, 2009. A day that started out as a relaxing afternoon of golf, turned into a life-changing event for Mark.

Mark was headed home after his golf outing travelling west on Highway 10 in Anoka. He exited Highway 10 at 7th Avenue. "Historically," Mark says, "I always slow down when I get to that ramp." Mark didn't do anything different on May 14th. From the top of the ramp, he watched as the light turned green for his direction of travel. He watched cars ahead of him in the right lane making right hand turns. He entered the left turn lane and proceeded through the intersection on a green light.

As soon as Mark entered the intersection, "BOOM, there he was." An inattentive driver, going about 45 miles per hour, blew a red light. The other driver crashed into the driver's side of Mark's vehicle. The impact jammed Mark's door shut, and rocked and rotated his Ford Explorer ninety degrees in the middle of the intersection. He describes the impact like being on a reckless ride at the fair.

To add insult to injury, the at-fault driver got out of his vehicle and accused Mark of running a red light. A witness to the crash quickly corrected the other driver, and informed him that he was the one who ran the red light, not Mark.

Mark was in shock, and his neck felt funny at the scene. As time went on, Mark's neck problems became more pronounced. He was having frequent headaches and constant stiffness and pain in his neck. Sitting for long periods would make things worse. Normal everyday tasks and his duties at work, things that Mark did with ease before the crash, became monumental

undertakings. The pain became unbearable and he sought out care with a spinal specialist. Mark learned that he suffered a disc herniation in his neck, a condition that would ultimately require surgery.

Mark underwent the surgery to repair the damage to his neck. After the surgery, Mark had to endure a long recovery period. As Mark says, "you can't do anything for three months after a neck surgery." As a result, Mark had to give up refereeing high school basketball. Mark had coached his daughters' basketball teams for ten years but, "that was taken away from me," because of this crash. While the surgery helped Mark's injuries and symptoms, he continues to suffer from ongoing neck pain and permanent numbness in his left index finger and thumb.

In the aftermath of the crash, Mark decided he needed help that his doctors could not provide. He needed someone to guide him through the quagmire of getting his medical bills paid, and making sure the at-fault driver was held accountable for the losses Mark suffered. A good friend told him about Soucie Law. He looked up the number online and spoke with, attorney Matt Steinbrink.

"Matt was very personable, and very caring. I could tell he wanted to hear my story," recalls Mark. During their first meeting, Matt took the time to explain to Mark what he was entitled to, how the process worked, and that his job was to get the care he needed while Matt and his paralegal Dee Pfeifer would take care of the legal issues. Mark appreciated this because, "it allowed me to continue with my work and be with my family and live my life," says Mark. Plus, Mark knew what to expect, and that was comforting to him.



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Matt kept Mark informed with updates as the case progressed, and answered all of his questions. Mark was thankful that Matt would make himself available to coordinate with his schedule. "I had to work, and Matt was kind enough to stay late at the office to meet with me."

As things progressed, it came time to present Mark's claim against the at-fault driver. Matt and his team put together a powerful presentation that resulted in a settlement offer of the at-fault driver's policy limits. Mark was thankful for all of the work that Matt and his team put into the case to achieve a settlement offer that recognized Mark's losses. Most of all, Mark says, "I didn't have to worry about it—I knew Matt and his team would handle it all."

If you need to talk to a personal injury attorney, call Soucie Law today. Our phones are answered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. All of our initial consultations are free of charge, and there is never a fee for our services unless we make a recovery for you.

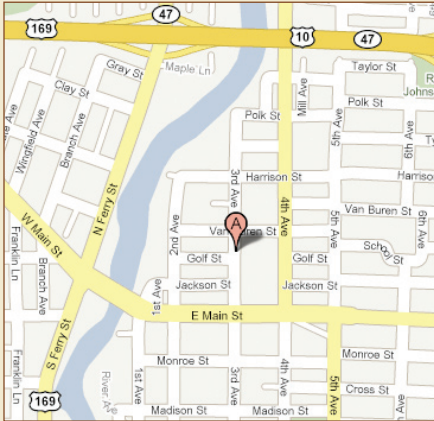
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SCHOOL BUS SAFETY TIPS

Another school year is upon us! The following are some safety tips for motorists who encounter a school bus on Minnesota's roadways: always use extra caution whenever a school bus is near, be alert for school children in the area, and be prepared to stop for a school bus.

Did you know a school bus is required to stop at a railroad crossing, but is not required to activate the amber warning lights? (It is illegal to drive to the left of the roadway center to pass another vehicle within 100 feet of a railroad crossing).

Know what is required whenever the flashing amber or flashing red lights of a school bus are activated:

School bus pre-warning signals. The purpose of the flashing amber lights is to warn other drivers that school bus is preparing to load or unload students. A school bus driver is required (with some exceptions) to activate the amber flashing lights at least 100 feet before stopping in a speed zone of 35 mph or less, and at least 300 feet before stopping in a speed zone of more than 35 mph. It is a gross misdemeanor to pass or attempt to pass on the right side of a school bus displaying the amber flashing warning lights. Upon observing a school bus displaying flashing amber lights be extra alert for children in the area and be prepared to stop.



School bus red lights and stop arm. When the school bus is stopped with its flashing red lights activated and its stop arm extended, traffic from both directions **must** stop at least 20 feet away from the school bus. Motorists must remain stopped until the stop arm is retracted and the red lights are no longer flashing. The only time motorists are not required to stop for a school bus with its red lights flashing is when the bus is on a separate roadway. A separate roadway means a road that is separated from a parallel road by a safety isle or safety zone.

Penalties for school bus violations can be substantial. From a fine of not less than \$300.00, to a fine of \$3000.00 and one year in jail, along with drivers license suspension.

For additional information visit us at www.soucielaw.com. Also check out the information provided at the Minnesota Department of Public Safety. www.dps.state.mn.us/patrol/safety/schoolbus/index.htm