

YOUR RIGHTS CAN'T WAIT

Embracing the Benefits of TeleLaw

In the midst of the COVID-19 crisis, our biggest concern has been and will continue to be for the health and well-being of ourselves, our families, and everyone in our community. Until a vaccine is developed or adequate treatments are deemed effective, we all must remain committed to doing everything possible to endure what is undoubtedly the worst public health catastrophe of our lives. Social distancing will no doubt be a part of our lives for the foreseeable future, changing the way we interact with others and the world around us.

The obvious casualties of these behavior modifications will be some of the most enjoyable aspects of our prior lives: concerts, bars, sporting events, and movie theaters. But one aspect of our American experience that may change forever is something we don't hear much about — our justice system. In an attempt to avoid unnecessary interactions, many people may avoid traveling to a lawyer's office to seek assistance with their injury claim. That would be an injustice. Fortunately, in today's world of readily available virtual communication, embracing the practice of TeleLaw can prevent necessary social distancing from becoming an unnecessary barrier to our justice system.

Unlike telemedicine, where some aspects of medicine require in-person contact, TeleLaw has no such limitations. Every aspect of handling a client's injury case can (and has) been done virtually. Through this pandemic, TeleLaw has allowed people to continue forward with (and resolve) their accident cases during the COVID-19 pandemic. The benefits of using virtual technology to resolve injury-related legal disputes far outweigh any argued disadvantages, in my opinion.

At Spada Law Group, we have continued to work on our clients' cases each and every day during the shutdown thanks to TeleLaw. We are proud of the fact that we've settled dozens of cases for clients during the last 60 days. We have also conducted new client intakes virtually, using the latest audio-visual technology in our offices. In our experience, clients love the convenience and safety of remaining at home yet still having a more formal face-to-face conversation with one of our lawyers.

During the last 60 days, we have also met with new clients via Zoom, filed new lawsuits electronically on behalf of clients, taken depositions via Zoom, and even successfully mediated a very sizable case using this technology. Simply put, we have been keeping very busy ensuring that our clients' cases continue to move forward toward a successful conclusion while also meeting with new clients and answering their questions.

It is not just our firm embracing the benefits of TeleLaw. I suspect that TeleLaw will become the norm for nearly all areas of law for quite some time. The pandemic has hastened the trial court systems' planning and implementation of new technology. To quote the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court, "Even when this pandemic is behind us, we do not believe we will or should go back to doing things as we did in February ..." Such language indicates the times are changing for good.

In a letter from the Supreme Judicial Court, we were informed that courthouses are expected to physically reopen sometime during the summer, but only in stages and only for certain matters that require in-person appearances. They



also made it clear that even as courthouses reopened, they will still need to conduct most court business virtually to reduce the number of people that come in and out of the courthouse each day. Our courthouses used to serve approximately 40,000 people per day. Those days are gone as far as I'm concerned.

I believe our court system will soon be equipped to handle all of an injury claimants' judicial needs virtually, by way of Zoom or telephonically. The other day, in a conversation with a District Court judge, I was informed that every courthouse in Massachusetts now has at least one license for Zoom and they are working on increasing that capability to accommodate more usage of the technology.

During the shutdown, people who have been recently injured or have ongoing legal matters may have questions or may have assumed that work on their cases has stalled. While everyone was ordered to stay home, they rightfully may have wondered what was happening with their case or how they could protect their rights if they suffered an accident during the shutdown.

I want people to know that your legal matters do not need to wait. In fact, they shouldn't wait. Waiting to speak to your attorney or to move forward with your case could harm your legal rights. Although we may not be able to

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PROTECTING YOUR FUTURE

ESTATE PLANNING WITH ATTORNEY
MICHAEL MONTEFORTE JR.

What would happen to your family if you died in a car accident tomorrow? Would your spouse know which financial accounts they need to be aware of? If you have minor children, who would take responsibility for their care? If you have adult children, would they know how to distribute your assets?

