



## *Crime Victim's Law Alert of Pennsylvania*

The news bulletin for crime victims and concerned citizens who want to stay up-to-date on the newest laws, latest developments, and key court decisions affecting crime in Pennsylvania.

Distributed free by the **Crime Victim's Information Center of Pennsylvania (CVIC)**, Daniel F. Monahan, Esq., Executive Director. Dan welcomes your questions and comments at **1-866-307-3888** or **Dmonahan@monahanlawpractice.com**.

Daniel F. Monahan  
Personal Injury &  
Crime-Victim Trial  
Lawyer

Representing victims  
injured during a crime  
or in any type of  
accidental injury.

Toll-free:  
1-866-307-3888

Local: 610-363-3888

Fax: 610-594-9556



**MONAHAN  
LAW PRACTICE, P.C.**

**300 North Pottstown Pike  
Suite 210  
Exton, PA 19341**

### **NEWS RELEASE**

## ***Crime scenes should be examined for criminal and civil liability, advises lawyer***

Exton, Pa. (February 27, 2008)—Late February's shooting in the parking lot of a popular Delaware County bar and restaurant provides another example of how violent crime exposes everyone to potential harm, according to Daniel F. Monahan, a crime-victim lawyer and President of the Crime Victims Information Center, Inc. The victim, Andre Frederick, 30, of Wilmington, died from multiple gunshot wounds to the chest.

And while the Pennsylvania State Police conduct their criminal investigation to catch the shooter, Monahan warns, "The failure to quickly investigate the civil liability of prospective defendants could be a serious mistake. If a victim wants to file a civil lawsuit to recover damages for his injuries, it could be hard to find evidence and witnesses if the civil investigation doesn't begin until 18 months after the shooting."

In fact, the International Association of Professional Security Consultants (IAPSC), which provides expert advice to attorneys, recommends an immediate risk assessment and security survey, which should include interviewing the four potential witnesses identified in the restaurant's security cameras.

According to Monahan, "The risk review should include going over reports of crimes on and near the property, inspecting the site where the shooting

occurred, interviewing persons with knowledge of the incident and setting, as well as evaluating the premises for lighting, lines of sight, places of concealment, remoteness, accessibility, and security measures."

When surveying the scene, Monahan says consultants such as the IAPSC need to look at how security guards responded to the shooting, staffing levels, post orders, duty hours, equipment provided, tours, evaluations, and training and hiring procedures of security personnel. In addition, "Their review should include security equipment, building design, site plans, inspection of security devices, as well as the position, function, and maintenance of security equipment."

Pennsylvania juries have recently found in favor of patrons injured in criminal activities outside bars. In one Pittsburgh case, a plaintiff was awarded damages when a fight erupted outside a bar shortly after closing hours.

Monahan has authored the *Crime Victim's Guide to Recovering Damages for Your Injuries*, in which he discusses damages recoverable in Pennsylvania, as well as the immediate steps needed to pursue a civil claim. To receive a free copy by e-mail, call **610-363-3888** or e-mail **Dmonahan@monahanlawpractice.com**.

# 36 tips to avoid becoming a victim of violence while traveling for business or pleasure

By Daniel F. Monahan, Crime-Victim Lawyer and Board-Certified Civil Trial Advocate

With recent shootings at shopping malls and churches, travelers should take extra precautions to make sure they don't become victims of violence. I offer the following security and safety tips for vacationers.

## **Before you leave home, and before you decide where to stay, call the hotel and ask these questions:**

- Onto what kind of hallways do the rooms open? You don't want your room on a hallway that opens onto a balcony passageway, a parking area, or a pool area, because strangers can see you coming and going from your room.
- How safe is the hotel parking area? Valet parking is safest. Next is a well-lighted, fenced, guarded parking area alongside the hotel. The least safe places—the places you are more likely to be attacked—are in underground or high-rise parking garages. Also ask if the hotel offers an escort service you can call when you want someone to walk with you to your car.
- How safe are the hotel rooms? The safest rooms are those that operate with an electronic key system, have a dead-bolt lock or security bar on the door, and have a peephole in the door so you can look into the hallway when the door is closed.
- Does a hotel employee stay at the front desk around the clock? Someone should be available to handle emergencies and keep a watchful eye on the front doors. All other doors should be locked at night.
- Does the hotel pay attention to landscaping, cleanliness, and outside lighting? This usually shows the hotel's attitude toward security.
- Does the hotel have features in and near the rooms to keep you safe? These include smoke detectors; bars on sliding glass doors; secure windows; good lighting systems; short, well-lit corridors; dead-bolt locks; latches and chains; side or rear doors that allow exit, but not entry without a key; and a room telephone with a complete list of emergency numbers.
- Does the hotel have keycards that they reprogram for each new guest—or metal keys without numbers on them? Consider that small hotels may be safer than large hotels because they have fewer guests to keep track of—and fewer entrances to protect.

