



Seufert Law Offices, PA

We'll Get You Through It

From the Captain's Log What's the Rush



I hope you all had a great Holiday Season and spent some quality time – doing nothing. Life seems to speed up the older we get, some weeks are just a blur. A few weeks before Christmas the City had its annual Holiday Stroll and Christmas Tree lighting event. A large part of my family attended the event, with the promise of a free dinner out afterwards. All the restaurants were packed, finally we got into the downtown Irish Pub, and it was also packed, but warm. We were told it would be a wait for a table so a few of us went to the bar for a drink. At the bar I met a fellow that had immigrated to Franklin directly from Ireland when he was 18 and we chatted for a while; he was about to move to West Virginia to be closer to his daughter and grandchildren. In the restaurant were a lot of my friends and clients from over the years and everyone came over to wish a Merry Christmas. It was almost 45 minutes before our table was ready, but the time passed quickly. The little ones were getting hangry, so chicken fingers and fries were the immediate order. Grandchildren appeased, the adults struck up conversations that always seemed to end with laughter. Seated at the end of the table, and slightly hard of hearing with all the din of bustling chatter, I just leaned back and enjoyed my children and grandchildren having an awesome time together. The kitchen staff was obviously having problems keeping up with the orders, so it was another 45 minutes before the food arrived, but again with all the conversations and laughter occurring, and I just enjoying the moment, that also did not appear to be too long, or at least it didn't matter. An Irish band was playing at the front of the restaurant, and the little ones were dancing in the aisles to the beat of their tunes. Along the way our waiter set up a table that had just vacated behind us and brought out crayons and coloring books for the grandchildren, and even sat with them awhile as they drew masterpieces. Time seemed to stand a little still in the moment, as a proud parent was just enjoying his family being together.



I hope all of you parents and grandparents got to spend some quality time with your loved ones, and that you let the hustle and bustle of the holiday season just stand still for a moment also. Sometimes, those are the best of times.

To all my friends and clients, let's enjoy 2026 and remember to make some quality time for our families and friends along the way. •

January 2026 News





A Heated Situation

During frigid winter weather, home space heaters can add warmth and cut costs when used efficiently, but they present serious risks as well.

From 2019–2023, space heaters and heating stoves were responsible for an average of 432 fatalities, 1,352 injuries, and \$1.1 billion in property damage per year in the United States, according to the National Fire Protection Association. Space heaters alone cause approximately one-third of all winter house fires — and 80% of winter house fire fatalities.

Electric space heaters are typically high-wattage devices that can overwhelm outlets that aren't designed for them and lead to fires. Defective power cords and faulty wiring are fire risks. Fuel-powered space heaters present the potential danger of carbon monoxide poisoning.

Space heaters in general can tip over, become hot enough to burn someone who comes in contact with them (oftentimes children), and ignite flammable materials in proximity (maintain 3+ feet of clearance).

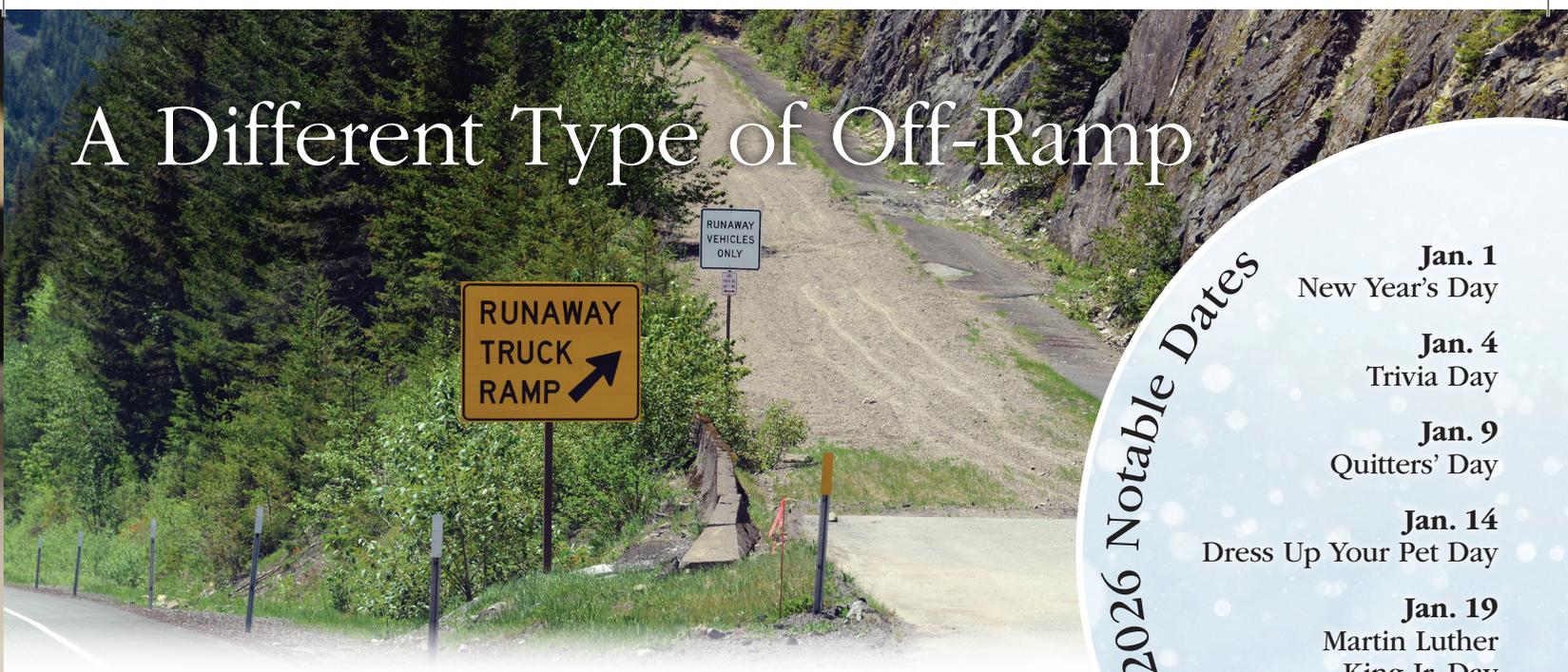
Space heater safety tips include:

- Choose those with a guard surrounding the heating element.
- Make sure they're safety certified (look for a UL, ETL, or CSA International label).
- Read all instructions and warning labels carefully.
- Keep heaters away from high-traffic areas.
- Do not use extension cords.
- Place heaters on stable, level surfaces.
- Do not leave heaters unattended; turn them off when going to bed.
- Occasionally check product recall lists.

Negligence enters the picture when a design defect, manufacturing defect, or a failure to warn results in injury. A landlord could be liable if they don't properly maintain a dwelling's heating system, forcing tenants to utilize space heaters.

If you are harmed by a defective product or someone's negligent actions, contact our firm to protect your rights. •

A Different Type of Off-Ramp



When fully loaded tractor trailers weighing up to 40 tons are traveling at highway speeds, it's imperative that drivers are well trained, and trucks well maintained.

According to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, approximately 30% of truck accidents are caused by brake failure — a risk that's elevated on steep mountain roads. A truck barreling down a mountain road without full control is a terrifying prospect that can endanger numerous vehicles in one incident. That's where runaway truck ramps come in.

A runaway truck ramp is a lane that branches off the main road — a long, gradual uphill slope that is frequently composed of sand or gravel to bring the truck to a safe stop. Some also incorporate stainless-steel nets. For long mountain downhills, there may be a number of ramps spaced apart strategically to accommodate truckers experiencing problems; ramps will typically be placed prior to sharp turns as well.

Truth is, most runaway truck accidents can be prevented. Driver error, trucking companies cutting corners, poor maintenance, and equipment failure are often to blame. Examples include:

- Negligent hiring of unsafe drivers
- Lack of proper driver training
- Poor braking technique (e.g., slamming the brakes can cause a jackknife; riding the brakes causes overheating ... and brake failure)
- Speeding
- Incorrect tire pressure
- Loss of brake fluid
- Worn-out brake pads
- Overheated brakes
- Faulty truck parts in general

Runaway truck accidents might be rare, but not rare enough to forgo runaway truck ramps.

I did a case years back where the rear brakes on a truck were totally inoperable on 1-side as a mechanic had reversed the intake and return air lines on the brake cylinders, an error that should have been caught on a pre-trip inspection, and an error the company tried to hide in the subsequent repairs after the crash.

If you are injured in a truck accident due to someone's negligence, contact our firm. We will fight to achieve fair compensation for your injuries. ●

January 2026 Notable Dates

Jan. 1
New Year's Day

Jan. 4
Trivia Day

Jan. 9
Quitters' Day

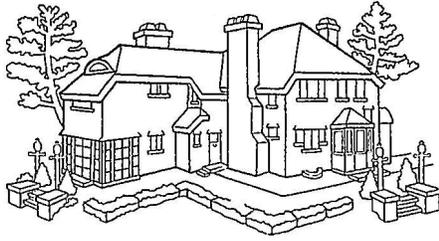
Jan. 14
Dress Up Your Pet Day

Jan. 19
Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Jan. 24
Compliment Day

Jan. 29
Corn Chip Day

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Protect Your Family, Protect Your Rights



What's the Rush

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This publication is intended to educate the general public about personal injury, medical malpractice, and other issues. It is for information purposes only and is not intended to be legal advice. Prior to acting on any information contained here, you should seek and retain competent counsel. The information in this newsletter may be freely copied and distributed as long as the newsletter is copied in its entirety.



The Dangers of Recorded Statements

If you've been in an auto crash and the other party is at fault, expect their insurance company to contact you, quite possibly within 24 hours. High on their priority list will be to charm (or scare) you into giving a recorded statement. Do not agree to it—ever.

Anything you say in a recorded statement can be used against you later. Your words can be twisted to completely change the story about what happened. You might say something that didn't come out right, and once uttered, it can't be taken back. If you correct your answers later, it will look like you're the one who's changing the story.

Also, some injuries only manifest themselves days, weeks, and even months after an accident. If you speak on your injuries (or a suspected lack thereof) too quickly, you may look foolish later and end up hurting your case.

The adjuster might ask you to sign a medical authorization in order to get their hands on your medical records, and sometimes with no beginning or end date, so they can get your records going back to birth, and for every medical condition you ever treated for. Never sign off on this either (or any documents) without consulting with an attorney. Medical authorization gives them wide latitude to delve into far more information than is necessary. Obtain your own medical records and bills and forward to the adjuster yourself. Review them for accuracy and clear up any errors with your doctor. At that point you can select what is truly pertinent to send along to the other party's adjuster.

The other guy's insurance adjuster is not your friend. Everything they do is designed to keep from paying you what you deserve. You will need to be more forthcoming with your own insurance company...but exercise caution. Contact an auto accident attorney to protect your rights. ●