At Spada Law Group, we specialize in helping people overcome the challenges of personal injury law after suffering an accident. However, we know this isn't the only area of law our clients may need help with. That's why we make sure to stay connected with other reliable and trustworthy attorneys who practice in other areas of the law. Attorneys like Michael Monteforte Jr., who specializes in estate planning and elder law.

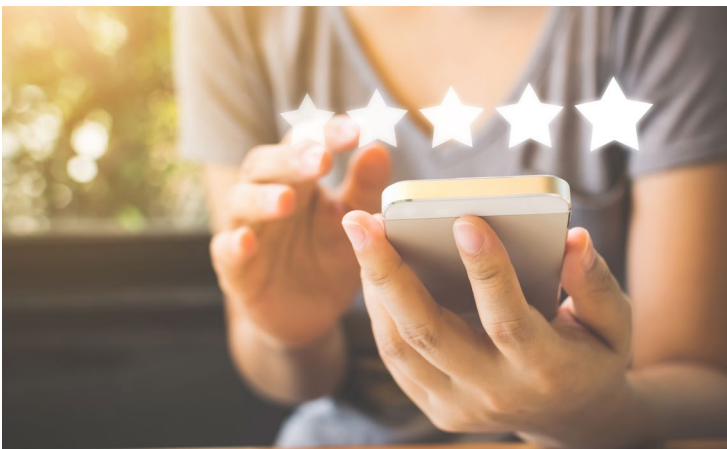
Mike founded his firm in 2006. Initially a general practice firm, Mike handled whatever case came in the door. However, in time, Mike began to focus on the unique challenges of estate planning and elder law. Today, Monteforte Law, P.C., offers solutions tailored to meet their clients' needs.

Rarely do we want to think about our own mortality or what would happen if we no longer had the ability to make decisions for ourselves. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has been a stark reminder of how everything can change in an instant. Putting off planning for the future only leads to more pain and heartache for our loved ones. Mike and his staff specialize in estate plans for individuals, families, and business owners. They can also assist retirees with trusts, Medicaid planning, and protecting assets from long-term care costs. By making time to work on your estate plan today, you empower your loved ones to better fulfill your wishes in the future.



If you are in need of Mike's services, then don't hesitate to reach out now by calling **978.657.7437**. Let Mike know you read about him in the Spada Law Group newsletter and he'll waive his initial consultation fee. You can speak to him freely about your estate planning needs and take those first steps to being secure in your future.

REVIEW OF THE MONTH



"From the initial phone call and throughout the process, Attorney Spada, Robyn, and the associates at Spada Law Group helped me through my process. Robyn was always providing status updates and providing next steps in very uncharted waters. Thank you for all your help and assisting me over the past 1 1/2 years."

–Carolyn R.

Keep Our Roads Safe

11 Rules for Cyclist Safety

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, more people are opting to avoid crowded public transportation and commute via bicycle. This is a smart decision because it's good for your personal health and good for the environment. However, cycling is not without its risks. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reports that in 2018, over 850 bicyclists were killed in the United States after colliding with a motor vehicle. According to the NHTSA, "A large percentage of crashes can be avoided if motorists and cyclists follow the rules of the road and watch out for each other."

Safety Rules for New Cyclists

If you are new to commuting on your bicycle, then be aware that you are considered part of traffic. NHTSA says that cyclists 10 years of age or older should behave like other vehicles on the street. This means you must follow the rules of the road, including riding with the flow of traffic. Other safety rules to follow include:

- Wear a helmet.
- Remain visible by dressing in light-colored clothing and attaching reflective equipment to your bicycle.
- Ride in the bike lane when possible. If there is no bike lane, then ride on

the right side of the lane, not on the sidewalk.

- Check over your shoulder and signal before changing position.
- Don't talk on the phone or listen to music while riding.
- Obey all traffic laws, signs, and lights.
- Assume cars cannot see you. Wait until a car passes before changing position.

