

#### March 2022

TO: Holders of Wisconsin Jury Instructions – Civil

FROM: Bryce Pierson, Office of Judicial Education – Wisconsin Court System

Legal Advisor – Jury Instructions

Reporter, Wisconsin Civil Jury Instructions Committee

SUBJECT: 2022 Supplement to Wisconsin Jury Instructions – Civil

The enclosed 2022 supplement to *Wisconsin Jury Instructions – Civil* was recently approved by the Wisconsin Judicial Conference's Civil Jury Instructions Committee. It is the fifty-third supplement in the publication's 62-year history.

**Content.** The 2022 supplement updates the publication on legislative actions and judicial decisions through January 21, 2022.

**Information.** For information on the status of the Committee's work, please contact Bryce Pierson at <a href="mailto:bryce.pierson@wicourts.gov">bryce.pierson@wicourts.gov</a>.

# 2022 Supplement

# **Filing Instructions**

Volume I Remove Old Pages Entitled	Insert New Pages Entitled
Title Page	Title Page 2022 Supplement (Release No. 53) in lower right corner
Committee Members (p. ii)	Committee Members (1959-2022) (p.ii)
Summary of Contents (2021)	Summary of Contents (2022)
Table of Contents (2021)	Table of Contents (2022)
JI-50 (© 2020)	JI-50 (2022)
JI-400 (© 2011)	JI-400 (2022)
JI-1008 (© 2004)	JI-1008 (2022)
JI-1023 (2021)	JI-1023 (2022)
JI-1023.5 (2021)	JI-1023.5 (2022)
JI-1153 (© 2008)	JI-1153 (2022)
JI-1155 (© 2008)	JI-1155 (2022)
JI-1157 (© 2008)	JI-1157 (2022)
JI-1158 (© 2008)	JI-1158 (2022)
JI-1159 (© 2008)	JI-1159 (2022)
JI-1160 (© 2008)	JI-1160 (2022)
JI-1165 (© 2008)	JI-1165 (2022)
JI-1170 (© 2008)	JI-1170 (2022)
JI-1175 (© 2008)	JI-1175 (2022)
JI-1180 (© 2008)	JI-1180 (2022)
JI-1185 (© 2008)	JI-1185 (2022)

JI-1190 (© 2008)	JI-1190 (2022)
JI-1190.5 (© 2008)	JI-1190.5 (2022)
JI-1191 (© 2008)	JI-1191 (2022)
JI-1192 (© 2008)	JI-1192 (2022)
JI-1193 (© 2008)	JI-1193 (2022)
JI-1193.5 (© 2008)	JI-1193.5 (2022)
JI-1195 (© 2008)	JI-1195 (2022)
JI-1205 (© 2008)	JI-1205 (2022)
JI-1210 (© 2008)	JI-1210 (2022)
JI-1220 (© 2008)	JI-1220 (2022)
JI-1225 (© 2008)	JI-1225 (2022)
JI-1230 (© 2008)	JI-1230 (2022)
JI-1235 (© 2008)	JI-1235 (2022)
JI-1240 (© 2008)	JI-1240 (2022)
JI-1245 (© 2008)	JI-1245 (2022)
JI-1250 (© 2008)	JI-1250 (2022)
JI-1255 (© 2008)	JI-1255 (2022)
JI-1260 (© 2008)	JI-1260 (2022)
JI-1265 (© 2008)	JI-1265 (2022)
JI-1270 (© 2008)	JI-1270 (2022)
JI-1275 (© 2008)	JI-1275 (2022)
No instruction	JI-1393 (2022)
Volume II	
Title Page	Title Page 2022 Supplement (Release No. 53) in lower right corner
Table of Contents (2021)	Table of Contents (2022)
JI-1762 (© 2003)	JI-1762 (2022)
JI-1900.4 (2021)	JI-1900.4 (2022)
JI-2600 (© 2015)	JI-2600 (2022)

JI-2605 (© 2015)	JI-2605 (2022)
JI-2770 (© 2005)	JI-2770 (2022)
JI-2790 (© 2020)	JI-2790 (2022)
JI-3028 (© 2020)	JI-3028 (2022)
No instruction	JI-3079 (2022)
Volume 1	III
Title Page	Title Page 2022 Supplement (Release No. 53) in lower right corner
Table of Contents (2021)	
JI-3110 (© 2013)	JI-3110 (2022)
JI-7050 (2021)	JI-7050 (2022)
No instruction	JI-7050A (2022)
JI-8025 (© 2016)	JI 8025 (2022)
JI-8060 (© 2018)	JI 8060 (2022)
JI-8100 (© 2020)	JI 8100 (2022)
JI-8110 (© 2008)	JI 8110 (2022)
JI-8120 (© 2008)	JI 8120 (2022)
Table of Cases Cited (2021)	
Index (2021)	Index (2022)
2022 Supplement filed by	
initials	date

#### FOR QUESTIONS:

If you have any questions about these filing instructions or the civil jury instructions, please contact the Committee's reporter, Bryce Pierson at <a href="mailto:bryce.pierson@wicourts.gov">bryce.pierson@wicourts.gov</a>.



# WISCONSIN JURY INSTRUCTIONS

# **CIVIL**

# Wisconsin Civil Jury Instructions Committee

• 2022 Supplement (Release No. 53)



# WISCONSIN JURY INSTRUCTIONS

# **CIVIL**

# **VOLUME I**

**Wisconsin Civil Jury Instructions Committee** 

• 2022 Supplement (Release No. 53)

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#### **SUMMARY OF CONTENTS**

Tributes Memorials 1981 Foreword 1978 Preface 1960 Introduction

1700 Inti Ottaction	
GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS	
Right to a Jury Trial	1
Suggested Order	10
Preliminary Instructions	50-66
Jurors' Duties	100-197
Evidence, Burdens, and Presumptions	200-358
Witnesses	400-425
Accrual of Action	950
NEGLIGENCE	
Standard of Care Required	1000-1029
Duties of Persons in Specific Situations	1030-1413
Cause	1500-1511
Comparative Negligence	1580-1595
Imputed Negligence	1600-1610
Damages	1700-1897
Safe Place	1900.2-1911
Nuisance	1920-1932
INTENTIONAL TORTS	-,-, -,
Assault and Battery	2000-2020
False Imprisonment	2100-2115
Federal Civil Rights	2151-2155
Conversion	2200-2201
Misrepresentation	2400-2420
Defamation	2500-2552
Misuse of Procedure	2600-2620
Trade Practices	2720-2722
Domestic Relations	2725
Business Relations	2750-2791
Civil Conspiracy; Injury to Business	2800-2822
Tort ImmunityBLaw Note	2900
CONTRACTS	
General	3010-3095
Insurance	3100-3118
Breach of Warranty	3200-3230
Duties of Manufacturers and Sellers	3240-3310
Damages	3700-3760
AGENCY; EMPLOYMENT; BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS	4000-4080
PERSONS	5001-7070
PROPERTY	
General	8012-8060
Eminent Domain	8100-8145
TABLE OF CASES CITED	
INDEX	

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

# **VOLUME I**

### **GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS**

#### **Jurors' Duties**

Inst. No.	
1	Right to a Jury Trial: Law Note for Trial Judges (2017)
10	Suggested Order of Instructions: Negligence Cases (2018)
50	Preliminary Instruction: Before Trial (2022)
57	Juror Questioning of Witnesses (2014)
60	Notetaking Not Allowed (2011)
61	Notetaking Permitted (2011)
63	Transcripts Not Available for Deliberations; Reading Back Testimony (2011)
65	Preliminary Instruction: Use of an Interpreter for a Witness (2011)
66	Preliminary Instruction: Use of an Interpreter for a Juror (2011)
80	Recording Played to the Jury (2011)
100	Opening (2013)
103	Summary Exhibit (2013)
106	Submission on General Verdict (2010)
107	Submission on Ultimate Fact Verdict [Withdrawn 2011]
108	Submission on Ultimate Fact Verdict When Court Finds One or More Parties at
	Fault [Withdrawn 2011]
110	Remarks and Arguments of Counsel (2011)
115	Objections of Counsel (2015)
120	Ignoring Judge's Demeanor (2011)
125	Counsel's Reference to Insurance Company (2011)
130	Stricken Testimony (2011)
145	Special Verdict Questions: Interrelationship (2016)
150	Damage Question Answered by the Court (2005)
152	View of Scene (2011)
155	Question Answered by the Court (2011)
180	Five-Sixths Verdict (2017)
190	Closing: Short Form (2011)

191	Closing: Long Form (2017)
195	Supplemental Instruction Where Jury is Unable to Agree (2003)
197	Instruction after Verdict is Received (2010)
	<b>Evidence, Burdens, and Presumptions</b>
200	Burden of Proof: Ordinary (2004)
202	Burden of Proof: Ordinary: Compensatory Damages (2005)
205	Burden of Proof: Middle (2016)
210	Burden of Proof Where Verdict Contains a Middle Standard Question [Withdrawn 1998]
215	Credibility of Witnesses; Weight of Evidence (2011)
220	Jury Not to Speculate [Withdrawn 1990]
230	Circumstantial Evidence (2011)
255	Driver's Manual: Use by Jury [Withdrawn 2011]
260	Expert Testimony (2017)
261	Medical or Scientific Treatise in Evidence (1989)
265	Expert Testimony: Hypothetical Questions (2011)
268	Opinion of a Nonexpert Witness (2013)
305	Measurements (1989)
315	Negative Testimony (2016)
325	Physical Facts (1989)
349 350	Presumptions and Permissive Inferences - Law Note for Trial Judges (2017) Presumptions: Conflict as to Existence of Basic Fact; Evidence Introduced from
	Which Nonexistence of Presumed Fact May Be Inferred (2013)
352	Presumptions: Existence of Basic Fact Uncontradicted; Evidence Introduced from Which Nonexistence of Presumed Fact May Be Inferred (2013)
353	Presumptions: Deceased Person was Not Negligent (2003)
354	Presumptions: Conflict as to Existence of Basic Fact; No Evidence Introduced from Which Nonexistence of Presumed Fact Could Be Inferred (1991)
356	Permissive Inferences; e.g., Res Ipsa Loquitur (1989)
358	Subsequent Remedial Measures (2021)
	Witnesses
400	Spoliation: Inference (2022)
405	Falsus in Uno (2018)
410	Witness: Absence (2015)
415	Witness: Prior Conviction (2011)
420 425	Impeachment of Witnesses: Prior Inconsistent or Contradictory Statements (1981) Witness Exercising Privilege Against Self-Incrimination (2011)