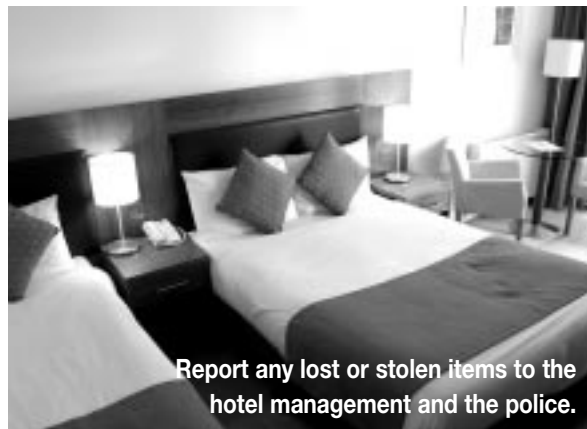
## **When you arrive at the hotel, follow these steps:**

- Lock your car when checking in and out. Automobile break-ins often occur while you're in the hotel lobby, when your car contains all your possessions.
- Closely watch your luggage when checking in and out.
- Request a safe-deposit box for your valuables. They are usually free to guests.
- Request a safe hotel room that is not on the ground floor. Rooms on the first floor are extremely exposed, while those near elevators or places where people gather provide safety in numbers. Ask for a room between the second and seventh floors above ground level so it won't be easy for anyone to get into your room from the outside, yet your room is low enough for fire equipment to reach you in an emergency. You might also consider asking for a floor that has a concierge or staff member who is available to help with guests' needs and safety.
- Ask the clerk not to repeat your room number out loud, including when he calls the bellman. Instead, ask the clerk to write down your room number and hand you the piece of paper. If anyone says your room number out loud, ask for a different room.
- If the hotel will let you, reserve your room and register under the names of two people, such as John and Mary Smith—even if Mary is staying by herself.
- When checking in, ask the bellman to escort you to your room and inspect it.
- When you first enter your room, carefully observe your surroundings and close the door behind you.
- While the bellman is unloading your luggage, check to make sure no one is hiding in your room.
- If your room has a door to a connecting room, make sure it's locked, and check the windows and sliding doors, even in a high-rise building.
- Make sure the telephone in your room works. Read the telephone instructions about how to call for help in an emergency and how to call the operator, manager, security, or 9-1-1. Keep important emergency numbers by the phone.
- When you arrive at the hotel and see the room, remember that you can always cancel your reservation if you are not comfortable with the hotel's security.



***When you come and go from your hotel room, follow these safety tips:***

- Ask to see the hotel identification badge. Remember it so when someone comes to your room, you can check their ID.
- Always leave the idea with the desk clerk that you are expecting someone soon.
- If the door doesn't close securely, jam a doorstop underneath it after you've closed it. Then call the front desk and ask them to repair it immediately. Heavy carpeting can keep the door to your room from swinging and locking shut.
- Unpack and arrange your belongings so when you return to your room, you'll know if anything is missing. Place your belongings in the closet and dresser. Sweep all the hotel advertising into a drawer so when you leave you'll know that everything on the desk and dresser is yours.
- Determine the most direct route to and from your room, the fire escapes, elevators, and nearest phone.
- Once you have settled in, tell the front desk manager about any unusual occurrences. This includes people hanging around your room or repeated wrong-number calls. Burglars may be trying to learn which guests are not in their rooms. Remember, the only way to stop crime is to get involved in crime prevention.
- Report any lost or stolen items to the hotel management and the police.
- Ask to see identification before allowing anyone claiming to be a hotel employee into your room. If you aren't sure the person works at the hotel, call the front desk. If room service knocks, and if you did not order room service, do not open the door. Verify all requests for entry into your room with the front desk. Here's a common scam: Someone claiming to be from the maintenance department calls and says a repair person is coming up to check your bathroom because there's water leaking into the room below yours. Once you open the door, you're an easy target for crime.
- Do not bring unregistered guests into your hotel room unless they are family, close friends, or business associates. Do not allow new acquaintances or someone you've just met into your room.
- Do not leave valuables in plain view, especially when you have visitors coming into your room, such as during meetings. Always take your keys with you. Also take valuables with you, or place them in a sealed envelope in the hotel's safe. Always leave furs and gems in the hotel's safe. For maximum safety, assume your room is always unlocked, because service people may forget to lock it.



