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What Court Closures During The COVID-19 Coronavirus Pandemic Means For Your Personal Injury Matter

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, on March 17, 2020 New York State closed all courts outside of New York City except for “essential matters.” Courts in the City of New York followed shortly thereafter. What that means is that court appearances in all civil cases – including personal injury cases - were postponed.

The Chief Administrative Judge then issued an administrative order on March 22, 2020 that restricted the court clerks from accepting the filing of papers both physically and electronically, except in “essential matters.”

In addition to postponing all non-essential court matters and filings, the Governor issued an executive order suspending the statutes of limitations (claim filing time limits) in legal matters until April 19, 2020. The order is an extension of the deadline, not a waiver of the deadline.

In personal injury cases, what this means if the deadline to bring a personal injury lawsuit fell between March 19, 2020 and April 19, 2020, the deadline in that case was extended by one month. In essence, a case that would ordinarily have had a three-year time limitation (for a lawsuit against an individual or a company) instead has a three year and one month time limitation if the three year date fell within the month before April 19, 2020.

You can read the administrative orders and the Governors Executive Order here:

<http://www.nycourts.gov/whatsnew/pdf/Essential-Matters-ExhibitA.pdf>.

<https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/no-2028-continuing-temporary-suspension-and-modification-laws-relating-disaster-emergency>

What does that mean for our clients’ personal injury cases? Other than the possibility of a short delay in getting into court, not very much. Just because the Courts are closed does not mean that

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Grey and Grey has stopped working on our clients' personal injury cases. In fact quite the opposite!

During the temporary Court closures our attorneys and staff are reviewing every case to make sure that we have all the documents, relevant information, and medical proof necessary to move into litigation as soon as the restrictions are lifted. We continue to engage in active negotiations with insurance carriers and defense firms to resolve cases that are suitable for settlement. In other cases, we are aggressively pursuing all of the court-ordered deadlines that were already in place for discovery and motion practice.

Most importantly, we are here and remain fully available to address any concerns and answer any questions our clients may have regarding their personal injury cases during this stressful time. Obtaining successful results for our clients continues to be, as always, our number one priority.