950 Reasonable Diligence in Discovery of Injury (Statute of Limitations) (2016)

#### **NEGLIGENCE**

### **Standard of Care Required**

1000	Unavoidable Accident (1989)
1001	Negligence: Fault: Ultimate Fact Verdict (2004)
1002	Gas Company, Duty to Customer (1989)
1003	Negligence, Gas Company, Duty in Installing Its Pipes, Mains, and Meters (1989)
1004	Negligent Versus Intentional Conduct (1995)
1005	Negligence: Defined (2016)
1006	Gross Negligence: Defined (2016)
1007	Contributory Negligence: Defined (2015)
1007.5	Contributory Negligence: Rescue Rule (2016)
1008	Intoxication: Chemical Test Results [Reflects Changes in 2003 Wisconsin Act 30] (2022)
1009	Negligence: Violation of Safety Statute (2010)
1010	Negligence of Children (© 2014)
1011	Attractive Nuisance: Ultimate Fact Question [Renumbered JI-Civil 8025 (2013)]
1012	Parents' Duty to Protect Minor Child (1989)
1013	Parent's Duty to Control Minor Child (2006)
1014	Negligent Entrustment (2017)
1014.5	Negligent Entrustment to an Incompetent Person (2017)
1015	Negligence in an Emergency [Renumbered JI-Civil-1105A 1995]
1019	Negligence: Evidence of Custom and Usage (1995)
1020	Negligence: Under Special Circumstances [Withdrawn 2011]
1021	Negligence of Mentally Disabled (2006)
1021.2	Illness Without Forewarning (2002)
1022.2	Negligence of General Contractor: Increasing Risk of Injury to Employee of Subcontractor (2020)
1022.4	Negligence: Building Contractor (2016)
1022.6	Liability of One Employing Independent Contractor (2015)
1023	Medical Negligence (2022)
1023.1	Professional Negligence: Medical: Duty of Physician to Inform a Patient:
	Special Verdict (2015)
1023.2	Professional Negligence: Medical: Duty of Physician to Inform a Patient (2015)
1023.3	Professional Negligence: Medical: Duty of Physician to Inform a Patient:
	Cause (2015)
1023.4	Professional Negligence: Medical: Duty of Physician to Inform a Patient:

Wisconsin Court System, 2022

Contributory Negligence (2015)

- 1023.5 Professional Negligence: Legal—Status of Lawyer as a Specialist is Not in Dispute (2022)
- 1023.5A Professional Negligence: Legal—Status of Lawyer as Specialist is in Dispute (1997)
- 1023.6 Negligence of Insurance Agent (2021)
- 1023.7 Professional Negligence: Registered Nurses and Licensed Technicians Performing Skilled Services (2016)
- 1023.8 Professional Negligence: Chiropractor-Treatment (2016)
- 1023.9 Professional Negligence: Chiropractor-Determining Treatability by Chiropractic Means (1999)
- 1023.14 Professional Negligence: Dental (2016)
- 1023.15 Professional Negligence: Chiropractor, Dentist, Optometrist, or Podiatrist: Duty to Inform a Patient: Special Verdict (2015)
- 1023.16 Professional Negligence: Chiropractor, Dentist, Optometrist, or Podiatrist: Duty to Inform a Patient (2015)
- 1023.17 Professional Negligence: Chiropractor, Dentist, Optometrist, or Podiatrist: Duty to Inform a Patient: Cause (2015)
- 1024 Professional Negligence: Medical: Res Ipsa Loquitur (2017)
- Negligence of a Common Carrier (2006)
- 1025.5 Bailment: Defined (2009)
- 1025.6 Duty of Bailor for Hire (1992)
- 1025.7 Bailment: Duty of Bailee under a Bailment for Mutual Benefit (2009)
- 1025.8 Bailment: Liability of a Gratuitous Bailor (2009)
- 1026 Bailment: Negligence of Bailee May Be Inferred (2005)
- 1026.5 Bailment: Negligence of Carrier Presumed (2005)
- Duty of Owner of Place of Amusement: Common Law [Renumbered JI-Civil 8040 1985]
- 1027.5 Duty of a Proprietor of a Place of Business to Protect a Patron from Injury Caused by Act of Third Person [Renumbered JI-Civil 8045 1986]
- 1027.7 Duty of Hotel Innkeeper [Renumbered JI-Civil 8050 1986]
- Duty of Owner of a Building Abutting on a Public Highway [Renumbered JI-Civil 8030 1986]
- Highway or Sidewalk Defect or Insufficiency [Renumbered JI-Civil 8035 1986]

#### **Duties of Persons in Specific Situations**

- 1030 Right to Assume Due Care by Highway Users (1992)
- 1031 Conditional Privilege of Authorized Emergency Vehicle Operator (2016)
- 1032 Defective Condition of Automobile: Host's Liability (1992)
- 1035 Voluntary Intoxication: Relation to Negligence (2004)
- 1045 Driver's Duty When Children Are Present (1992)

1046 Contributory Negligence of Passenger: Placing Self in Position of Danger (1992) 1047 Contributory Negligence of Guest: Riding with Host (1992) Negligence of Guest: Active: Management and Control (1992) 1047.1 1048 Driver, Negligence: Highway Defect or Insufficiency (1992) 1049 Pedestrian, Negligence: Sidewalk Defect or Insufficiency (1989) 1050 Duty of Persons with Physical Disability (2005) 1051 Duty of Worker: Preoccupation in Work Minimizes Duty (1995) 1051.2 Duty of Worker: When Required to Work in Unsafe Premises (1992) Equipment and Maintenance of Vehicles: General Duty (2008) 1052 1053 Equipment and Maintenance of Vehicles: Headlights (2008) 1054 Equipment and Maintenance of Vehicles: Brakes (2008) 1055 Lookout (1997) 1056 Lookout: Camouflage (2013) 1060 Lookout: Backing (2008) 1065 Lookout: Entering or Crossing A Through Highway (2003) 1070 Lookout: Failure to See Object in Plain Sight (1992) 1075 Lookout: Guest (1996) 1076 Lookout: Guest's Duty to Warn (1992) 1080 Lookout: Limited Duty on Private Property (1992) 1090 Driver on Arterial Approaching Intersection: Lookout; Right of Way; Flashing Yellow Signal (1992) 1095 Lookout: Pedestrian (2008) 1096 Duty to Sound Horn (2008) 1105 Management and Control (2008) 1105A Management and Control–Emergency (2016) 1107 Racing (2008) 1112 Operation of Automobile Following Another (2015) 1113 Duty of Preceding Driver: Slowing or Stopping: Signaling (2008) 1114 Duty of Preceding Driver to Following Driver: Lookout (2008) 1115 Parking: Stopping: Leaving Vehicle Off the Roadway (2008) 1120 Parking: Stopping: Leaving Vehicle On the Roadway (2008) 1125 Parking: Stopping: Leaving Vehicle On or Off the Roadway: Exception to Prohibition (2008) 1132 Stopped School Bus: Position on Highway (2008) 1133 School Bus: Flashing Red Warning Lights (2008) 1135 Position on Highway on Meeting and Passing (2008) 1140 Position on Highway on Meeting and Passing; Violation Excused (2008) 1141 Passing: Vehicles Proceeding in Same Direction (2008) 1142 Passing: Vehicles Proceeding in Same Direction: Obstructed View (2008)

1143

Overtaken Vehicle Turning Left (2008)

Passing: Vehicles Proceeding in Same Direction: In No Passing Zone or Where

- 1144 Passing: Vehicles Proceeding in Same Direction (2015) 1145 Res Ipsa Loquitur (2002) Right of Way: At Intersection with Through Highway (2022) 1153 1155 Right of Way: At Intersections of Highways (2022) 1157 Right of Way: At Intersection of Highways: Ultimate Verdict Question (2022) 1158 Right of Way: To Pedestrian Crossing at Controlled Intersection (2022) 1159 Right of Way: Pedestrian Control Signal: Walk Signal (2022) 1160 Right of Way: To Pedestrian at Intersections or Crosswalks on Divided Highways or Highways Provided with Safety Zones (2022) 1161 Right of Way: Pedestrian Crossing Roadway at Point Other Than Crosswalk (1982)1165 Right of Way: To Pedestrian at Uncontrolled Intersection or Crosswalk (2022) 1170 Right of Way: Blind Pedestrian on Highway (2022) 1175 Right of Way: Entering Highway from an Alley or Nonhighway Access Point (2022)1180 Right of Way: Funeral Processions; Military Convoys (2022) 1185 Right of Way: Green Arrow (2022) 1190 Right of Way: Green Signal (2022) 1190.5 Plaintiff and Defendant Each Claims Green Light in Their Favor (2022) 1191 Duty of Driver Entering Intersection with Green Light in Driver's Favor: Lookout (2022)1192 Duty of Driver Approaching Intersection When Amber Light Shows (2022) 1193 Red Traffic Control Light Signaling Stop (2022) 1193.5 Flashing Red Traffic Control Light (2022)
- Right of Way: Left Turn at Intersection (2022)
  Right of Way: Livestock (2008)
- 1205 Right of Way: Moving from Parked Position (2022)
- 1210 Right of Way: On Approach of Emergency Vehicle (2022)
- 1220 Right of Way: Pedestrian's Duty: At Pedestrian Control Signal (2022)
- Right of Way: Pedestrian's Duty: Crossing at Controlled Intersection or Crosswalk (2022)
- Right of Way: Pedestrian's Duty: Crossing Roadway at Point Other than Crosswalk (2022)
- Right of Way: Pedestrian's Duty: Divided Highways or Highways with Safety Zones (2022)
- Right of Way: Pedestrian's Duty: Facing Green Arrow (2022)
- Right of Way: Pedestrian's Duty: Facing Red Signal (2022)
- 1250 Right of Way: Pedestrian's Duty: Standing or Loitering on Highway (2022)
- Right of Way: Pedestrian's Duty at Uncontrolled Intersection or Crosswalk; Suddenly Leaving Curb or Place of Safety (2022)
- Position on Highway: Pedestrian's Duty; Walking on Highway (2022)

