

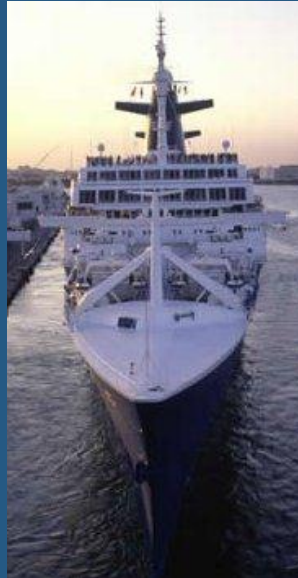


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Do you sign away your rights when you book a cruise?

The deadly *Costa Concordia* disaster in Italy has raised a mass of legal questions about what rights passengers have on a cruise ship. Most people are unaware that booking a cruise means agreeing to the terms and conditions outlined in the boarding pass.



The fine print usually includes restrictions for when, where, and for what reasons you can sue. The *Concordia* contract, for example, requires that any suit be filed within one year in Genoa, Italy, and restricts class-action suits. However, considering the extreme circumstances of the case, the contract terms are already being challenged. Last week, a *Concordia* crewmember filed the first U.S. lawsuit for negligence and breach of contract. The suit seeks class-action status on behalf of 4,200 passengers.

Our personal injury lawyers have answered a few common questions for you to learn what your rights are in cruise line injury cases.

1. What's in the ticket contract?

Many cruise lines require passengers to provide written documentation of any injury within six months. Most lines have a one-year limit to bring any suit and many companies also stipulate which state and county they can be sued in. These contracts are usually found on the cruise line website. Click to read [Carnival's cruise ticket contract](#).

2. Can you sue a cruise ship for negligence?

Our personal injury attorney David Hodges answered this one:

"Yes. A cruise line can be held liable for personal injury or wrongful death caused by negligence. You can file against them for

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compensation for past medical costs, future medical costs, lost wages, and pain and suffering. In cases like these, federal maritime law should apply."

3. What laws govern the ship?

Each ship is bound by the laws of the country in which it registered. So if the ship is registered in the Bahamas, those are the laws that will apply while on the ship. Once a ship is 24 miles from any coastline it's in international waters and the law that applies is the law of the country whose flag it's flying.

4. How long do I have to file a claim?

Each cruise line stipulates the statute of limitations for filing a lawsuit in the ticket contract. Most cruise lines enact a six month or one year limit to file a suit. This is why it is crucial to take action immediately if you are injured on a cruise ship.

5. What do I do if I'm injured on a cruise ship?

You should immediately notify the ship's crew in writing of any injuries you sustain. You should consult a personal injury attorney immediately to investigate any claims before the time limit to file a lawsuit runs out.

12 popular jobs - It's not how much, but HOW you are paid that should worry you.

Job creation is one of the most important issues on the political agenda, and according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the following 15 jobs accounted for more than 25 percent of total U.S. employment, making them the most popular areas for growth. If you work in these industries, one of your concerns may be how much you are paid.



But most people rarely stop to ask if they are paid correctly. Should you really be salaried? Are you really exempt from receiving overtime pay? When people do take the time to find out, the truth can shock them.

Our employment lawyers have given a description of how employees are generally supposed to be paid under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) in the most common jobs.

1. Retail salespeople - Many famous retail companies have been brought to court for wage and hour violations. Among the

Planning to drink and drive on Super Bowl Sunday? Think again.

This story was shared by a friend of Kennedy Hodges. We wanted to share the message with you. Drinking and driving leads to tragic consequences, so always make travel arrangements if you plan to drink.

"My nephew in California was killed last Saturday night. If you know someone who thinks driving while intoxicated is no big deal, please share this link and story with them. One night of partying will have a lifetime of impact on three families. Please pass the word to make arrangements for transportation if you plan on going to a Super bowl party and intend to have 'a few'; you just might save someone's life."

[Read the story here.](#)

We aggressively represent clients who were hit by drunk drivers to obtain maximum compensation. If you or a family member are hit by a drunk driver contact Kennedy Hodges to review your case free of charge.

Read more:
[Drunk Driving information and charges](#)

violations are: off-the-clock work, overtime violations, failure to record hours worked, and improper use of exemptions.

2. Cashiers - Low wage workers are frequently denied their proper wages and overtime pay by companies who purposely break the law or who have no idea how they should pay employees. Either way, this robs you out of your hard-earned money on every check.

3. Office clerks - The "Administrative Exemption" might seem like it fits here, but this is generally not the case since one of the requirements for that is: the employee regularly exercises independent judgment and discretion.

4. Food Preparation and Food Service Workers - The restaurant industry is notorious for wage and overtime violations. Overtime violations, minimum wage violations, and illegal tip pools are the most common instances of wage theft in this line of work.

5. Registered Nurses - If you are an hourly paid registered nurse (RN) or a licensed practical nurse (LPN) the chances are likely that you are eligible to receive overtime pay. Automatic lunch deductions are a common practice in this industry, and can rob you of your hard-earned wages.

