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# Buckfire & Buckfire, P.C. Attorneys At Law

  
**WINTER EDITION**

## A Life Lesson From The Champ

When I was in junior high school, I decided to start an autograph collection. I would write letters to actors, politicians, athletes, and other celebrities telling them a little about myself and why their autograph would be such an important addition to my collection. The responses that I received were incredible.

Everyday after school, going to the mailbox was a great adventure. I would open up my mail and find glossy autographed personalized photos from famous people like James Cagney, Arnold Palmer, Nancy Reagan, Neil Armstrong, and Joe Di-Maggio. These were all very special, but nothing compared to the autograph that I received from Muhammad Ali.

Rather than send a photo, the Greatest of All Time wrote on my letter **"Kindness to others is the rent that I pay for my room in heaven-Love Muhammad Ali,"** and returned it back to me. His is an autograph and a lesson that I have never forgotten. I also try to teach my children that same lesson.

Last year, my family "sponsored" another local family in a great Christmas program through Volunteers of America. We received a Christmas wish list from a family who was not going to enjoy the holiday without our help. My wife and I took the kids shopping with the list and bought the family bedding, toys, books, and even a grocery store gift card so they could enjoy a nice holiday dinner together. We then delivered the gifts to the family.

This time of year is a great time to show kindness to others. Listed below are some great opportunities for you and your family to make a difference this holiday season. Muhammad Ali taught me that everyone can be a champ, without even stepping into the ring.

Happy Holidays,

Larry Buckfire

## Show Your Kindness This Holiday Season

In the spirit of the holiday, here are a few valuable organizations that allow you to help out with others that may not be as fortunate as you.

- **Salvation Army 2010 Christmas Campaign**—Visit [www.salarmygenesees.org](http://www.salarmygenesees.org) or call 810-232-2196.
- **Volunteers of America**— Visit <http://www.voami.org>
- **The Ark Association**— Visit <http://www.thearkassociation.org>
- **Goodfellows** — "No child without a Christmas" is their mission. Goodfellow offices are located throughout the State of Michigan.

## Winter Driving Tips

Winter driving conditions such as rain, snow, and ice can be very dangerous and alarming for motor vehicle drivers. Weather changes can happen quickly, even on a short trip, increasing the risks faced by drivers and all the cars on the road. To prepare yourself for the upcoming wintry season, here are some tips that drivers can use for winter driving:



1. Accelerate and decelerate slowly. Applying the gas slowly to accelerate is the best method for regaining traction and avoiding skids. Take time to slow down for a stop light. Icy roads take longer to slow down on.
2. The normal dry pavement following distance of three to four seconds should be increased to eight to ten seconds. The increased distance will provide an increased margin of safety if you have to stop unexpectedly.
3. Don't stop if you can avoid it. There's a big difference in the amount of inertia it takes to start moving from a full stop versus how much it takes to get moving while still rolling.
4. Always make sure your vehicle is in peak operating condition, tires are properly inflated, and your vehicle has at least a half tank of gasoline at all times.
5. Avoid driving while you're fatigued. Getting the proper amount of rest before taking on winter weather conditions reduces driving risks.
6. Make sure the exhaust pipe isn't clogged with snow or ice. A blocked exhaust could cause deadly carbon monoxide gas to leak into the passenger compartment with the engine running.
7. Know your breaks. Whether you have antilock breaks or not, the best way to stop is threshold breaking. Keep the heel of your foot on the floor and use the ball of your foot to apply firm, steady pressure on the break pedal.
8. If possible, stay home if driving conditions are bad. Even if you can drive well in the snow, do not mean everyone else can.

Buckfire & Buckfire would like to remind you to be cautious while driving in winter weather and encourages everyone to learn the safety rules for dealing with winter driving conditions and emergencies.

## Christmas Tree Safety



The holiday season is a time to spend with our families and children and celebrate the cheerful time of the year. For many people it is also a time to decorate their house with holiday decorations and put up a Christmas tree. In fact, more than 33 million American homes include a natural tree in their holiday decorating. However, as common as this holiday tradition is, Christmas trees account for 250 fires annually, resulting in 14 deaths, 26 injuries, and more than \$13.8 million in property damage.

The majority of Christmas tree fires are due to shorts in electrical lights or open flames from candles, lighters or matches. If you decide to use a natural tree, the best way to prevent a household fire is keep the tree well watered. Dry trees are more susceptible to catch on fire. Even after the holiday season is over, be careful of where you discard the tree, because placing a dry tree in your garage, for example, can be just as much a fire danger as inside your home. If you have an artificial tree, be sure it is labeled certified, or identified by the manufacturer as fire-retardant.