1265 Right of Way: Persons Working on Highway (2022) Right of Way: When Vehicle Using Alley or Nonhighway Access to Stop (2022) 1270 1275 Right of Way: When Yield Sign Installed (2022) 1277 Safety Belt: Failure to Use (2009) 1278 Safety Helmet: Failure to Use (2009) 1280 Skidding (2008) 1285 Speed: Reasonable and Prudent; Reduced Speed (2008) 1290 Speed: Fixed Limits (2008) 1295 Speed: Special Restrictions for Certain Vehicles (2008) 1300 Speed: Impeding Traffic (2008) 1305 Speed: Failure to Yield Roadway (2015) Speed: Obstructed Vision (2008) 1310 1315 Speed: Obstructed Vision: Nighttime (2008) 1320 Speed: Camouflage (1992) 1325 Stop at Stop Signs (2008) Stop at Stop Signs [Alternate] (2008) 1325A 1330 Stop: Emerging from an Alley (2008) 1335 Emerging from a Private Driveway or Other Nonhighway Access (2008) 1336 Railroad Crossing: Driver's Duty (2008) 1337 Stop: All Vehicles at Railroad Crossing Signals (2015) 1337.5 Stop: Pedestrian Crossing Railroad Tracks (2015) 1338 Stop: Nonoperation of Railroad Crossing Signals (2008) 1339 Stop: Special Vehicles at Railroad Crossing (2008) 1340 Stop: For School Bus Loading or Unloading Children (2008) 1350 Turn or Movement: Signal Required (2008) 1352 Turn: Position and Method When Not Otherwise Marked or Posted (2008) 1354 Turn or Movement: Ascertainment that Turn or Movement Can Be Made with Reasonable Safety: Lookout (2009)

## Other Negligence

Deviation from Traffic Lane: Clearly Indicated Lanes (2008)

1380	Negligence: Teacher: Duty to Instruct or Warn (2020)
1381	Negligence: Teacher: Duty to Supervise Students (2016)
1383	Employer Negligence: Negligent Hiring, Training, or Supervision (2019)
1384	Duty of Hospital: Granting and Renewing Staff Privileges (Corporate
	Negligence) (2017)
1385	Negligence: Hospital: Duty of Employees: Performance of Routine Custodial
	Care Not Requiring Expert Testimony (1999)
1385.5	Negligence: Hospital: Duty of Employees: Suicide or Injury Resulting from
	Escape or Attempted Suicide (2006)

1355

1390	Injury by Dog (2017)
1391	Liability of Owner or Keeper of Animal: Common Law (2016)
1393	Participation in Rec. Act (2022)
1395	Duty of Public Utility: Highway Obstructions: Nonenergized Facilities (1989)
1397	Negligence: Voluntary Assumption of Duty to a Third Person (2014)
	RAILROADS
1401	Railroads: Duty to Ring Engine Bell Within Municipality (2007)
1402	Railroads: Duty to Ring Engine Bell Outside Municipality (2007)
1403	Railroads: Duty to Blow Train Whistle Within Municipality [Withdrawn 2007]
1405	Railroads: Duty of Train Crew Approaching Crossing (2006)
1407	Railroads: Speed: Fixed Limits (2006)
1408	Railroads: Speed: No Limit (2006)
1409	Railroads: Negligent Speed, Causation (2006)
1410	Railroads: Duty to Maintain Crossing Signs (2006)
1411	Railroads: Duty to Maintain Open View at Crossings (2006)
1412	Railroads: Duty to Have Proper Headlights (2006)
1413	Railroads: Ultrahazardous or Unusually Dangerous Crossings: Increased Duty
	(2006)

1390

### **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

#### **VOLUME II**

# **NEGLIGENCE** (Continued)

1500	Cause (2021)
1501	Cause: Normal Response (1998)
1505	Cause: Where Cause of Death is in Doubt (1998)
1506	Cause: Relation of a Medical Procedure to the Accident (1998)
1510	Negligent Infliction of Severe Emotional Distress (Bystander Claim) (2014)
1511	Personal Injuries: Negligent Infliction of Severe Emotional Distress (Separate or Direct Claim) (2018)
	Comparative Negligence
1580	Comparative Negligence: Plaintiff and One or More Defendants (2011)
1582	Comparative Negligence: Adult and Child (1990)
1585	Comparative Negligence: Plaintiff-Guest and Host-Defendant Negligent (1992)
1590	Comparative Negligence: Plaintiff-Guest Passively Negligent; Host (Or Other Driver) Negligent (2003)
1591	Comparative Negligence: Guest Passively Negligent; Claims Against and Among Drivers; Apportionment from One Comparative Negligence Question (2015)
1592	Comparative Negligence: Guest Passively Negligent; Claims Against and Among Drivers; Apportionment of Comparative Negligence from Two Questions (2003)
1595	Comparative Negligence: Where Negligence or Cause Question Has Been Answered by Court (1990)
	Imputed Negligence
1600 1605 1610	Servant: Driver of Automobile (Presumption from Ownership of Vehicle) (2003) Driver: Scope of Employment (2014) Joint Adventure (Enterprise): Automobile Cases (1990)

# **Damages**

1700	Damages: General (2016)
1705	Damages: Burden of Proof in Tort Actions: Future Damages [Withdrawn 2001]
1707	Punitive Damages: Nonproducts Liability [For Actions Commenced Before May
	17, 1995] (1996)
1707A	Punitive Damages: Products Liability [For Actions Commenced Before May 17,
	1995] (1996)
1707.1	Punitive Damages: Nonproducts Liability (2018)
1707.2	Punitive Damages: Products Liability (2008)
1708	Battery: Punitive Damages: Mitigation by Provocation [Withdrawn © 2010]
1710	Aggravation of Injury Because of Medical Negligence (2015)
1715	Aggravation of Pre-existing Injury (1990)
1720	Aggravation or Activation of Latent Disease or Condition (1992)
1722	Damages from Nonconcurrent or Successive Torts (1992)
1722A	Damages from Nonconcurrent or Successive Torts (To be used where several
	tortfeasors are parties) (1996)
1723	Enhanced Injuries (2009)
1725	Further Injury in Subsequent Event (2003)
1730	Damages: Duty to Mitigate: Physical Injuries (2012)
1731	Damages: Duty to Mitigate: Negligence or Breach of Contract (2012)
1732	Damages: Duty to Mitigate: Intentional Tort (2012)
1735	Damages: Not Taxable as Income (1990)
1740	Damages: Common Scheme or Plan; Concerted Action
	(Wis. Stat. § 895.045(2)) (2009)
1741	Personal Injuries: Negligence in Informing the Patient (2015)
1742	Personal Injuries: Medical Care: Offsetting Benefit from Operation Against
	Damages for Negligence in Informing the Patient (2015)
1749	Personal Injuries: Conversion Table for 1998 Revision of Damage Instructions
	(1998)
1750.1	Personal Injuries: Subdivided Question as to Past and Future Damages (1998)
1750.2	Personal Injuries: Past and Future: One Verdict Question (Except Past Loss of
	Earnings and Past Medical Expenses) (1998)
1754	Personal Injury: One Subdivided Question as to Past Damages [Withdrawn ©
	1998]
1756	Personal Injuries: Past Health Care Expenses (2015)
1757	Personal Injuries: Past Health Care Expenses (Medical Negligence Cases)
	(Negligence of Long-Term Care Provider): Collateral Sources (2013)
1758	Personal Injuries: Future Health Care Expenses (2010)
1760	Personal Injuries: Past Loss of Earning Capacity (2016)
1762	Personal Injuries: Future Loss of Earning Capacity (2022)

1766	Personal Injuries: Past Pain, Suffering, and Disability (Disfigurement) (2009)
1767	Personal Injuries: Future Pain, Suffering, and Disability (Disfigurement) (1999)
1768	Personal Injuries: Past and Future Pain, Suffering, and Disability (Disfigurement) (1998)
1770	Personal Injuries: Severe Emotional Distress (2006)
1780	Personal Injuries: Loss of Business Profits [Withdrawn 1998]
1785	Personal Injuries: Past Loss of Professional Earnings [Withdrawn 1998]
1788	Loss of Earnings: Delay in Obtaining Degree [Withdrawn 1999]
1795	Personal Injury: Life Expectancy and Mortality Tables (1992)
1796	Damages: Present Value of Future Losses (2003)
1797	Damages: Effects of Inflation (1993)
1800	Property: Loss of Use of Repairable Automobile (1997)
1801	Property: Loss of Use of Nonrepairable Automobile (1997)
1803	Property: Destruction of Property (2010)
1804	Property: Damage to Repairable Property (2010)
1805	Property: Damage to Nonrepairable Property (2010)
1806	Property: Damage to a Growing Crop (1997)
1810	Trespass: Nominal Damages (2013)
1812	Quantum Meruit: Measure of Services Rendered (1992)
1815	Injury to Spouse: Loss of Consortium (2012)
1816	Injury to Spouse: Past Loss of Earning Capacity: Household Services (1993)
1817	Injury to Spouse: Future Loss of Earning Capacity: Household Services (2001)
1820	Injury to Spouse: Nursing Services: Past and Future (1992)
1825	Injury to Wife: Medical and Hospital Expenses [Withdrawn 1995]
1830	Injury to Wife: Medical and Hospital Bills: Dispute over Ownership of Claim [Withdrawn 1995]
1835	Injury to Minor Child: Parent's Damages for Loss of Child's Earnings and
	Services: Past and Future (2001)
1837	Injury to Minor Child: Parent's Damages for Loss of Society and Companionship (2001)
1838	Injury to Parent: Minor Child's Damages for Loss of Society and Companionship (2001)
1840	Injury to Minor Child: Parents' Damages for Medical Expenses: Past and Future (1996)
1845	Injury to Child: Parents' Damages for Services Rendered to Child: Past and Future (1992)
1850	Estate's Recovery for Medical, Hospital, and Funeral Expenses (2016)
1855	Estate's Recovery for Pain and Suffering (2018)
1860	Death of Husband: Pecuniary Loss [Withdrawn 1992]
1861	Death of Spouse (Domestic Partner): Pecuniary Loss (2010)
1865	Death of Wife: Pecuniary Loss [Withdrawn 1992]

CONTENTS	WIS JI-CIVIL	CONTENTS
----------	--------------	----------

1870 1875 1880 1885 1890 1892 1895 1897	Death of Spouse: Surviving Spouse's Loss of Society and Companionship (2019) Death of Spouse: Medical, Hospital, and Funeral Expenses (1992) Death of Parent: Pecuniary Loss (2016) Death of Adult Child: Pecuniary Loss (2001) Damages: Death of Minor Child: Premajority Pecuniary Loss (2001) Damages: Death of Minor Child: Postmajority Pecuniary Loss (2001) Death of Child: Parent's Loss of Society and Companionship (2019) Death of Parent: Child's Loss of Society and Companionship (2019)		
	Safe Place		
1900.2 1900.4 1901 1902 1904 1910 1911			
	Nuisance		
1920 1922 1924 1926 1928 1930 1932	Nuisance: Law Note (2019) Private Nuisance: Negligent Conduct (2010) Private Nuisance: Abnormally Dangerous Activity: Strict Liability (2010) Private Nuisance: Intentional Conduct (2010) Public Nuisance: Negligent Conduct (2010) Public Nuisance: Abnormally Dangerous Activity: Strict Liability (2010) Public Nuisance: Intentional Conduct (2010)		
	INTENTIONAL TORTS		
	Assault and Battery		
2000 2001 2004 2005 2005.5	Intentional Tort: Liability of Minor (2014) Intentional Versus Negligent Conduct (1995) Assault (2011) Battery (2011) Battery: Offensive Bodily Contact (2015)		

