

What Are My Legal Options for a Broken Ankle in a Nursing Home?

Our Tampa nursing home abuse and neglect attorneys fight for residents and their families

When families place loved ones in nursing homes, they do so with trust and hope. The promise is safety, supervision, and dignity. But sometimes that promise is broken and loved ones get hurt. One of the most common and serious injuries in nursing homes is a broken ankle.

For younger adults, an ankle fracture might mean a few months of inconvenience. For seniors, it can mean loss of mobility, rapid health decline, or even life-threatening complications. When a nursing home resident breaks an ankle, families are left with urgent questions: How did this happen? Was it preventable? Could it be negligence? If so, what can be done about it?

Our Tampa [nursing home abuse and neglect lawyers](#) can help you answer those questions, so you know your options if your loved one suffers this kind of injury.

How do broken ankles happen in nursing homes?

Ankle fractures in nursing homes don't come out of nowhere. They usually result from conditions or situations that should have been addressed. Here are some of the most common causes:

- **Falls from walking or standing:** Residents often trip on cluttered hallways, loose cords, rugs, or uneven flooring. Slippery floors from spills or mopping are another hazard. Poor lighting in hallways or bathrooms, especially at night, increases the risk of a fall.
- **Improper mobility assistance:** Staff may rush when transferring residents from a bed to a wheelchair or fail to use gait belts or mechanical lifts properly. Even one slip in these situations can cause a serious ankle break.
- **Bed-related accidents:** Residents sometimes try to get out of bed alone when staff don't respond quickly to call lights. Beds set at unsafe heights make falls worse.
- **Environmental hazards:** Things like broken furniture, missing handrails, or icy sidewalks outside a facility all put residents at risk.
- **Underlying health conditions:** Older adults are more vulnerable to ankle fractures due to osteoporosis, diabetes-related nerve damage, or balance issues.

What makes these causes concerning is that they're often preventable. Broken ankles don't just happen. They happen when safety measures aren't in place or staff aren't attentive.

Is a broken ankle in a nursing home negligence?

Negligence in a nursing home means the staff or facility didn't provide the level of care that a reasonable facility should. It's not about expecting perfection; it's about expecting safety.

Here are some examples of negligence that could lead to a broken ankle:

- Failing to clean up spills quickly, leaving residents to walk on wet floors.
- Not providing walkers, canes, or other mobility aids for residents who need them.
- Ignoring repeated falls or not creating a fall-prevention plan after the first incident.
- Chronic understaffing that leaves residents waiting too long for help.
- Poor training that results in unsafe transfers from beds, chairs, or bathrooms.

To be fair, not every broken ankle is negligence. Sometimes accidents happen despite reasonable precautions. For example, if a resident suddenly becomes dizzy and falls, even while being closely supervised, that might not be considered negligence, especially if the patient didn't have a history of it.

However, if the injury could have been prevented with proper care and attention, there's a strong chance negligence played a role.

Do I have a claim if my loved one broke an ankle in a nursing home?

Families often wonder if they have any legal standing to hold a nursing home accountable after an injury like this. The short answer: yes, you may. But it depends on the facts.

To bring a claim, four elements usually need to be proven:

- **Duty of care:** The nursing home is responsible for providing a safe environment and proper supervision.
- **Breach of duty:** The facility failed in that responsibility. For example, they ignored a safety hazard or failed to provide adequate staffing.
- **Causation:** That failure directly caused the broken ankle.
- **Damages:** The injury led to real harm, such as medical bills, pain, or long-term disability.

If those four elements can be shown, you may have a valid claim. However, proving negligence will require a deep investigation and evidence such as:

- Medical records and X-rays documenting the ankle fracture.
- Incident reports written by staff at the time of the injury.
- Photos of the injury and accident scene.
- Witness statements from residents, visitors, or even staff.
- Logs showing how long it took staff to respond to call lights or requests for help.

It can be difficult for families to collect this on their own. Nursing homes may resist giving records or downplay what happened. That's why many families turn to a Tampa nursing home abuse and neglect attorney who can subpoena records, dig into staffing levels, and uncover prior violations.

What is the average award or settlement for a broken ankle in a nursing home?

No two cases are exactly alike. But financial compensation for such an injury typically includes:

- **Medical expenses:** Hospital stays, surgeries, rehabilitation, medications, and mobility devices.
- **Pain and suffering:** Both physical pain and emotional distress.
- **Loss of quality of life:** If the resident can no longer walk, participate in activities, or live independently.
- **Wrongful death damages:** If complications from the fracture prove fatal.

The actual award or settlement amount will be impacted by the severity of the fracture and how much it impacts mobility. Other factors will include the resident's age and overall health, how strong the evidence of negligence is, whether the facility has a history of safety violations, and whether your case settles quietly or goes to trial.

In general, nursing home injury cases can range anywhere from tens of thousands of dollars to several hundred thousand. Cases involving gross negligence (such as repeated falls ignored by staff) can sometimes result in million-dollar verdicts.

What steps should I take if a loved one suffers a broken ankle?

If your loved one breaks an ankle in a nursing home, the steps you take immediately afterward can make a big difference in the course of your claim. Here's what you should do:

- **Get your loved one medical care right away:** Make sure your loved one is properly diagnosed and treated. Delays can worsen the injury and give the facility excuses.
- **Document everything:** Take photos of the injury, the room, or the hallway where the accident happened. Also, keep copies of medical records, prescriptions, and bills.
- **Report the incident:** Notify nursing home administrators in writing. Florida's Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA). If neglect or abuse is suspected, you may also contact [Adult Protective Services](#) or the [Long Term Care Ombudsman of Florida](#).
- **Preserve evidence:** Ask for copies of the facility's incident reports. Write down the names of staff members who were on duty at the time. Record anything your loved one remembers about how it happened.

- **Get legal help:** An attorney can launch a thorough investigation and push back when facilities or insurance companies try to downplay or deny what happened.

Get a trusted Tampa nursing home abuse and neglect lawyer on your side today

If your loved one suffered a broken ankle in a nursing home, you deserve answers and justice. [Armando Personal Injury Law](#) knows how devastating it is when the people you trust to care for your family fail to keep them safe. Attorney Armando Edmiston has built his practice on standing up to nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and the insurance companies that try to deny or downplay these injuries.

Our mission is to protect your family, uncover the truth, and hold negligent facilities accountable. We'd be glad to review what happened, answer your questions, and explain your legal options during a free consultation. You don't pay us anything upfront if we take your case, and we only get paid if we win. That means our interests are fully aligned with yours.

Serving families throughout Tampa, St. Petersburg, Sarasota, and the greater Tampa Bay area, we treat every client like family. From the moment you reach out, you'll receive compassionate support and aggressive legal representation. To get started, [contact us](#) today to schedule your free consultation and put an experienced Tampa nursing home abuse lawyer in your corner.