

How Permanent Scarring and Disfigurement Affect an Alabama Accident Claim

Know Your Rights When an Injury Leaves a Lasting Mark

Injuries can heal, but many times they leave a permanent mark. Long after the stitches come out and the swelling goes down, a scar across someone's face, hands, or arms stays exactly where it is, and it reminds that person every single day of the moment their life changed.

Insurance adjusters often treat scarring as an afterthought, something to note in a file next to the medical bills and move past quickly. But Alabama law recognizes [permanent scarring](#) and disfigurement as compensable harm beyond the medical expenses associated with treating the underlying injury, and it's one of the more overlooked aspects of an Alabama [personal injury](#) claim.

If you're dealing with a scar or disfigurement from a wreck that wasn't your fault, understanding how Alabama values that loss can make a real difference in what your claim is worth.

What Counts as Scarring or Disfigurement Under Alabama Law

Compensation for permanent scarring and disfigurement can include damages that are not tied to a specific bill or financial loss, including the physical and emotional effects of living with a permanent change in appearance. These differ from economic losses such as medical expenses and lost wages, which are generally easier to calculate.

A scar doesn't have to be dramatic to qualify. A visible line across someone's cheek from a car accident, a burn scar covering part of an arm, or another lasting change in physical appearance can all contribute to the damages claimed after an injury.

Types of Accidents That Commonly Cause These Injuries

Scarring and disfigurement show up across nearly every category of a personal injury case, and the cause of the injury often shapes how the scar heals and how it's valued.

- [Car and Truck Accidents](#): Broken glass, deployed airbags, and contact with the dashboard or steering column frequently cause facial lacerations and permanent scarring.
- [Motorcycle Accidents](#): Road rash from being thrown off a bike can scar large areas of skin, since riders have no metal frame protecting their arms and legs.
- **Burn Injuries**: Contact with hot surfaces, chemicals, or fire during an accident can leave permanent scarring that sometimes requires ongoing skin grafts.
- [Dog Bites](#) and **Animal Attacks**: Bite wounds, especially to the face and hands, often leave scarring even after proper medical treatment.

- **Slip and Fall Accidents**: A fall onto broken glass, sharp metal, or a rough surface can cause deep lacerations that scar permanently.

Each of these injuries carries its own healing timeline, and that timeline matters when it comes time to value the claim.

Why the Location and Visibility of a Scar Can Matter

Not all scars have the same impact on an injured person's life. A scar on someone's face or hands is visible every day, in every interaction, in every job interview and family photo. A scar of the same size on someone's back or leg may carry a different emotional and practical weight, even though the underlying wound might be identical.

For example, a server who develops a facial scar after a car accident may face awkward questions from customers every single shift, something a scar hidden under clothing would never cause. That ongoing, public reminder of the accident can help demonstrate the personal impact of the disfigurement, beyond simply documenting the size or depth of the scar itself.

The Emotional Toll That Comes With a Permanent Scar

The physical wound is only part of what a scarring injury leaves behind. Many people dealing with visible scarring also struggle with self-consciousness, anxiety in social or professional settings, and a lasting sense of grief over how they used to look before the accident.

That emotional toll is real, and Alabama law allows it to be part of a claim. A therapist or counselor's records documenting anxiety, depression, or a diagnosed condition like post-traumatic stress tied to the injury can help show the full weight of what a disfigurement has cost someone, beyond what shows up in a plastic surgeon's notes alone.

Future Medical Costs Tied to Permanent Scarring

Scarring rarely ends with the initial treatment. Many injury victims need ongoing care long after the wound itself has closed, and that future care should be factored into the value of a claim.

Laser therapy, silicone sheeting, scar revision surgery, and treatment for contractures that limit movement near a joint can all continue for months or years after an accident. A claim that only accounts for the bills already paid, without factoring in what future treatment is likely to cost, can leave an injury victim covering those expenses out of pocket for years to come.

How Contributory Negligence Complicates These Claims

Alabama follows one of the strictest fault rules in the country. Under [Alabama's contributory negligence rule](#), if an insurance company can pin even 1 percent of the blame on the injured person, it can try to deny the entire claim, including compensation for permanent scarring.

That makes disputes over fault especially important in a scarring or disfigurement claim. An insurer may argue that the injured person contributed to the accident, making evidence about exactly how the accident happened critical to the claim.

Building the Evidence a Scarring Claim Needs

A scar is visible, but proving its full impact on someone's life takes more than a photograph. Building a strong claim usually requires several types of documentation working together.

- **Medical Records and Treatment History:** Records from emergency treatment through any follow-up surgeries or skin grafts establish the medical reality of the injury.
- **Photographic Evidence Over Time:** Photos taken shortly after the injury and again as healing progresses show how the scar developed and whether it's permanent.
- **A Plastic Surgeon or Dermatologist's Opinion:** A qualified physician can speak to whether the scarring is permanent and what future treatment, if any, might help.
- **Personal Testimony About Daily Impact:** Testimony about how the scar affects work, relationships, social interactions, and everyday life can help demonstrate its ongoing impact.

Without this kind of documentation, an insurance company has an easier time arguing that a scar is minor or temporary, even when it isn't.

The Two-Year Deadline to File a Claim in Alabama

Alabama law generally gives injury victims two years from the date of the accident to file a personal injury lawsuit under [Alabama Code Section 6-2-38](#). That deadline applies to scarring and disfigurement claims the same way it applies to any other personal injury case.

Waiting to pursue a claim can also hurt the case itself. The longer someone waits, the harder it can be to gather fresh photographic evidence, track down witnesses, and build the kind of medical record that shows exactly how a scar developed and whether it's permanent.

Don't Wait to Protect What You're Owed

Living with a permanent scar means living with a daily reminder of someone else's carelessness. [Dean Waite & Associates, LLC](#), has spent years fighting for Mobile and Alabama accident victims, and we know how to build a case that accounts for the full impact of a visible injury, not just the medical bills that came with it. We leave no stone unturned in pursuit of the compensation our clients deserve, and we don't back down when insurance companies try to minimize what a scar has cost someone.

If you or someone you love is dealing with permanent scarring or disfigurement from an accident in Mobile or anywhere in Alabama, don't hesitate. [Contact us](#) today for a free consultation and let Dean Waite fight for what your case is really worth. We handle every case on a contingency fee basis, so you owe us nothing unless we recover compensation for you.