CONTENTS	WIS JI-CIVIL	CONTENTS
CONTENTS	MIQ DI-CIVIL	CONTEN

2006.5 2007 2008 2010	Battery: Self-Defense (2013) Battery: Self-Defense; Defendant's Dwelling, Motor Vehicle, Place of Business; Wis. Stat. § 895.62 (2016) Battery: Defense of Property (2013) Battery: Liability of an Aider and Abettor (2011) Battery: Excessive Force in Arrest (2002) Assault and Battery: Offensive Bodily Contact [Renumbered JI-Civil- 2005.5 2011] Sports Injury: Booklass or Intentional Missondwet (2018)		
2020	Sports Injury: Reckless or Intentional Misconduct (2018)		
	False Imprisonment		
2100 2110 2115	False Imprisonment: Definition (2014) False Imprisonment: Compensatory Damages (2014) False Arrest: Law Enforcement Officer; Without Warrant (1993)		
	Federal Civil Rights		
2150 2151 2155	Federal Civil Rights: §§ 1981 and 1982 Actions (1993) Federal Civil Rights: § 1983 Actions [Withdrawn 2014] Federal Civil Rights: Excessive Force in Arrest (in Maintaining Jail Security) [Withdrawn 2014]		
	Conversion		
2200.2	Conversion: Dispossession (2014) Conversion: Refusal to Return Upon Demand (Refusal by Bailee) (1993) Conversion: Destruction or Abuse of Property (1991) Conversion: Damages (2016)		
Misrepresentation			
2400	Misrepresentation: Bases for Liability and Damages - Law Note for Trial Judges (2021)		
2401 2402 2403 2405 2405.5	Misrepresentation: Intentional Deceit (2018) Misrepresentation: Strict Responsibility (2018) Misrepresentation: Negligence (2018) Intentional Misrepresentation: Measure of Damages in Actions Involving Sale [Exchange] of Property (Benefit of the Bargain) (2018) Strict Responsibility: Measure of Damages in Actions Involving Sale [Exchange]		
	of Property (Benefit of the Bargain) (2018)		

Wisconsin Court System, 2022

#### CONTENTS WIS JI-CIVIL CONTENTS

- 2406 Negligent Misrepresentation: Measure of Damages in Actions Involving Sale [Exchange] of Property (Out of Pocket Rule) (2014)
- 2418 Unfair Trade Practice: Untrue, Deceptive, or Misleading Representation: Wis. Stat. § 100.18(1) (2021)
- 2419 Property Loss Through Fraudulent Misrepresentation: Wis. Stat. § 895.446 (Based on Conduct (Fraud) Prohibited by Wis. Stat. § 943.20) (2018)
- 2420 Civil Theft: Wis. Stat. § 895.446 (Based on Conduct (Theft) Prohibited by Wis. Stat. § 943.20(1)(a)) (2019)

#### **Defamation**

2500	Defamation - Law Note for Trial Judges (2016)
2501	Defamation: Private Individual Versus Private Individual, No Privilege (2003)
2505	Defamation: Truth as a Defense (Nonmedia Defendant) (2014)
2505A	Defamation: Truth of Statement (First Amendment Cases) (1989)
2507	Defamation: Private Individual Versus Private Individual with Conditional
	Privilege (2020)
2509	Defamation: Private Individual Versus Media Defendant (Negligent Standard)
	(2003)
2510	Defamation: Truth as Defense Where Plaintiff Charged with Commission of a
	Crime [Withdrawn 1993]
2511	Defamation: Public Figure Versus Media Defendant or Private Figure with
	Constitutional Privilege (Actual Malice) (2003)
2512	Defamation: Truth as Defense Where Plaintiff Not Charged with Commission of
	a Crime [Withdrawn 1993]
2513	Defamation: Express Malice (1993)
2514	Defamation: Effect of Defamatory Statement or Publication [Withdrawn 1993]
2516	Defamation: Compensatory Damages (1991)
2517	Defamation: Conditional Privilege: Abuse of Privilege [Renumbered JI-Civil
	2507 1993]
2517.5	Defamation: Public Official: Abuse of Privilege [Renumbered JI-Civil 2511
	1993]
2518	Defamation: Express Malice [Renumbered JI-Civil 2513 1993]
2520	Defamation: Punitive Damages (2003)
2550	Invasion of Privacy (Publication of a Private Matter) Wis. Stat. § 995.50(2)(c)
	(2015)
2551	Invasion of Privacy: Highly Offensive Intrusion; Wis. Stat. § 995.50(2)(a) (2011)
2552	Invasion of Privacy: Publication of a Private Matter: Conditional Privilege (2003)

#### **Misuse of Procedure**

2600 2605 2610	Malicious Prosecution: Instituting a Criminal Proceeding (2022) Malicious Prosecution: Instituting a Civil Proceeding (2022) Malicious Prosecution: Advice of Counsel: Affirmative Defense (Criminal Proceeding) (2015)
2611	Malicious Prosecution: Advice of Counsel: Affirmative Defense (Civil Proceeding) (2015)
2620	Abuse of Process (2013)
	Trade Practices
2720	Home Improvement Practices Act Violation; Wisconsin Administrative Code Chapter ATCP 110; Wis. Stat. § 100.20 (2013)
2722	Theft by Contractor (Wis. Stat. § 779.02(5)) (2015)
	<b>Domestic Relations</b>
2725	Intentional Infliction of Emotional Distress (2020)
	<b>Business Relations</b>
2750	Employment Relations: Wrongful Discharge - Public Policy (2020)
2760	Bad Faith by Insurance Company (Excess Verdict Case) (2003)
2761	Bad Faith by Insurance Company: Assured's Claim (2012)
2762	Bad Faith by Insurance Company: Third Party Employee Claim Against Worker's Compensation Carrier [Withdrawn] (2009)
2769	Wisconsin Fair Dealership Law: Existence of Dealership (2020)
2770	Wisconsin Fair Dealership Law: Good Cause for Termination, Cancellation, Nonrenewal, Failure to Renew, or Substantial Change in Competitive Circumstances (Wis. Stat. § 135.03) (2022)
2771	Wisconsin Fair Dealership Law: Adequate Notice by Grantor (Wis. Stat. § 135.04) (2005)
2772	Wisconsin Fair Dealership Law: Special Verdict (2005)
2780	Intentional Interference with Contractual Relationship (2020)
2790	Trade Name Infringement (2022)
2791	Trade Name Infringement: Damages (2010)

CONTENTS WIS JI-CIVIL CONTENTS

# **Civil Conspiracy**

2800	Conspiracy: Defined (2018)
2802	Conspiracy: Proof of Membership (2003)
2804	Conspiracy: Indirect Proof (2003)
2806	Conspiracy to be Viewed as a Whole (1993)
2808	Conspiracy between Affiliated Corporations [Withdrawn 2009]
2810	Conspiracy: Overt Acts (2003)
2820	Injury to Business: (Wis. Stat. § 134.01) (2008)
2822	Restraint of Will (Wis. Stat. § 134.01) (2003)

# **Tort Immunity**

2900 Tort Immunity: Immunities Abrogated - Law Note for Trial Judges (1993)

#### **CONTRACTS**

### General

3010	Agreement (2011)
3012	Offer: Making (1993)
3014	Offer: Acceptance (1993)
3016	Offer: Rejection (1993)
3018	Offer: Revocation (1993)
3020	Consideration (1993)
3022	Definiteness and Certainty (1993)
3024	Implied Contract: General (1993)
3026	Implied Contract: Promise to Pay Reasonable Value (1993)
3028	Contracts Implied in Law (Unjust Enrichment) (2020)
3030	Modification by Mutual Assent (1993)
3032	Modification by Conduct (1993)
3034	Novation (1993)
3040	Integration of Several Writings (1993)
3042	Partial Integration: Contract Partly Written, Partly Oral (1993)
3044	Implied Duty of Good Faith (Performance of Contract) (2007)
3045	Definitions – "Bona Fide" (1993)
3046	Implied Promise of No Hindrance (1993)
3048	Time as an Element (2016)
3049	Duration (2016)
3050	Contracts: Subsequent Construction by Parties (1993)
3051	Contracts: Ambiguous Language (2012)
3052	Substantial Performance (1994)
3053	Breach of Contract (2007)

