

YOUR CIVIL RIGHTS A GUIDE



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One of the most fundamental categories in the laws that govern the relationship between citizen and state are the rules that cover how we should be treated by law enforcement and the courts. We have a right to due process of law, the government may not enter our homes or seize our property improperly, and we are not to be subjected to cruel and unusual punishment: These are some of our civil rights.

Police officers and other law enforcement officials across the country are, for the most part, well-trained professionals who have dedicated their lives to public service. As with any other group of people, though, there are always going to be a few bad apples in the bunch.

When an officer of the law abuses their power, a victim may feel like there's nowhere to turn. But there is. Morgan & Morgan's civil rights attorneys are here to help you fight for justice. All you have to do is call, and we'll evaluate your case for free.

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Types of Civil Rights Cases

Not sure if your situation qualifies for a civil rights lawsuit? Here are some examples of the types of civil rights cases that we handle:

- **Police Brutality:** If the police use more force than is necessary to fulfill their duties, or use force on an innocent person, that could constitute police brutality.
- **Police Dog Bites:** Police dog units can be necessary law enforcement tools, but their handlers have a responsibility to keep innocent citizens safe from them.
- **Jail Abuse and Neglect:** A prison sentence is no excuse for abuse and neglect. Prisoners in our jails deserve to be treated with decency and respect, and should not be neglected, physically abused, or deprived of anything **they need (e.g., medicine)**.
- **Jail Sexual Assault:** No one deserves to be sexually assaulted under any circumstances, and prison is no exception. Prison management has a responsibility to prevent sexual abuse from occurring within their walls.
- **Jail Suicide:** Prisons are responsible for their inmates' health, including mental health. A prisoner who is able to commit suicide may have been ignored or neglected despite red flags about their mental state.

Civil Rights Violations Are a Serious Problem

Most Americans trust the police departments who serve them. According to a 2018 Gallup poll, 85% of Americans trusted the police a "great deal" (54%) or "some" (31%). That said, there is a growing understanding that civil rights violations in this country are a significant issue.

When a police officer brutalizes a citizen, it isn't just the victim who is hurt. Society as a whole suffers. Communities stop trusting the police, which means the police can't do their jobs as effectively. This is why perpetrators of civil rights violations must be held accountable, whether they wear a badge or not — to discourage future such incidents from occurring.

If you or a loved one had your civil rights violated, you could be owed money for medical bills, pain and suffering, lost wages, and other damages. In 2018 alone, New York City paid more than \$230 million to settle claims against the New York Police Department, according to the NY Daily News.

Call Morgan & Morgan now. We have the resources to take this fight all the way to court, and you pay nothing unless we win.

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Frequently Asked Questions

Who Is the Defendant in a Civil Rights Lawsuit?

This can vary greatly depending on the city or state where the incident took place, among other details. It could be the individual who committed the violation, the institution for whom they work, and/or another party. Only a licensed attorney can speak to each individual case.

Can I Really Hire Your Firm for Free?

Yes. Our civil rights lawyers work on a contingency basis, which means that we charge nothing upfront and only get paid if we win your case at trial or negotiate a favorable settlement (which you must approve). If that happens, the attorney will receive a portion of the compensation you've recovered.



Should I Still File a Claim If I Don't Think the Officer in Question Is a Bad Person?

Many cases of brutality involve police officers or prison officials who were just having a bad day, or who panicked and made a terrible mistake. But it's still important to hold them accountable, because that is the most effective way to effect positive change within police departments. A government that is forced to pay out an expensive verdict or settlement will be motivated to make sure it doesn't happen again. Ideally, this prompts better training and protocols in the future, and fewer incidents of brutality and other civil rights violations.

How Can I Prevent a Civil Rights Violation from Happening to Me?

We wish we knew. Some of the worst cases of police brutality and other civil rights violations have happened to innocent people who were just minding their own business. One thing that could help is installing a dash camera in your vehicle, and always being quick to pull out your camera and start filming as an encounter with law enforcement spirals out of control. Even if this doesn't prevent the abuse, the footage could help you obtain justice and compensation.

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