**Report any lost or stolen items to the hotel management and the police.**

- Don't leave the door to your room open for any length of time. Do not leave the door standing open while you run down the hall for ice or a cold drink. Do not sit in the room with the door propped open.
- Make safe arrangements for the delivery of anything you order. If you want to have something delivered to your room, ask the delivery person to slip the bill under your door so you can verify the order before you open the door. Or, you can meet and pay the delivery person in the lobby. This way he never learns your room number.
- When you go to bed, prop a chair against the door with the back under the doorknob. This helps prevent anyone from entering your room—and, if they do get in, the chair will make noise.

***When you return to your hotel at night, take extra effort to protect yourself, as follows:***

- Look around carefully before you enter a parking lot.
- Park in a well-lit area as close to the hotel entrance as possible.
- Make sure that the person asking for your car keys is really the hotel valet.
- When you return to your hotel room late at night, use the hotel's main entrance. Don't enter through remote corners, such as meeting or workout rooms. You never know where an attacker might be waiting for his next victim.

***FREE guide:***

I have recently written and published a Crime Victim's Guide to Recovering Damages for Your Injuries. To receive a free copy by e-mail, call my office at **610-363-3888** or e-mail **Dmonahan@monahanlawpractice.com**.

***Does the hotel have keycards that they reprogram for each new guest—or metal keys without numbers on them? Consider that small hotels may be safer than large hotels because they have fewer guests to keep track of—and fewer entrances to protect.***



**MONAHAN LAW PRACTICE, P.C.**  
**300 North Pottstown Pike, Suite 210**  
**Exton, PA 19341**

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*Ask for your copy of these  
 2 FREE booklets:*

***“Crime Victim’s Guide to Recovering  
 Damages for Your Injuries”***

***“Consumer’s Guide For  
 Injured Victims”***

*Written and published by  
 Crime-Victim Lawyer Dan Monahan*

To request your free copies,  
 call toll-free at **1-866-307-3888** or e-mail  
**Dmonahan@monahanlawpractice.com.**

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 Make sure you consult a qualified lawyer so you can discuss the facts of your case.

***Meet Daniel F.  
 Monahan, Esq.***

**Daniel F. Monahan** is a respected trial lawyer based in Exton, Pennsylvania. He has practiced law for 29 years and represents crime victims and other plaintiffs in personal injury cases.

Dan is the founder and Executive Director of the Crime Victim’s Information Center of Pennsylvania, a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping crime victims and their families.

Dan is the only member of the National Crime Victim Bar Association in Chester County, and the only member actively serving crime victims in Berks, York, Lehigh, Lebanon, Schuylkill, Northumberland, Northampton, and Dauphin Counties.

Dan is a Fellow of the Academy of Advocacy and a member of the Pennsylvania Trial Lawyers Association. In addition, he recently won recognition as a **Board Certified Civil Trial Advocate** by the National Board of Trial Advocacy, an organization accredited by the American Bar Association and the only certification organization recognized by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court.

The international law directory *Martindale-Hubbell* reviewed confidential opinions from members of the Bar and awarded Dan a rating of “Excellent,” describing him as having “High to Very High” legal ability and “Unquestionable Ethics.”

***Yours FREE! You’re invited to request  
 free copies of my two educational booklets***

**“Crime Victim’s Guide to Recovering Damages for Your Injuries.”** You’ll discover...many sources of damages other than the criminal; your rights as a crime victim in Pennsylvania; why you should file a civil lawsuit; key differences between criminal and civil liability; types of civil lawsuits; and much more. To receive this booklet, call my office toll-free at **1-866-307-3888** or send an e-mail to **Dmonahan@monahanlawpractice.com.**

**“Consumer’s Guide For Injured Victims.”** You’ll find practical advice accident victims can use to recover the money they deserve without problems, hassles, or delays. This guide includes...17 Secrets of Getting a Fair Settlement For Your Injuries; 7 Common Misconceptions About Injury Cases; 8 Costly Mistakes to Avoid When Selecting a Personal Injury Trial Lawyer; 17 Tough Questions to Ask Before You Hire a Lawyer; and much more. To receive this booklet, call my office toll-free at **1-866-307-3888** or send an e-mail to **Dmonahan@monahanlawpractice.com.**

***If you have a friend or colleague...***

...who would like to receive this newsletter, please give us the person’s name and address, and we’ll add them to our distribution list. Thanks.

*Dan*

***You’re invited to call or e-mail***

“If you have been injured—or if a family member has died—from a crime-related injury or accidental injury, please don’t hesitate to call me. I will gladly speak with you over the telephone or in person, whichever you prefer. And your initial visit is always free. You’re welcome to call me anytime. I promise I’ll do everything I can to help you.”—*Dan*