3056 Sale of Goods: Delivery or Tender of Performance (1993) 3057 Waiver (2018) 3058 Waiver of Strict Performance (1993) 3060 Hindrance or Interference with Performance (1993) 3061 Impossibility: Original (1993) 3062 Impossibility: Supervening (1993) 3063 Impossibility: Partial (1993) 3064 Impossibility: Temporary (1993) 3065 Impossibility: Superior Authority (1993) 3066 Impossibility: Act of God (1993) 3067 Impossibility: Disability or Death of a Party (1993) 3068 Voidable Contracts: Duress, Fraud, Misrepresentation (2016) 3070 Frustration of Purpose (2020) 3072 Avoidance for Mutual Mistake of Fact (2014) 3074 Estoppel: Law Note for Trial Judges (2018) 3076 Contracts: Rescission for Nonperformance (2001) 3078 Abandonment: Mutual (1993) 3079 Termination of Easement by Abandonment (2022) 3082 Termination of Servant's Employment: Indefinite Duration (1993) 3083 Termination of Servant's Employment: Employer's Dissatisfaction (1993) 3084 Termination of Servant's Employment: Additional Consideration Provided by Employee (1993)	3054	Demand for Performance (2014)
Waiver of Strict Performance (1993)  Waiver of Strict Performance (1993)  Hindrance or Interference with Performance (1993)  Impossibility: Original (1993)  Impossibility: Supervening (1993)  Impossibility: Partial (1993)  Impossibility: Temporary (1993)  Impossibility: Superior Authority (1993)  Impossibility: Act of God (1993)  Impossibility: Disability or Death of a Party (1993)  Voidable Contracts: Duress, Fraud, Misrepresentation (2016)  Frustration of Purpose (2020)  Avoidance for Mutual Mistake of Fact (2014)  Estoppel: Law Note for Trial Judges (2018)  Contracts: Rescission for Nonperformance (2001)  Abandonment: Mutual (1993)  Termination of Easement by Abandonment (2022)  Termination of Servant's Employment: Indefinite Duration (1993)  Termination of Servant's Employment: Employer's Dissatisfaction (1993)  Termination of Servant's Employment: Additional Consideration Provided by Employee	3056	Sale of Goods: Delivery or Tender of Performance (1993)
Hindrance or Interference with Performance (1993)  Impossibility: Original (1993)  Impossibility: Supervening (1993)  Impossibility: Partial (1993)  Impossibility: Partial (1993)  Impossibility: Temporary (1993)  Impossibility: Superior Authority (1993)  Impossibility: Act of God (1993)  Impossibility: Disability or Death of a Party (1993)  Voidable Contracts: Duress, Fraud, Misrepresentation (2016)  Frustration of Purpose (2020)  Avoidance for Mutual Mistake of Fact (2014)  Estoppel: Law Note for Trial Judges (2018)  Contracts: Rescission for Nonperformance (2001)  Abandonment: Mutual (1993)  Termination of Easement by Abandonment (2022)  Termination of Servant's Employment: Indefinite Duration (1993)  Termination of Servant's Employment: Employer's Dissatisfaction (1993)  Termination of Servant's Employment: Additional Consideration Provided by Employee	3057	Waiver (2018)
<ul> <li>Jossibility: Original (1993)</li> <li>Jimpossibility: Supervening (1993)</li> <li>Jimpossibility: Partial (1993)</li> <li>Jimpossibility: Temporary (1993)</li> <li>Jimpossibility: Superior Authority (1993)</li> <li>Jimpossibility: Act of God (1993)</li> <li>Jimpossibility: Disability or Death of a Party (1993)</li> <li>Voidable Contracts: Duress, Fraud, Misrepresentation (2016)</li> <li>Frustration of Purpose (2020)</li> <li>Avoidance for Mutual Mistake of Fact (2014)</li> <li>Estoppel: Law Note for Trial Judges (2018)</li> <li>Contracts: Rescission for Nonperformance (2001)</li> <li>Abandonment: Mutual (1993)</li> <li>Termination of Easement by Abandonment (2022)</li> <li>Termination of Servant's Employment: Indefinite Duration (1993)</li> <li>Termination of Servant's Employment: Employer's Dissatisfaction (1993)</li> <li>Termination of Servant's Employment: Additional Consideration Provided by Employee</li> </ul>	3058	Waiver of Strict Performance (1993)
Impossibility: Supervening (1993) Impossibility: Partial (1993) Impossibility: Temporary (1993) Impossibility: Superior Authority (1993) Impossibility: Superior Authority (1993) Impossibility: Act of God (1993) Impossibility: Disability or Death of a Party (1993) Voidable Contracts: Duress, Fraud, Misrepresentation (2016) Frustration of Purpose (2020) Avoidance for Mutual Mistake of Fact (2014) Estoppel: Law Note for Trial Judges (2018) Contracts: Rescission for Nonperformance (2001) Abandonment: Mutual (1993) Termination of Easement by Abandonment (2022) Termination of Servant's Employment: Indefinite Duration (1993) Termination of Servant's Employment: Employer's Dissatisfaction (1993) Termination of Servant's Employment: Additional Consideration Provided by Employee	3060	Hindrance or Interference with Performance (1993)
Impossibility: Partial (1993)  Impossibility: Temporary (1993)  Impossibility: Superior Authority (1993)  Impossibility: Act of God (1993)  Impossibility: Disability or Death of a Party (1993)  Voidable Contracts: Duress, Fraud, Misrepresentation (2016)  Frustration of Purpose (2020)  Avoidance for Mutual Mistake of Fact (2014)  Estoppel: Law Note for Trial Judges (2018)  Contracts: Rescission for Nonperformance (2001)  Abandonment: Mutual (1993)  Termination of Easement by Abandonment (2022)  Termination of Servant's Employment: Indefinite Duration (1993)  Termination of Servant's Employment: Employer's Dissatisfaction (1993)  Termination of Servant's Employment: Additional Consideration Provided by Employee	3061	Impossibility: Original (1993)
Impossibility: Temporary (1993) Impossibility: Superior Authority (1993) Impossibility: Act of God (1993) Impossibility: Disability or Death of a Party (1993) Voidable Contracts: Duress, Fraud, Misrepresentation (2016) Frustration of Purpose (2020) Avoidance for Mutual Mistake of Fact (2014) Estoppel: Law Note for Trial Judges (2018) Contracts: Rescission for Nonperformance (2001) Abandonment: Mutual (1993) Termination of Easement by Abandonment (2022) Termination of Servant's Employment: Indefinite Duration (1993) Termination of Servant's Employment: Employer's Dissatisfaction (1993) Termination of Servant's Employment: Additional Consideration Provided by Employee	3062	Impossibility: Supervening (1993)
Impossibility: Superior Authority (1993) Impossibility: Act of God (1993) Impossibility: Disability or Death of a Party (1993) Voidable Contracts: Duress, Fraud, Misrepresentation (2016) Frustration of Purpose (2020) Avoidance for Mutual Mistake of Fact (2014) Estoppel: Law Note for Trial Judges (2018) Contracts: Rescission for Nonperformance (2001) Abandonment: Mutual (1993) Termination of Easement by Abandonment (2022) Termination of Servant's Employment: Indefinite Duration (1993) Termination of Servant's Employment: Employer's Dissatisfaction (1993) Termination of Servant's Employment: Additional Consideration Provided by Employee	3063	Impossibility: Partial (1993)
Impossibility: Act of God (1993) Impossibility: Disability or Death of a Party (1993) Voidable Contracts: Duress, Fraud, Misrepresentation (2016) Frustration of Purpose (2020) Avoidance for Mutual Mistake of Fact (2014) Estoppel: Law Note for Trial Judges (2018) Contracts: Rescission for Nonperformance (2001) Abandonment: Mutual (1993) Termination of Easement by Abandonment (2022) Termination of Servant's Employment: Indefinite Duration (1993) Termination of Servant's Employment: Employer's Dissatisfaction (1993) Termination of Servant's Employment: Additional Consideration Provided by Employee	3064	Impossibility: Temporary (1993)
Impossibility: Disability or Death of a Party (1993) Voidable Contracts: Duress, Fraud, Misrepresentation (2016) Frustration of Purpose (2020) Avoidance for Mutual Mistake of Fact (2014) Estoppel: Law Note for Trial Judges (2018) Contracts: Rescission for Nonperformance (2001) Abandonment: Mutual (1993) Termination of Easement by Abandonment (2022) Termination of Servant's Employment: Indefinite Duration (1993) Termination of Servant's Employment: Employer's Dissatisfaction (1993) Termination of Servant's Employment: Additional Consideration Provided by Employee	3065	Impossibility: Superior Authority (1993)
Voidable Contracts: Duress, Fraud, Misrepresentation (2016) Frustration of Purpose (2020) Avoidance for Mutual Mistake of Fact (2014) Estoppel: Law Note for Trial Judges (2018) Contracts: Rescission for Nonperformance (2001) Abandonment: Mutual (1993) Termination of Easement by Abandonment (2022) Termination of Servant's Employment: Indefinite Duration (1993) Termination of Servant's Employment: Employer's Dissatisfaction (1993) Termination of Servant's Employment: Additional Consideration Provided by Employee	3066	Impossibility: Act of God (1993)
Frustration of Purpose (2020)  Avoidance for Mutual Mistake of Fact (2014)  Estoppel: Law Note for Trial Judges (2018)  Contracts: Rescission for Nonperformance (2001)  Abandonment: Mutual (1993)  Termination of Easement by Abandonment (2022)  Termination of Servant's Employment: Indefinite Duration (1993)  Termination of Servant's Employment: Employer's Dissatisfaction (1993)  Termination of Servant's Employment: Additional Consideration Provided by Employee	3067	Impossibility: Disability or Death of a Party (1993)
Avoidance for Mutual Mistake of Fact (2014)  Estoppel: Law Note for Trial Judges (2018)  Contracts: Rescission for Nonperformance (2001)  Abandonment: Mutual (1993)  Termination of Easement by Abandonment (2022)  Termination of Servant's Employment: Indefinite Duration (1993)  Termination of Servant's Employment: Employer's Dissatisfaction (1993)  Termination of Servant's Employment: Additional Consideration Provided by Employee	3068	Voidable Contracts: Duress, Fraud, Misrepresentation (2016)
Stoppel: Law Note for Trial Judges (2018) Contracts: Rescission for Nonperformance (2001) Abandonment: Mutual (1993) Termination of Easement by Abandonment (2022) Termination of Servant's Employment: Indefinite Duration (1993) Termination of Servant's Employment: Employer's Dissatisfaction (1993) Termination of Servant's Employment: Additional Consideration Provided by Employee	3070	Frustration of Purpose (2020)
Contracts: Rescission for Nonperformance (2001) Abandonment: Mutual (1993) Termination of Easement by Abandonment (2022) Termination of Servant's Employment: Indefinite Duration (1993) Termination of Servant's Employment: Employer's Dissatisfaction (1993) Termination of Servant's Employment: Additional Consideration Provided by Employee	3072	Avoidance for Mutual Mistake of Fact (2014)
3078 Abandonment: Mutual (1993) 3079 Termination of Easement by Abandonment (2022) 3082 Termination of Servant's Employment: Indefinite Duration (1993) 3083 Termination of Servant's Employment: Employer's Dissatisfaction (1993) 3084 Termination of Servant's Employment: Additional Consideration Provided by Employee	3074	Estoppel: Law Note for Trial Judges (2018)
Termination of Easement by Abandonment (2022) Termination of Servant's Employment: Indefinite Duration (1993) Termination of Servant's Employment: Employer's Dissatisfaction (1993) Termination of Servant's Employment: Additional Consideration Provided by Employee	3076	Contracts: Rescission for Nonperformance (2001)
Termination of Servant's Employment: Indefinite Duration (1993) Termination of Servant's Employment: Employer's Dissatisfaction (1993) Termination of Servant's Employment: Additional Consideration Provided by Employee	3078	Abandonment: Mutual (1993)
Termination of Servant's Employment: Employer's Dissatisfaction (1993) Termination of Servant's Employment: Additional Consideration Provided by Employee	3079	Termination of Easement by Abandonment (2022)
3084 Termination of Servant's Employment: Additional Consideration Provided by Employee	3082	Termination of Servant's Employment: Indefinite Duration (1993)
	3083	Termination of Servant's Employment: Employer's Dissatisfaction (1993)
(1993)	3084	Termination of Servant's Employment: Additional Consideration Provided by Employee
		(1993)