6. Waiters / Waitresses - Tipped employees are at the greatest risk of wage theft, with employers involving them in illegal tip pools and sharing their tips with workers who do not normally receive tips. All too often, employers get the laws wrong, denying hard-working servers and waiters their proper wages.

7. Customer Service Representatives - Make sure you are paid correctly in this industry, as many employers try to place you under the Administrative Exemption. Call center employees can also be affected by employers who misclassify them under the wage laws.

8. Material Movers - This can include a variety of workers in the construction industry, petroleum industry, and port or dock workers. Many workers in these industries can be paid a piece-rate or per diem rates - but employers often pay workers incorrectly under these methods.

9. Janitors - This is an hourly job eligible for overtime. We successfully represented a class of hundreds of janitors in a wage and hour claim in 13 states. All of the janitors were paid straight time for overtime hours, a big no-no for hourly, non-exempt employees.

10. Stock clerks - Some employers deny overtime to stock clerks by giving employees management titles to make them think they are



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We'll be busy posting informative articles year round, so bookmark these links when you or a friend have questions on any of the following:

1. Personal Injury
KennedyHodges.com

2. Car accidents
HoustonCarAccidentLawFirm.com

3. Trucking (18-wheeler) accidents
TexasTruckingAccidents.com

4. Product recalls
TexasProductRecall.com

5. Wage and overtime issues
TexasOvertimeLawFirm.com.



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not owed overtime. In reality, these workers are generally eligible to receive their overtime rate if they work over 40 hours a week.

11. Secretaries - Many employers like to peg hourly office workers under the Administrative Exemption when they should be paid overtime. Paralegals are often denied overtime, but we have successfully represented paralegals in wage and hour claims against their employers.

12. Bookkeeping, Accounting and Auditing Clerks - Many employers try to use the Administrative Exemption, but your primary duty must be the performance of non-manual or office work directly related to the "general business operations" of the employer for that to apply.

What can you do about unpaid overtime, or unfair pay?

If you are not paid overtime, or if you believe you have been paid unfairly, contact our employment attorneys at 1-877-342-2020 or [send us a contact form](#) to start a free, no obligation case review.

From Morpheus to the Big Cheese: 10 Odd Corporate Titles

Your job title is important: it conveys what your role and responsibilities are for a company. The most common ones include CEO, COO and CFO, but lately there have been some interesting corporate titles popping up in companies nationwide. Here's a few of the more colorful ones we read about recently.



1. **Rebel Commander** - Michael Daniels, Outlook Media
2. **Chief Tormenter** - Steve Richardson, Stave Puzzles
3. **Morpheus** - Mark Davidson, SaveonBrew
4. **SleepEO** - Barry Weinstein of Pillowcase Studies
5. **Worker Bee** - John Goodman of John Goodman PR
6. **Big Cheese** - Heddi Cundle, myTab.co
7. **Minister of Enlightenment** - Eva Wong, The Republic of Tea
8. **Chief Listeners** - appointed at Kodak and Dell
9. **Chief People Officer** - appointed at Microsoft
10. **Chief Awesomater** - Chad Kiser, The Gig Bureau

These were seen on [Forbes.com](#) and [CBS News.com](#).



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Reporting an error in our Newsletter Lawsuits like the McDonald's hot coffee case.

Last month, we inadvertently included a story about supposedly crazy lawsuits of 2011. We want to state that we in no way intended to give any credence whatsoever to sham "grassroots" organizations who support tort reform. Large corporations and insurance companies will go to great lengths to distort the public's view of lawsuits, and funding Astroturf groups (almost anything with "lawsuit reform" in its name) is one of their methods to encourage support for tort reform.

Astroturf groups are funded by the wealthiest corporations and insurance companies to spread incorrect or misleading information to consumers. Often, these groups engage in negative campaigns against everyday people or companies that are trying to protect a consumer's rights under the 7th Amendment.

As attorneys, our job is to stay on top of changes in the law in order to successfully represent consumers in litigation against corporations. Tort reform advocates often cite the McDonald's hot coffee case or other cases and skew the facts to paint a negative picture. They make a legitimate lawsuit seem like an abuse of the legal system, when in fact it is a legitimate claim. The hot coffee case was a 1994 product liability lawsuit where the woman involved, Stella Liebeck, suffered 3rd degree burns from spilled McDonald's coffee.

A vascular surgeon determined that Liebeck suffered third-degree burns over her inner thighs, perineum, and genital areas. She was hospitalized for eight days, during which time she underwent skin grafting. McDonald's was repeatedly warned about injuries from its coffee, which was served at a much hotter temperature than the industry average. In fact, McDonald's admitted that its coffee was inedible at the temperature it was served. Still, it refused to even cover the elderly Liebeck's out of pocket medical expenses, the only thing she asked of the company prior to filing a suit.

We work to represent those who have legitimate complaints against any company or individual responsible for a personal injury. Tort reform restricts the legal rights of Americans and only those who would prefer Iran's legal system would support changes that limit the rights of the people.

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