

\$1.3 Million Settlement After Slip and Fall on Black Ice in Maryland

How Goldberg Finnegan Secured Justice for a Client With Lasting Injuries

A winter storm had just passed through Montgomery County, and the parking lot looked like it had been cleared. But appearances can be deceiving. Beneath the surface of melting snow, a dangerous hazard was forming—black ice.

Our client was walking across the lot when she suddenly lost her footing and fell hard. What seemed like an ordinary [slip and fall](#) quickly spiraled into a life-altering ordeal. She fractured her ankle in three places and, despite surgery, developed a painful condition that affects her mobility and quality of life to this day.

At [Goldberg Finnegan](#), our Maryland slip and fall lawyers fought tirelessly for her. The result: a **\$1.3 million settlement**, holding the property operator accountable for failing to maintain the lot properly after the storm.

This case illustrates how severe slip and fall accidents can be, why property owners must take their responsibilities seriously, and what it takes to secure justice when insurers push back.

What Happened in the Parking Lot Slip and Fall?

The case began after a snowstorm swept through the region. The property operator plowed and cleared the lot, but failed to re-treat the area once temperatures dropped again. As melted snow re-froze overnight, slick patches of black ice developed across the pavement.

Our client was unaware of the danger. While crossing the lot, she stepped on the ice, slipped, and fell. The impact left her with a severe tri-malleolar fracture, one of the most complex ankle breaks a person can suffer. Surgery was required to stabilize the bones with plates and screws, followed by a grueling recovery.

Unfortunately, her ordeal didn't end with surgery. She later developed Complex Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS)—a chronic neurological condition triggered by the injury. CRPS causes intense burning pain, swelling, and hypersensitivity. It can make even the lightest touch unbearable and often results in permanent disability.

Why Property Owners in Maryland Are Responsible for Ice Hazards

Maryland law is clear: property owners and operators have a duty of care to keep their [premises](#) reasonably safe for visitors. This includes clearing snow and ice after storms. It's not enough to plow once and walk away. If melting and refreezing create new ice hazards, owners must address them promptly or warn people of the risk.

In this case, the parking lot operator's negligence was obvious. By failing to re-treat the lot after the snow melted and re-froze, they allowed dangerous black ice to develop. That decision (or lack of action) set the stage for a devastating injury.

Slip and fall accidents are often brushed off as “minor.” But as this case shows, a fall can lead to catastrophic injuries and life-changing consequences. That’s why Maryland personal injury lawyers treat these claims with the seriousness they deserve.

What Are the Long-Term Consequences of a Slip and Fall Injury?

The effects of our client’s fall went far beyond a broken ankle. Even after surgery, she faced:

- **Chronic Pain** – CRPS is notoriously difficult to manage. Victims often endure constant pain that interferes with every part of daily life.
- **Loss of Mobility** – Severe ankle fractures and CRPS limit a person’s ability to walk, stand, or drive, threatening independence.
- **Emotional Trauma** – Living with chronic pain and reduced function takes a heavy psychological toll, leading to anxiety, depression, and social withdrawal.
- **Financial Strain** – Medical expenses, lost income from missed work, and the cost of ongoing care can overwhelm families.

Our client’s case demonstrates how a slip and fall is not just a temporary setback. For many victims, it is the start of a lifelong battle with pain, disability, and financial hardship.

How Do Slip and Fall Lawyers Prove Liability in Black Ice Cases?

Slip and fall cases often hinge on proving notice, that is, showing that the property owner knew, or should have known, about the dangerous condition. In ice cases, this means demonstrating that the hazard developed in a way that was foreseeable and preventable.

This may involve:

- **Investigating Weather Patterns** – Records can show temperatures rose during the day, melted snow, and dropped again overnight, creating predictable refreezing.
- **Documenting Maintenance Failures** – This can prove that the property was never re-treated or salted, despite clear risk of ice forming.
- **Gathering Witness Statements** – If other visitors confirmed slippery conditions and the absence of warnings or treatment, that can be used as evidence.
- **Consulting Experts** – Snow and ice management professionals can provide testimony on proper industry standards and how they were ignored.

This type of thorough investigation leaves no room for the defense to argue that the ice was “sudden” or “unavoidable.” Instead, it can show a clear pattern of negligence.

What Is Complex Regional Pain Syndrome and Why Does It Matter in a Case?

CRPS is a rare but devastating outcome of traumatic injuries like fractures. It is caused by abnormal nerve responses that create chronic, disproportionate pain. For legal purposes, CRPS is crucial because it dramatically increases the value of a case.

Insurance companies often resist acknowledging CRPS because its symptoms can vary and it is not as visible as a broken bone on an X-ray. That makes strong medical documentation essential. Our client's treating physicians provided detailed records and testimony showing her pain was real, severe, and directly linked to the accident.

By proving CRPS, our attorneys secured recognition of the long-term suffering and life impact that extended far beyond the initial ankle fracture.

How Much Is a Slip and Fall Case Worth in Maryland?

The value of a slip and fall case depends on the severity of the injuries, the permanence of the condition, and the strength of the liability evidence. In this case, damages reflected:

- The cost of emergency treatment, surgery, and rehabilitation.
- Lost wages and diminished earning capacity.
- Ongoing pain management and medical care.
- The permanent impact of CRPS on quality of life.

The result was a \$1.3 million settlement, a figure that not only compensated our client for her suffering, but also held the property operator accountable for failing to keep the premises safe.

Why Insurance Companies Fight Slip and Fall Claims

Slip and fall cases are notoriously contested. Insurers often try to minimize payouts by claiming:

- The victim wasn't paying attention.
- The ice was "open and obvious."
- The property owner had no reasonable opportunity to correct the condition.
- The injuries weren't as severe as claimed.

In this case, the defense tried to argue that the ice was unavoidable and the injuries were exaggerated. But with clear evidence of negligence and strong medical proof, our attorneys dismantled those arguments.

Why Experienced Legal Representation Makes the Difference

A \$1.3 million settlement does not happen by accident. It requires:

- **Early Investigation** – Gathering critical evidence before it disappears.
- **Medical Documentation** – Proving not just the initial fracture, but the long-term effects of CRPS.
- **Persistence Against Insurers** – Refusing to accept low offers and pushing forward with litigation when necessary.
- **Trial Readiness** – Insurance companies only take cases seriously when they know the plaintiff's lawyers are prepared to go to court.

At Goldberg Finnegan, our [Maryland personal injury lawyers](#) approach every slip and fall claim with this level of preparation. That's why our clients consistently achieve meaningful results.

Standing Up for Slip and Fall Victims Across Maryland

Slip and fall accidents are often underestimated, but they can leave victims with catastrophic injuries and permanent disabilities. For our client, a simple walk across a parking lot turned into a lifelong battle with pain. The \$1.3 million settlement we secured gave her financial security and accountability against the negligent property operator.

If you or a loved one has suffered a serious fall on unsafe property, you don't have to face the aftermath alone. Our Silver Spring personal injury attorneys are ready to fight for you, just as we did for this client. [Contact Goldberg Finnegan today](#) for a free consultation. We'll listen to your story, explain your rights, and work tirelessly to secure the justice you deserve.