#### **Real Estate**

3086	Real Estate Listing Contract: Validity: Performance (2019)
3088	Real Estate Listing Contract: Termination for Cause (1993)
3090	Real Estate Listing Contract: Broker's Commission on Sale Subsequent to
	Expiration of Contract Containing "Extension" Clause (1993)
3094	Residential Eviction: Possession of Premises (2020)
3095	Landlord - Tenant: Constructive Eviction (2013)

#### **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

#### **VOLUME III**

#### **CONTRACTS** (Continued)

#### **Insurance**

Insurance Contract: Misrepresentation or Breach of Affirmative Warranty by the

Insurance Contract: Failure of Condition or Breach of Promissory Warranty

3110	Insurance Contract: Definition of "Resident" or "Member of a Household" (2022	2)	
3112	Owner's Permission for Use of Automobile (1993)		
3115	Failure of Insured to Cooperate (2016)		
3116	Failure to Cooperate: Materiality (2016)		
3117	Failure to Give Notice to Insurer (1994)		
3118			
	Breach of Warranty		
3200	Products Liability: Law Note (2021)		
3201	Implied Warranty: Merchantability Defined (2009)		
3202	Implied Warranty: Fitness for Particular Purpose (1994)		
3203	Implied Warranty: By Reason of Course of Dealing or Usage of Trade (1994)		
3204	Implied Warranty: Sale of Food (1994)		
3205	Implied Warranty: Exclusion or Modification (2009)		
3206	Implied Warranty: Exclusion by Reason of Course of Dealing or Usage of Trade	,	
	(1994)		
3207	Implied Warranty: Use of Product after the Defect Known (2009)		
3208	Implied Warranty: Failure to Examine Product (2009)		
3209	Implied Warranty: Susceptibility or Allergy of User (2009)		
3210	Implied Warranty: Improper Use (1994)		
3211	Implied Warranty: Notice of Breach (1993)		
3220	Express Warranty: General (1994)		
3222	Express Warranty: No Duty of Inspection (1994)		
3225	Express Warranty: Statement of Opinion (1994)		

3100

3105

Insured (1998)

3230 Express Warranty under the Uniform Commercial Code (1994)

### **Duties of Manufacturers and Sellers**

3240	Negligence: Duty of Manufacturer (2007)
3242	Negligence: Duty of Manufacturer (Supplier) to Warn (2020)
3244	Negligence: Duty of Manufacturer (Seller) to Give Adequate Instructions as to
	Use of a Complicated Machine (Product) (1994)
3246	Negligence: Duty of Manufacturer (Seller) Who Undertakes to Give Instruction
	as to the Use of a Machine (Product) (1994)
3248	Negligence: Duty of Restaurant Operator in Sale of Food Containing Harmful
	Natural Ingredients (1994)
3250	Negligence: Duty of Seller: Installing (Servicing) Product (1994)
3254	Duty of Buyer or Consumer: Contributory Negligence (2015)
3260	Strict Liability: Duty of Manufacturer to Ultimate User (For Actions Commenced
	Before February 1, 2011) (2014)
3260.1	Product Liability: Wis. Stat. § 895.047 (For Actions Commenced after January 31,
	2011) (2014)
3262	Strict Liability: Duty of Manufacturer (Supplier) to Warn (For Actions
	Commenced Before February 1, 2011) (2014)
3264	Strict Liability: Definition of Business (1994)
3268	Strict Liability: Contributory Negligence (2015)
3290	Strict Products Liability: Special Verdict (For Actions Commenced Before
	February 1, 2011) (2014)
3290.1	Product Liability: Wis. Stat. § 895.047: Verdict (For Actions Commenced after
	January 31, 2011) (2014)
3294	Risk Contribution: Negligence: Verdict (For Actions Commenced Before
	February 1, 2011) (2014)
3295	Risk Contribution: Negligence Claim (For Actions Commenced Before February
	1, 2011) (2014)
3296	Risk Contribution: Negligence: Verdict (Wis. Stat. § 895.046) (For Actions
	Commenced after January 31, 2011) (2014)

#### **Lemon Law**

3300	Lemon Law Claim: Special Verdict (2016)
3301	Lemon Law Claim: Nonconformity (2001)
3302	Lemon Law Claim: Four Attempts to Repair: Same Nonconformity (1999)
3303	Lemon Law Claim: Out of Service Warranty Nonconformity (Warranty on or
	after March 1, 2014) (2016)
3304	Lemon Law Claim: Failure to Repair (Relating to Special Verdict Question 6)

Wisconsin Court System, 2022

3310	(2006) Magnusan Mass Claim (2020)
3310	Magnuson–Moss Claim (2020)
	Damages
3700	Damages: Building Contracts: Measure of Damages (2012)
3710	Consequential Damages for Breach of Contract (2018)
3720	Damages: Incidental (1994)
3725	Damages: Future Profits (2008)
3735	Damages: Loss of Expectation (1994)
3740	Damages: Termination of Real Estate Listing Contract (Exclusive) by Seller; Broker's Recovery (1994)
3750	Damages: Breach of Contract by Purchaser (1994)
3755	Damages: Breach of Contract by Seller (1994)
3760	Damages: Attorney Fees (1994)
	AGENCY; EMPLOYMENT; BUSINESS ORGANIZATION
4000	Agency: Definition (2019)
4001	General Agent: Definition (1994)
4002	Special Agent: Definition (1994)
4005	Agency: Apparent Authority (1994)
4010	Agency: Implied Authority (1994)
4015	Agency: Ratification (1994)
4020	Agent's Duties Owed to Principal (1994)
4025	Agency: Without Compensation (2005)
4027	Agency: Termination: General (1994)
4028	Agency: Termination: Notice to Third Parties (1994)
4030	Servant: Definition (2015)
4035	Servant: Scope of Employment (2020)
4040	Servant: Scope of Employment; Going to and from Place of Employment (2014)
4045	Servant: Scope of Employment While Traveling (2020)
4050	Servant: Master's Ratification of Wrongful Acts Done Outside Scope of
	Employment (1994)
4055	Servant: Vicarious Liability of Employer (2005)
4060	Independent Contractor: Definition (2005)
4080	Partnership (2009)

#### **PERSONS**

5001 Paternity: Child of Unmarried Woman (2021)

7030	Child in Need of Protection or Services [Withdrawn 2014]
7039	Involuntary Termination of Parental Rights: Child in Need of Protection or
	Services: Preliminary Instruction [Withdrawn 2014]
7040	Involuntary Termination of Parental Rights: Continuing Need of Protection or
	Services [Withdrawn 2014]
7042	Involuntary Termination of Parental Rights: Abandonment under Wis. Stat.
	§ 48.415(1)(a) 2 or 3 [Withdrawn 2014]
7050	Involuntary Commitment: Mentally Ill (2022)
7050A	Involuntary Commitment: Mentally Ill: Recommitment Alleging Wis. Stat. §
	51.20(1)(am) (2022)
7054	Petition for Guardianship of the Person: Incompetency;
	Wis. Stat. § 54.10(3)(a)2 (2019)
7055	Petition for Guardianship of the Estate: Incompetency;
	Wis. Stat. § 54.10(3)(a)3 (2009)
7056	Petition for Guardianship of the Estate: Spendthrift;
	Wis. Stat. § 54.10(2) (2009)
7060	Petition for Guardianship of Incompetent Person and Application
	for Protective Placement; Wis. Stat. § 54.10 and 55.08(1) (2019)
7061	Petition for Guardianship of Incompetent Person and Application
	for Protective Services; Wis. Stat. § 54.10 and 55.08(2) (2014)
7070	Involuntary Commitment: Habitual Lack of Self-Control as to the Use of Alcohol
	Beverages (2003)

### **PROPERTY**

### General

8012	Trespasser: Definition (2013)
8015	Consent of Possessor to Another's Being on Premises (2013)
8017	Duty of Hotelkeeper to Furnish Reasonably Safe Premises and Furniture for
	Guests (Renumbered JI-Civil 8051) (1994)
8020	Duty of Owner or Possessor of Real Property to Nontrespasser User (2020)
8025	Trespass: Owner's Duty to Trespasser; Duty to Child Trespasser (Attractive
	Nuisance) (2022)
8026	Trespass: Special Verdict (2016)
8027	Trespass: Child Trespasser (Attractive Nuisance): Special Verdict (2013)
8030	Duty of Owner of a Building Abutting on a Public Highway (2006)
8035	Highway or Sidewalk Defect or Insufficiency (2021)
8040	Duty of Owner of Place of Amusement: Common Law (1994)
8045	Duty of a Proprietor of a Place of Business to Protect a Patron from Injury Caused
	by Act of Third Person (2012)

CONTENTS	WIS JI-CIVIL	CONTENTS
----------	--------------	----------

8050	Duty of Hotel Innkeeper: Providing Security (1994)
8051	Duty of Hotelkeeper to Furnish Reasonably Safe Premises and Furniture for
	Guests (2020)
8060	Adverse Possession Not Founded on Written Instrument (Wis. Stat. § 893.25)
	(2022)

#### **Eminent Domain**

8100	Eminent Domain:	Fair Market Value (Total Taking) (2022)
8101	Eminent Domain:	Fair Market Value (Partial Taking) (2012)
8102	Eminent Domain:	Severance Damages (2008)
8103	Eminent Domain:	Severance Damages: Cost-To-Cure (2007)
8104	Eminent Domain:	Unity of Use - Two or More Parcels (2007)
8105	Eminent Domain:	Lands Containing Marketable Materials (2008)
8107	Eminent Domain:	Severance Damages; Unity of Use (Renumbered JI-Civil 8104)
	(2008)	
8110	Eminent Domain:	Change in Grade (2022)
8111	Eminent Domain:	Access Rights (2020)
8112	Eminent Domain:	Air Rights (2007)
8115	Eminent Domain:	Special Benefits (2008)
8120	Eminent Domain:	Comparable Sales Approach (2022)
8125	Eminent Domain:	Inconvenience to Landowner [Withdrawn 2008]
8130	Eminent Domain:	Income Approach (2008)
8135	Eminent Domain:	Cost Approach (2008)
8140	Eminent Domain:	Legal Nonconforming Use, Lot or Structure (Definitions)
	(2007)	
8145	Eminent Domain:	Assemblage (2007)

Table of Cases Cited (2022)

**Index** (2022)

## 50 PRELIMINARY INSTRUCTION: BEFORE TRIAL

(NOTE TO THE TRIAL JUDGE: The following is a suggested instruction to be given to the jury before opening statements are made by the lawyers for the parties. While most of this instruction should apply to most cases, some parts of it do not apply to all cases and some parts of it may not apply to the case before you now. Read the instruction before it is given and delete any parts that are not applicable. Also, the language used in this Instruction is "suggested" language. You may have another way of expressing the same ideas in this instruction and may do so, consistent with Wisconsin law.)

