

News Release

THE MISSISSIPPI BAR
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MISSISSIPPI BAR CAUTIONS PUBLIC IN AFTERMATH OF OIL RIG EXPLOSION

The Mississippi Bar is offering information to the public following the recent oil rig explosion and its aftermath, by providing a "Disaster Legal Information Guide" and contact information for submitting complaints of improper solicitation or concerns about possible unethical behavior by an attorney.

"After events of this nature, it is sometimes difficult for those who may have been injured or damaged to make informed decisions about their legal rights," says George Fair, President of The Mississippi Bar. "The Bar wants to make sure no one takes advantage of them as they try to make these decisions."

The Bar is making available to the public a "Disaster Legal Information Guide" that offers general advice to persons that may have been injured or damaged as a result of recent oil rig explosion and its aftermath. "Legal rights are particularly important and the decisions to talk to an attorney about these legal rights should be handled cautiously and carefully," says Adam Kilgore, the Bar's General Counsel. The Guide may be found on the Bar's website at www.msbar.org

The selection of an attorney should be made upon the basis of the client's trust and confidence in the attorney selected. Mississippi Supreme Court Rules regulating Mississippi lawyers prohibit a lawyer, or a non-lawyer acting on behalf of a lawyer, from soliciting employment in person, by telephone, or by email, from an individual with whom the lawyer has no

prior personal or professional relationship. In addition, a lawyer, or a non-lawyer acting on behalf of a lawyer is prohibited from initiating contact with any individual who has made known to the lawyer that he or she does not wish to be solicited. Mississippi licensed lawyers may contact potential clients in writing if the communication is clearly marked as “solicitation material.” A lawyer may properly advertise for clients on television, radio, by mail or through other media.

In addition, only lawyers who are licensed to practice in Mississippi can practice law in Mississippi courts. A lawyer from another state who is not licensed to practice law in Mississippi may appear in court in Mississippi only with the special permission of the court and in association with a Mississippi lawyer. Before deciding to employ a lawyer from another state, persons should understand how the lawyer is going to represent them if the lawyer is not licensed in Mississippi.

It is also important for victims to be cautious in dealing with a representative of another party pressuring them to secure a settlement or to sign documents releasing other parties from further liability.

The Supreme Court of Mississippi which regulates the professional conduct of all Mississippi lawyers, has designated The Mississippi Bar as its disciplinary agent to investigate complaints and, where warranted, prosecute those lawyers accused of ethical wrongdoing.

For additional information or to report an instance of solicitation, contact the Bar’s Consumer Assistance Program in Jackson at P.O. Box 2168, Jackson, MS 39225-2168, phone (601) 948-2344.

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