

One of the most common questions that accident victims have is what kind of compensation can be pursued on their behalf. In legal terms, the compensation sought is referred to as “damages.” While the damages will depend on the severity of your injury and other factors, understanding the types of damages that are available can be helpful in understanding the potential value of your claim. An experienced [Durham personal injury lawyer](#) will be able to provide an estimate of the value of your claim at the initial consultation.

Compensatory Damages

If you have been injured as a result of someone else’s negligence, you are entitled to be made whole under the law. This means that you will be able to pursue a claim for compensatory damages. As you might have guessed, these are damages that are intended to “compensate” you for your losses. Compensatory damages can be broken into two subcategories:

1. **Economic damages**, or damages for loss of a specific monetary amount. If the loss can be documented by an invoice or bill, then it would be considered part of your liquidated damages claim. In a personal injury case, liquidated damages include your medical bills, your lost income, and damage to other property such as the cost to repair or replace your vehicle.
2. **Non-economic damages**, or damages for losses that do not have a specific monetary amount. Your unliquidated damages cannot be documented by a bill or invoice. Instead, the parties to the accident or the court try to determine what would be fair compensation for your non-monetary losses. Pain and suffering is the most common example of non-economic damages.

These distinctions are somewhat academic, but it is helpful for clients to understand the components of their claim so that they know what to expect. Your Durham personal injury lawyer can further explain what specific damages you are entitled to seek in your case.

Punitive Damages

Punitive damages are intended to punish the at-fault party and deter other people from behaving in a similar manner. Many clients, upset that they are injured and suffering other losses as a result of their accident, often want to pursue punitive damages against the other party.

Unfortunately, punitive damages are reserved for only the most egregious cases. As a result, they are not available in most personal injury claims. That said, here are some examples where pursuing punitive damages may be appropriate:

- A drunk driver gets in a [car accident](#) and kills another driver
- A consumer is killed by a [defective product](#) that the manufacturer knows is unsafe
- After patrons die in a fire, it is discovered that a [nightclub owner](#) refused to maintain adequate fire suppression systems and refused to comply with the local fire code

You should also be aware that North Carolina has placed caps on certain kinds of punitive damages. A Durham personal injury lawyer can discuss with you whether punitive damages would be appropriate in your case.

Contact a Durham Personal Injury Lawyer at Martin & Jones

Don't settle your claim for less than what it is worth. If you have been injured in an accident, we can help you get the compensation you need to make a full recovery. To schedule a free consultation with a Durham personal injury lawyer from our firm, [contact us](#) today at 800-662-1234.