## MEMBERS OF THE JURY:

Before the trial begins, there are certain instructions you should have to better understand your functions as a juror and how you should conduct yourself during the trial.

Your duty is to decide the case based only on the evidence presented at trial and the law given to you by the court. Anything you may see or hear outside the courtroom is not evidence. [Do not let any personal feelings, prejudices or stereotypes about personal characteristics such as (race), (religion), (national origin), (sex), or (age) affect your consideration of the evidence.]<sup>1</sup>

In fairness to the parties, keep an open mind during the trial. Do not begin your deliberations and discussion of the case until all the evidence is presented and I have instructed you on the law. Do not discuss this case among yourselves or with anyone else until your final deliberations in the jury room. This order is not limited to face-to-face conversations. It also extends to all forms of electronic communications. Do not use any electronic devices, such as a mobile phone or computer, text or instant messaging, or social

networking sites, to send or receive any information about this case or your experience as a juror. Once deliberations begin in the jury room you will then be in a position to intelligently and fairly exchange your views with other jurors.

## **CONDUCT**

We will stop, or "recess," from time to time during the trial. You may be excused from the courtroom when it is necessary for me to hear legal arguments from the lawyers. If you come in contact with the parties, lawyers [interpreters,] or witnesses, do not speak with them. For their part, the parties, lawyers, [interpreters,] and witnesses will not contact or speak with the jurors. Do not listen to any conversation about this case.

Do not research any information that you personally think might be helpful to you in understanding the issues presented. Do not investigate this case on your own or visit the scene, either in person or by any electronic means. Do not read any newspaper reports or listen to any news reports on radio, television, over the internet, or any other electronic application or tool about this trial. Do not consult dictionaries, computers, electronic applications, social media, the internet, or other reference materials for additional information. Do not seek information regarding the public records of any party or witness in this case. Any information you obtain outside the courtroom could be misleading, inaccurate, or incomplete. Relying on this information is unfair because the parties would not have the opportunity to refute, explain, or correct it.

Do not communicate with anyone about this trial or your experience as a juror while

you are serving on this jury. Do not use a computer, cell phone or other electronic device, including personal wearable electronics, applications, or tools with communication capabilities, to share any information about this case. For example, do not communicate by telephone, blog post, e-mail, text message, instant message, social media post, or in any other way, on or off the computer.

Do not permit anyone to communicate with you about this matter, either in person, electronically, or by any other means. If anyone does so despite your telling them not to, you should report that to me. I appreciate that it is tempting when you go home in the evening to discuss this case with another member of your household, but you may not do so. This case must be decided by you, the jurors, based on the evidence presented in the courtroom. People not serving on this jury have not heard the evidence, and it is improper for them to influence your deliberations and decision in this case. After this trial is completed, you are free to communicate with anyone in any manner.

These rules are intended to assure that jurors remain impartial throughout the trial. If any juror has reason to believe that another juror has violated these rules, you should report that to me. If jurors do not comply with these rules, it could result in a new trial involving additional time and significant expense to the parties and the taxpayers.

## **PARTIES**

A party who brings a lawsuit is called a plaintiff. In this case, the plaintiff[s] [is]

[are] \_\_\_\_\_ [state separately as to each if more than one]. The

plaintiff[s] [is] [are] suing to [note: state purposes of the action for each plaintiff, for example, recover damages from a defendant].

[If there are multiple plaintiffs, give the following: You should decide the case of each plaintiff as if it were a separate lawsuit. Each plaintiff is entitled to separate consideration of [his] [her] [its] own claim(s). All instructions apply to each plaintiff unless I tell you otherwise.]

A party against whom a claim is made is called a defendant. In this case, the defendant[s] [is] [are] \_\_\_\_\_ [state separately to each if more than one].

[If there are multiple defendants, give the following: You should decide the case against each defendant as if it were a separate lawsuit. Each defendant is entitled to separate consideration of [his] [her] [its] own defenses. All instructions apply to each defendant unless I tell you otherwise.]

[If there is a counterclaiming defendant, give the following: The defendant[s] in this case have also filed a claim against the plaintiff[s]. [Identify the party making the counterclaim and the party against whom the counterclaim is made]. The claim of a defendant against a plaintiff is called a counterclaim. The defendant[s] [is] [are] counterclaiming for [note: state purposes of the counterclaim for each defendant, for example, recover damages from a plaintiff.]

[If there are parties with subrogated interests or other parties named in caption and

not appearing at trial, give the following: There [is another party] [are other parties] named in this case that will not participate in this trial. Do not speculate on the reasons. Any claims involving them are not to be considered by you in deciding this case.]

[If there are settled, dismissed, or withdrawn parties, give the following: [Former party] is no longer a party in this case. [The claims of that party] [Claims against that party] have been [settled] [dismissed] [withdrawn]. Do not speculate on the reasons.]

## **EVIDENCE**

You are to decide the case solely on the evidence offered and received at trial.

## Evidence is:

- 1. testimony of witnesses given in court, both on direct and cross-examination, regardless of who called the witness;
- 2. deposition testimony presented during the trial;
- 3. exhibits admitted by me regardless of whether they go to the jury room; and
- 4. any facts to which the lawyers have agreed or stipulated or which I have directed you to find.

Anything you may have seen or heard outside the courtroom is not evidence.

Remarks of the attorneys are not evidence. If any remarks suggest certain facts not in evidence, disregard the suggestion.

## **ORDER OF PROOF**

Normally, a plaintiff will produce all witnesses and exhibits supporting plaintiff's

claim against the defendant before the defendant introduces any evidence, although exceptions are sometimes made to that rule to accommodate a witness. After the plaintiff's case is presented, the defendant may present witnesses and exhibits to establish any defenses. There is no requirement that the defendant call any witnesses or present any evidence [unless the defendant is making a claim against the plaintiff]. If the defendant does introduce evidence, the plaintiff is then permitted to offer additional evidence to rebut the defendant's case. Each witness is first examined by the lawyer who called the witness to testify and then the opposing lawyer is permitted to cross-examine.

## **OBJECTIONS**

At times during a trial, objections may be made to the introduction of evidence. I do not permit arguments on objections to evidence to be made in your presence. Any ruling upon objections will be based solely upon the law and are not matters which should concern you at all. You must not infer from any ruling that I make or from anything that I should say during the trial that I hold any views for or against either party to this lawsuit.

During the trial, I will sustain objections to questions asked without permitting the witness to answer or, where an answer has been made, will instruct that it be stricken from the record and that you are to disregard it and dismiss it from your minds. You should not draw any inference from an unanswered question, nor may you consider testimony which has been stricken in reaching your decision. This is because the law requires that your decision be made solely upon the competent evidence before you.

## **INOTETAKING NOT ALLOWED**

Do not take notes during the trial. Taking notes will not be permitted in this case because \_\_\_\_\_.]

## **NOTETAKING PERMITTED**

You are not required to but you may take notes during this trial, except during the opening statements and closing arguments. The court will provide you with materials.

In taking notes, you must be careful that it does not distract you from carefully listening to and observing the witnesses.

You may rely on your notes to refresh your memory during your deliberations.

Otherwise, keep them confidential. After the trial, the notes will be collected and destroyed.]

# TRANSCRIPTS NOT AVAILABLE FOR DELIBERATIONS; READING BACK TESTIMONY

You will not have a copy of the written transcript of the trial testimony available for use during your deliberations. [You may ask to have specific portions of the testimony read to you.] You should pay careful attention to all the testimony because you must rely primarily on your memory of the evidence and testimony introduced during the trial.

## **USE OF DEPOSITIONS**

During the trial, the lawyers will often refer to and read from depositions.

Depositions are transcripts of testimony taken before the trial. The testimony may be that

of a party or anybody who has knowledge of facts relating to the lawsuit. Deposition testimony, just like testimony during the trial, if received into evidence at the trial, may be considered by you along with the other evidence in reaching your verdict in this case.

## **JUROR QUESTIONING OF WITNESSES**

You will be given the opportunity to ask written questions of the witnesses testifying in this case.

After both lawyers have finished questioning a witness, you may raise your hand if you have any questions that have not been addressed by the lawyers. Questions must be in writing and directed to the witness and not to the lawyers or me. If I determine that your question may be asked, I will ask it. If I do not ask your question, you should not speculate what the answer to the question is or why I did not ask it.]

## **CREDIBILITY OF WITNESSES**

It is the duty of the jury to scrutinize and to weigh the testimony of witnesses and to determine the effect of the evidence as a whole. You are the sole judges of the credibility, that is, the believability, of the witnesses and of the weight to be given to their testimony.

In determining the credibility of each witness and the weight you give to the testimony of each witness, consider these factors:

- whether the witness has an interest or lack of interest in the result of this trial;
- the witness' conduct, appearance, and demeanor on the witness stand;
- the clearness or lack of clearness of the witness' recollections;

- the opportunity the witness had for observing and for knowing the matters the witness testified about;
- the reasonableness of the witness' testimony;
- the apparent intelligence of the witness;
- bias or prejudice, if any has been shown;
- possible motives for falsifying testimony; and
- all other facts and circumstances during the trial which tend either to support or to discredit the testimony.

Then give to the testimony of each witness the weight you believe it should receive.

There is no magic way for you to evaluate the testimony; instead, you should use your common sense and experience. In everyday life, you determine for yourselves the reliability of things people say to you. You should do the same thing here.

## **BURDEN OF PROOF**

In every trial there is a burden of proof. The phrase "burden of proof" means that when a party comes into a courtroom and makes a claim, as the plaintiff is making here, the law says that claim must be proved. After the trial, I will instruct you on the proper burden of proof to be applied to the questions in the verdict that will be submitted to you.

## **[CLOSING ARGUMENTS**

After all of the evidence is introduced and both parties have rested, the lawyers will again have an opportunity to address you in a closing argument. While the closing Wisconsin Court System, 2022 (Release No. 53)

arguments are very important, they are not evidence and you are not bound by the argument of either lawyer.