Whether you have a fake or artificial tree, you will want to make sure the tree is at least three feet away from any heat source, like fireplaces, radiators, candles or heat vents and make sure the tree is not blocking an exit.

For decorating, use lights that have the label of an independent testing laboratory and replace any string of lights with worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections. No more than three strands of mini string sets and a maximum of 50 bulbs for screw-in bulbs should be connected and always turn off Christmas tree lights before leaving home or going to bed. Finally, remember to leave out a bowl of oats for Santa's reindeers.



## Buckfire & Buckfire Is Sponsor For The 2010-11 Viral Video Scholarship

Buckfire & Buckfire, P.C. is proud to announce that they are the Northern Regional sponsor for the American Lawyer Academy's (ALA) 2010-11 Viral Video Scholarship Contest. The ALA Viral Video Scholarship contest offers \$25,000 in scholarships toward college tuition at a recognized academic institution.

ALA, the Viral Video Contest was created as a community service project to help educate the public on safe driving practices by awarding a scholarship to the film student or video production enthusiast who creates the best public announcement viral video.

"We see outcomes of car accidents every day, handling cases for injury victims or ones who have lost a loved one in an accident. The injuries suffered in those car accidents are often serious and even catastrophic. At our firm we understand that distracted driving is a growing problem and want others to see the dangers of distracted driving," said Attorney Larry Buckfire.

The scholarship program is dedicated to the thousands of accident victims who are injured or killed in motor vehicle collisions each year in the U.S. and hopes to save lives with a positive viral message. The theme of the contest is "*distracted driving*" and high school students and college students nationwide are encouraged to submit their videos promoting safe driving.

**To get video submission details and contest rules visit:**

<http://www.buckfirelaw.com/library/viral-video-scholarship-contest-northern-region-buckfire-buckfire.cfm>

## RECENT FIRM SETTLEMENTS

Below is a representative sample of our firm's recent successes for our clients.

- **Confidential settlement** against a Michigan hospital and physician for a wrongful death lawsuit.
- **\$1,375,000 settlement** for a woman who suffered a spinal cord injury and was paralyzed in a Detroit rear-end auto collision.
- **\$415,000 settlement** for a woman who suffered serious injuries due to a fall on black ice in the parking lot of a catering hall.
- **\$250,000 settlement** on behalf of siblings who suffered lead poisoning injuries while living in a rental home.
- **\$200,000 settlement** on behalf of a nursing home resident who suffered a Stage IV bed-sore due to neglect of the nursing home staff.
- **\$100,000 settlement** for a client injured in a Grand Rapids motorcycle accident. The insurance company for the at-fault driver paid the full policy limits before a lawsuit was even filed.

## Cruise Ship Injuries

When winter hits in Michigan, cruise ships become a popular choice for vacation. In fact, during the winter months in the United States, there are at least thirty cruise ship departures per week in the U.S. alone.



Unfortunately, as any form of travel, accidents can happen and cruise ship passengers can get injured. Cruise ship industry experts estimate that several thousand people per year get seriously injured, or even killed, on cruise ships. These injuries occur due to dangerous conditions on the ship, excursion injuries, food poisoning, and injuries caused because the ship crew failed to take necessary precautions in poor weather.

As a cruise ship passenger you should know that cruise ship companies often include special provision and language on their tickets that limit time in which you can file a claim and the location a claim can be filed. You should also be aware that there are special laws, called maritime laws and conventions that can apply to injuries aboard cruise ships. Therefore, you should be extremely careful about discussing your injuries with anyone, including the cruise line, without consulting an attorney knowledgeable in travel injury law.



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## Cases of Interest our office is handling...

- A **medical malpractice claim** against a Detroit surgeon and hospital for significant injuries suffered by our client after bariatric surgery.
- A **wrongful death lawsuit** brought by the family of a pedestrian who was struck and killed by an inattentive and distracted motorist.
- A **bus accident lawsuit** against a municipal transit agency filed on behalf of a pedestrian who was struck and severely injured by a city bus as he walked in the marked cross-walk.
- A **no-fault insurance lawsuit** against an insurance company who refused to pay benefits to our clients after a serious motorcycle accident.

## REFERRALS

We want you to think of us as your law firm.

If you have any legal matters that need attention, please let us know. If we cannot handle the matter, we will refer you to a competent firm that can.

Please feel free to refer us to your family, friends, and neighbors for their legal needs. We welcome the opportunity to help.



**CALL US. YOU'RE GOING TO FEEL A WHOLE LOT BETTER ABOUT THINGS.**  
**(800) 606-1717**



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