Safety Rules for Drivers

In accidents between cars and bicyclists, the person on the bike will always be the one most in danger. Here's how drivers can help do their part to reduce accidents by checking for bicyclists when behind the wheel:

- Train yourself to check for bicycles when crossing an intersection or making a turn.
- When you are passing a cyclist on the road, make sure you give them at least 3 feet of space.
- Check for oncoming cyclists before opening your door.
- Never try to startle a cyclist by honking your horn as you pass by.

Bicycles are vehicles entitled to share the road with cars. As more bicyclists join the daily commute, it's up to everyone to make the roads as safe as possible.



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meet in person for a bit longer, I want you to know that if you have questions, then you can reach out to us. We would be happy to set up a Zoom meeting with you and answer your questions. You can email me at LSpada@SpadaLawGroup.com, call or text me at **617.889.5000**, or chat with us via our website at SpadaLawGroup.com.

Until we are out of harm's way with this virus, all of us here at Spada Law Group wish you and your families health and safety.

-Len Spada

Local Chef's Corner

The World's Best Barbecued Ribs

Inspired by AmazingRibs.com

The secret to a great rack of ribs is patience. This recipe calls for your ribs to spend plenty of time on the grill or smoker, but we promise they will be worth the wait.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 slab baby back ribs
- 1 tsp kosher salt
- 4 tbsp of preferred dry rub (Meathead's Memphis Dust recommended)
- 1 cup of preferred barbecue sauce

DIRECTIONS

1. Rinse ribs in cool water, remove membrane from underside, and trim off any excess fat from both sides.
2. Use salt to dry-brine your ribs. Let them sit for 1–2 hours so salt can be absorbed.
3. Dust your ribs with preferred dry rub and rub it into the meat.
4. Prepare your smoker or set up your grill for 2-zone or indirect cooking. Heat to 225 F and keep at this temperature throughout the cooking process. Do not go under 200 F or over 250 F. Add 4 oz of dry wood.
5. Put ribs in the cooker on indirect heat, meaty side up, and close the lid. When smoke dwindles after 30 minutes, add another 4 oz of wood. Let meat cook for 3–5 hours, or until the internal temperature of the ribs reaches 203 F.
6. Brush ribs with barbecue sauce and cook for another 15 minutes. Then move ribs to the hottest part of the cooker for about 1 minute to caramelize the sauce.
7. Serve hot off the cooker and prepare for plenty of applause.

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A MEAL FOR EVERY MEMBER OF THE FAMILY



Meals on Wheels doesn't often get the credit it deserves. The international nonprofit ensures those who are unable to buy or make their own meals get the food they need to survive. Of course, for many recipients, the efforts of the organization go far beyond "survival." For those who receive food daily or weekly, those deliveries may be their only source of social interaction. And during times of social distancing, the program became more important than ever.

Meals on Wheels doesn't just serve meals to the elderly and people with disabilities — it also serves those people's pets. In 2019, Meals on Wheels Atlanta realized there was a huge need in their community to feed the pets of senior citizens. It stands to reason that if an elderly individual is unable to shop or cook for themselves, their

MEALS ON WHEELS GOES THE EXTRA MILE

pets may be in a similar predicament. And when someone's pet is their entire world, making sure the animal is fed and healthy means everything.

In response to this need, Meals on Wheels Atlanta began stocking up on cat and dog food, creating their own pantry to serve the local pet community. When volunteers made their rounds delivering meals to seniors, they made sure to bring cat and dog food along too.

One volunteer with Meals on Wheels Atlanta, Larry Auberbach, had a unique experience delivering meals to Jeffery Jones and his dog, Grizzly. The volunteer told 11Alive News in Atlanta that Jeffery and Grizzly "have their own special relationship." Larry loved Grizzly long before Meals on Wheels Atlanta started the pet pantry because he saw how much Grizzly's companionship meant to Jeffery. Now, Larry enjoys his service that much more since he gets to provide for Jeffery's beloved pet, as well.

On top of delivering food to seniors and their pets, Meals on Wheels Atlanta also delivers pet toys and pet beds, and they are happy to take in any pet-related food or items for donation. The organization says this endeavor was done out of love, not only for the people they serve but also for the *whole* family — wagging tails, fuzzy whiskers, and all.