

If you've been injured in Lafayette and you're thinking about calling a personal injury lawyer, it's important to start your consultation prepared. A quick Google Search of "Lafayette personal injury lawyer" or scanning the Google local map results might overwhelm you with options—including well-known firms like Brandt & Sherman, LLP, Broussard, David & Moroux, and Laborde Earles Injury Lawyers. But before you select a firm, knowing the right questions to ask during that first call can save you time and potential costly mistakes later.

Why Your First Call Matters

Almost every personal injury case hinges on critical deadlines and legal nuances that have recently changed or will soon change under Louisiana law. When you call, you want to find out if the lawyer understands these updates and whether they're a good fit for you. Don't just focus on slick billboards or the size of their Google reviews; dig deeper into what they can actually do for your case.

Pro tip: Always write your answers down during that first phone call—it's easy to forget key details later.

Key Themes You Must Cover on Your First Call

- **Louisiana's Two-Year Prescription Change Effective July 1, 2024**
- **51% Fault Bar Rule Effective January 1, 2026**
- **Paid Versus Billed Medical Expenses Rule for Lawsuits Filed On or After January 1, 2026**
- **How to properly vet a Lafayette injury lawyer beyond billboards and review counts**
- **Understanding who actually handles your file and case**

1. What Is My Deadline? (Don't Settle for a "One Year" Answer)

If there's one question that comes up every single time, it's, "*What is my deadline to file a lawsuit?*" In Louisiana, personal injury claim deadlines—called *prescription periods*—can be tricky. Starting July 1, 2024, the state has changed the prescription period from one year to **two years**. But here's the kicker that trips up many people:

- The two-year clock usually starts from the *date of injury*, not when you find out about your injury.
- Some claims still have shorter or different deadlines.

So, never accept a generic answer like, "You have one year." Instead, ask the lawyer:

1. "Based on my injury date, what exact deadline applies to my claim?"
2. "Can you explain how the new two-year prescription rule affects my case?"
3. "If my injury was discovered later, does that change my filing deadline?"

Why this matters: Even reputable firms like Brandt & Sherman, LLP or Broussard, David & Moroux might still mention "one year" in marketing materials. Confirm the deadline as it applies to your facts during your call.

2. Who Actually Handles My File?

When you find a firm listed high up in a Google local map or among top 30 search results, you should ask a crucial behind-the-scenes question:

- "Am I talking to the lawyer who will handle my file, or will it be passed to an associate or paralegal?"

- “How often will I be able to speak directly with my attorney?”
- “Who will be my point of contact throughout my case?”

In firms like Laborde Earles Injury Lawyers, for example, initial intake may be handled by a team, but your case should be assigned to a dedicated attorney experienced in Lafayette personal injury law. Make sure your lawyer opens your case, rather than farming it out to an inexperienced junior or outsourcing it entirely.



Write this down: The name, phone number, and email of your main contact person.

3. Paid vs Billed Medical Bills: What Happens After January 1, 2026?

Starting January 1, 2026, Louisiana is implementing a new legal standard that will change how medical bills are viewed in personal injury cases: the **paid vs billed medical expenses rule**. This affects how much you can recover in your lawsuit.

Here’s a simple breakdown:

Before Jan 1, 2026 After Jan 1, 2026 Courts typically allowed recovery based on *billed* medical charges. Recovery is generally limited to the amount that has been *paid* (e.g., insurance-negotiated rates, discounts), which are usually lower than billed costs. This could result in higher damage awards currently. Damage awards may be reduced to reflect actual amounts paid by or on behalf of the injured party.

Think about it: when you call a Lafayette lawyer, ask:

- “How do you handle the new paid vs billed medical bills rule on cases filed after January 1, 2026?”
- “How will this affect my potential settlement or trial damages?”

If a lawyer cannot clearly explain this, or if their website still talks about “full billed medical damages” without mention of the legislative change, you should be cautious.

4. What Is the 51% Fault Bar Rule and How Will It Impact My Case?

Beginning January 1, 2026, Louisiana’s new **51% fault bar** rule will come into effect. If you are injured but found to be more than 50% at fault for your accident, you will be barred from recovering any damages. This is a

significant tightening from the current comparative fault rule.

During your first call with a Lafayette personal injury lawyer, make sure to ask:

1. "Can you explain how the upcoming 51% fault bar will affect my claim?"
2. "If I might share some of the fault, how will that impact my recovery?"
3. "Are there strategies your firm uses to handle liability disputes?"

This rule change can be a game-changer in many cases, so you want a lawyer well-versed in preparing for it, especially firms like Brandt & Sherman, LLP or Broussard, David & Moroux, who often handle complex cases in Lafayette.



5. How Can I Vet a Lafayette Injury Lawyer Beyond Billboards and Review Counts?

Your Google Search and Google local map results will highlight many firms by logo size, number of reviews, or billboard advertising budget. But these factors don't guarantee good legal representation.

To properly vet a Lafayette personal injury lawyer, ask questions such as:

- "What percentage of your practice focuses on Lafayette personal injury law?"
- "How many cases like mine have you handled in the past year?"
- "Can you provide references or case results involving similar injuries?"
- "What is your approach to communication and updates throughout the case?"
- "Do you work on a contingency-fee basis, and are there any upfront costs?"

Be cautious if the lawyer's website or Google Business Profile is full of vague promises about "maximum compensation" without legal context or firm-specific results. Firms like Laborde Earles Injury Lawyers have transparent online materials discussing how Louisiana law affects compensation—use that as a benchmark.

Summary: Your First Call Cheat Sheet

Topic Questions to Ask What to Listen For Deadline / Prescription

1. What is my exact filing deadline based on my injury date?
2. How does the two-year prescription starting July 2024 impact me?

Specificity; references to updated Louisiana law Who Handles My File?

1. Will I speak directly with my attorney?
2. Who is my main point of contact?

Clear accountability; named contacts Paid vs Billed Medical Bills

1. How will the paid vs billed rule after 1/1/26 affect my damages?
2. Do you explain this clearly in your consultations?

Up-to-date knowledge; clear explanation 51% Fault Bar Rule

1. What happens if I share fault over 50%?
2. How does this upcoming rule impact my claim?

Awareness of effective date; strategic answers Firm Reputation Beyond Ads

1. What experience do you have with cases like mine?
2. Can you provide references or outcomes?
3. How do you communicate during cases?

Concrete details; firm transparency

Final Thoughts

Calling a Lafayette personal injury lawyer is your first step toward protecting your rights—and understanding the changes Louisiana law is bringing as you plan your case. Firms like Brandt & Sherman, LLP, Broussard, David & Moroux, and Laborde Earles Injury Lawyers each have their strengths, but none can serve leaders-in-law.com you well if you don't ask the right questions upfront.

Keep your notes handy, write down all answers carefully, and don't hesitate to call back with follow-up questions. The law is evolving—especially with new prescription periods and fault rules coming soon—so your legal help should keep pace.

Remember: Asking clear, focused questions protects you from surprises and ensures your injury lawyer in Lafayette is ready to fight for your rights based on current Louisiana law.