

CATASTROPHIC INJURY

Our experienced counsel defends clients facing catastrophic injury cases.

From passenger bus accidents and train derailments to product liability, plant explosions, chemical leaks and on-the-job injuries, Lightfoot defends clients against high-exposure catastrophic injury lawsuits. We have deep experience handling claims involving serious personal injury, including burns, paralysis, brain injuries and amputations, or death. Claims in these cases also frequently carry with them the risk of punitive damages.

We represent clients across a broad range of sectors, including those in the oil and gas, transportation, manufacturing and construction industries. No matter the industry, we are always focused on working toward a solution that is best for our clients.

Catastrophic injury litigation is complex and requires an understanding of technical, medical and scientific issues as well as legal talent. Lightfoot's litigators blend an understanding of these critical areas to mount the best possible defense for a client. We manage the details so that all potential options are available to resolve a case, whether it is by settlement, trial or appeal.

Because of our approach, Lightfoot is frequently brought in by other litigators or their clients at the last minute to serve as trial or appellate counsel to ensure the case is properly tried and avenues for appeal are preserved.

EXPERIENCE

- Winning a Defense Verdict for U-Haul in a \$130 Million Personal Injury Case
- Proving the integrity of a bicycle helmet in the face of a \$20 million product liability lawsuit.
- Securing a favorable settlement for a water heater manufacturer after a fatal fire.
- Securing a defense victory in a \$9 million claim by two injured Mississippi chemical plant workers.
- Obtaining a defense verdict on behalf of a nationwide transportation company in a personal injury trial in Arizona. The plaintiff in the case was the passenger in a pickup truck using a tow dolly rented from our client to tow another vehicle. The plaintiff, who had suffered spinal cord injuries when the pickup truck rolled over, sought \$30 million in compensatory damages and \$100 million in punitive damages.
- Obtaining a defense verdict in a strict product liability case arising from a liquid petroleum (LP) gas explosion and fire that occurred in Hardeeville, South Carolina. The plaintiffs were two LP gas servicemen who were severely burned in the fire, as well as their respective wives who alleged loss of consortium claims. The two injured plaintiffs' undisputed medical expenses to date totaled more than \$2.68 million, and the plaintiffs claimed over \$1 million in past and future economic loss.
- Obtaining a defense verdict in a product liability case in which the plaintiff was ejected from her vehicle and rendered a ventilator-dependent quadriplegic. The plaintiff claimed more than \$17 million in past and future medical damages and more than \$27 million in total compensatory damages. The plaintiff also asked the jury to award punitive damages. Her lowest pre-trial settlement demand was \$12 million.
- Engaging shortly before trial to defend a road builder in a hydroplaning case brought on behalf of an injured minor and the estates of his two parents who were killed in the crash. The case was pending in Hale County, Alabama, where there had not been a defense verdict in a civil case in approximately 20 years. The trial resulted in a hung jury, and the case was settled favorably before the retrial.

- After being brought on shortly before trial, Lightfoot is working on cases involving a Huntsville school bus crash in which 33 schoolchildren were either killed or injured. At the time of our retention, the third motion for sanctions was pending and the case was set for trial in 30 days. We avoided sanctions, retained new experts and presented a vigorous defense that enabled the cases to be satisfactorily resolved.
- Working on a case in Mississippi involving a bus that crashed on the way to a casino in Tunica, leaving 14 dead and 14 injured. Shortly before we were retained, sanctions had been entered establishing that our casino client was vicariously liable for the negligence of the driver. The court put us to trial on the issues of whether the driver was negligent and the amount of the plaintiffs' damages. We inherited a case with no experts and were only able to argue burden of proof; the court did not allow us to argue that the casino was not at fault. The jury returned a defense verdict.