After the final arguments are concluded, I will instruct you on the rules of law applicable to the case, and you will then retire for your deliberations. Your function as jurors is to determine what the facts are and to apply the rules of law that I give you to the facts. The conclusion you reach will be your verdict. You will determine what the facts are from all the testimony that you hear and from exhibits that are submitted to you. You are the sole and exclusive judges of the facts. In that field, neither I nor anyone may invade your province. I will try to preside impartially during this trial and not to express any opinion concerning the facts. Any views of mine as to what the facts are totally irrelevant.

I do caution you, however, that under your oath as jurors, you are duty bound to accept the rules of law that I give you whether you agree with them or not. As the sole judges of the facts in this case, you must determine which of the witnesses you believe, what portion of their testimony you accept, and what weight you attach to it.]

## **OPENING STATEMENTS**

We have now reached that stage of the proceedings where both lawyers have the opportunity to make an opening statement.

The purpose of an opening statement is to outline for you what each side expects to prove so that you will better understand the evidence as it is introduced during the trial. I must caution you, however, that the opening statements are not evidence.

After [counsel/the parties] have completed their opening statements, we will begin the trial, by (<u>plaintiff</u>)'s lawyer calling the first witness.

## NOTES

1. The current non-exhaustive list of personal characteristics may be revised by the trial judge based on the needs of each case. An expanded list, for example, may include additional personal characteristics like [(disability) (gender) (gender identity) (sexual orientation)], etc.

## **COMMENT**

This instruction was approved in 2010, and revised in 2017 and 2020. The 2017 revision included a "Note to the Trial Judge" at the beginning of the instruction. The 2020 revision expanded on the use of social media and other digital tools. This revision was approved by the Committee in October 2021; it added to the comment. See footnote 1.

## **400 SPOLIATION: INFERENCE**

[Describe the conduct the court has found to constitute spoliation of evidence.]

You may, but are not required to, infer that ((<u>plaintiff</u>) (<u>defendant</u>)) (<u>describe spoliation</u>) because producing that evidence would have been unfavorable to (<u>plaintiff</u>)'s (<u>defendant</u>)'s interest.

(For example: The defendant destroyed all of his or her medical records for patient care provided prior to (relevant date). You may, but are not required to, infer that the defendant destroyed his or her medical records from prior to (relevant date) because producing that evidence would have been unfavorable to defendant's interest.)

## **COMMENT**

This instruction and comment were approved in 2010. This revision was approved by the Committee in September 2021; it added to the comment.

Prior to giving this instruction, the court must first determine if spoliation occurred. If the court finds spoliation has occurred, the court must then determine if the proper sanction for the spoliation of evidence is to instruct the jury on the spoliation inference. This may be appropriate when the destruction of evidence is intentional.

**Spoliation Defined**. Omnia Praesumuntur Contra Spoliatorem: "All things are presumed against a despoiler or wrongdoer." Black's Law Dictionary 1086 (rev. 6th ed. 1990).

Spoliation is defined as the destruction or withholding of critically probative evidence resulting in prejudice to the opposing party. <u>Estate of Neumann v. Neumann</u>, 2001 WI App. 61, 242 Wis.2d 205, 245, 626 N.W.2d 821.

The duty to preserve evidence exists whether litigation is pending or not. In evaluating an allegation of document destruction a court should examine whether the party knew or should have known at the time it caused the destruction of the documents that litigation against (the opposing parties) was a distinct possibility. Garfoot v. Fireman's Fund Ins. Co., 228 Wis.2d 707, 718, 599 N.W.2d 411 (Ct. App. 1999), citing Milwaukee Constructors II v. Milwaukee Metro Sewerage District, 177 Wis. 2d 523, 532, 502

N.W.2d 881 Ct. App. 1993; S.C. <u>Johnson & Son, Inc. v. Morris</u>, 2010 WI App. 6, 322 Wis.2d 766, 779 N.W.2d 19.

When a party deliberately destroys documents, the court may find spoliation by applying a two-part analysis. First, the court should consider "whether the party responsible for the destruction of evidence knew, or should have known, at the time it destroyed the evidence that litigation was a distinct possibility." Second, the court should consider "whether the offending party destroyed documents which it knew, or should have known, would constitute evidence relevant to the pending or potential litigation." "The purposes of the spoliation doctrine are served only if the offending party has notice that the evidence is or is likely to be relevant to pending or foreseeable litigation and proceeds to destroy the evidence anyway." Ins. Co. of N. Am. v. Cease Electric Inc., 2004 WI App 15, ¶15 and 16, 269 Wis.2d 286, 294, 674 N.W.2d 886, 890.

There is a five step process for evaluating the destruction of evidence and whether it constitutes spoliation.

- (1.) Identification, with as much specificity as possible, of the evidence destroyed;
- (2.) The relationship of that evidence to the issues in the action;
- (3.) The extent to which such evidence can now be obtained from other sources;
- (4.) Whether the party responsible for the evidence destruction knew or should have known at the time it caused the destruction of the evidence that litigation against the opposing parties was a distinct possibility; and
- (5.) Whether, in light of the circumstances disclosed by the factual inquiry, sanctions should be imposed upon the party responsible for the evidence destruction and if so, what those sanctions should be.

Milwaukee Constructors II v. Milwaukee Metro Sewerage District, 177 Wis.2d 523, 532, 502 N.W.2d 881 Ct. App. 1993 citing Struthers Patent Corp. v. Nestle Co., 558 F. Supp. 747, 756 (D.N.J. 1981).

**Burden of Proof**. The party seeking the evidence must prove by clear, satisfactory, and convincing evidence that relevant evidence was intentionally withheld or destroyed. <u>Estate of Neumann v. Neumann</u>, 2001 WI App. 61, ¶82 and 83, 242 Wis. 2d 205, 246, 626 N.W.2d 821 citing <u>Jagmin v. Simonds Abrasive Co.</u>, 61 Wis.2d 60, 80-81, 211 N.W.2d 810 (1973).

**Sanctions**. The decision whether to impose a sanction for the spoliation of evidence is committed to the trial court's discretion. <u>City of Stoughton v. Thomasson Lumber Co.</u>, 2004 WI App. 6, & 38, 269 Wis.2d 339, 675 N.W.2d 487 citing <u>Garfoot v. Fireman's Fund Ins. Co.</u>, 228 Wis.2d at 717. A circuit court has a "broad canvas upon which to paint in determining what sanctions are necessary." <u>Milwaukee Constructors</u> II v. Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District, 177 Wis. 2d 523, 538, 502 N.W.2d 881 (Ct. App. 1993).

The primary purpose behind the doctrine of spoliation is two fold: (1) to uphold the judicial system's truth-seeking function and (2) to deter parties from destroying evidence. A remedy for spoliation should "advance truth by assuming that the destroyed evidence would have hurt the party responsible for the

destruction of evidence and act as deterrent by eliminating the benefits of destroying the evidence." <u>Ins.</u> <u>Co. of N. Am. v. Cease Electric Inc.</u>, 2004 WI App. 15, ¶16, 269 Wis.2d 286, 295, 674 N.W.2d 886, 891 (Ct. App. 2003).

Courts have fashioned a number of remedies for evidence spoliation. The primary remedies used to combat spoliation are:

- (1) Pretrial discovery sanctions;
- (2) Monetary sanctions;
- (3) Exclusion of evidence;
- (4) Reading the Wis JI-Civil 400 to the jury;
- (5) Dismissal of one or more claims; and
- (6) See American Family Mut. Ins. Co. v. Golke, 319 Wis.2d 397, ¶42, 768 N.W.2d 729 (Ct. App. 2015); Sentry Ins. V. Royal Ins. Co. of America, 196 Wis.2d 907, 918-19, 539 N.W.2d 911 (Ct. App. 1995); Estate of Neumann v. Neumann, 242 Wis.2d 205, ¶80, 626 N.W.2d 821 (Ct. App. 2001); Mueller v. Bull's Eye Sport Shop, LLC, 2021 WI App 34, 398 Wis.2d 329, ¶20, 961 N.W.2d 112.

See also Wis. Stat. § 804.12 for sanctions for a failure to make discovery.

Spoliation Inference. Where the spoliation inference is applied, the trier of fact is permitted to draw an inference from the intentional spoliation of evidence that the destroyed evidence would have been unfavorable to the party that destroyed it. Estate of Neumann v. Neumann, 2001 WI App. 61, ¶81, 242 Wis.2d 205, 246, 626 N.W.2d 821 citing Beers v. Bayliner Marine Corp., 236 Conn. 769, 675 A.2d 829, 832 (Conn. 1996). The spoliation inference is inappropriate where evidence was negligently destroyed, but may be appropriate where destruction is intentional. Jagmin v. Simonds Abrasive Co., 61 Wis. 2d 60, 80-81, 211 N.W.2d 810 (1973). See also, Mueller, supra, at ¶21. In Wisconsin, the operation of the Maxim Omnia Praesumuntur Contra Spoliatorem is reserved for deliberate, intentional actions and not mere negligence even though the result may be the same as regards the person who desires the evidence. Jagmin v. Simonds Abrasive Co., 61 Wis.2d 60, 80-81, 211 N.W.2d 810 (1973) Id. at 80-81. See also S.C. Johnson & Son, Inc. v. Morris, 2010 WI App 6, 322 Wis.2d 766, 779 N.W.2d 19.

A permissible inference instruction is a proper sanction when the spoliation was intentional but not egregious. <u>American Fam. Mut. Ins. Co. v. Golke</u>, 319 Wis. 2d 397, ¶42; <u>Jagmin v. Simonds Abrasive Co.</u>, 61 Wis.2d 60, 80-81, 211 N.W.2d 810 (1973). Wisconsin case law does not mandate that sanctions for intentional spoliation achieve a remedial effect or a definitive result. Instead, this instruction allows a jury to infer that that unavailable evidence is adverse to the spoliator. <u>Mueller</u>, <u>supra</u>, at ¶40.

# 1008 INTOXICATION: CHEMICAL TEST RESULTS [REFLECTS CHANGES IN 2003 WISCONSIN ACT 30]

The results of a chemical test for intoxication have been received in evidence.

(NOTE: USE THE APPROPRIATE PARAGRAPH):

[If you find there was an alcohol concentration of more than 0.04 but less than 0.8 at the time of the test, you should consider that fact as relevant evidence on the issue of whether the person (was under the influence of an intoxicant) (had an alcohol concentration of 0.8 or more) at the time in question, but it is not by itself a sufficient basis for a finding that the person (was under the influence of an intoxicant) (had an alcohol concentration of 0.8 or more) at the time in question.]

[If you find there was an alcohol concentration of 0.8 or more at the time of the test, you should find from that fact alone that the person was under the influence of an intoxicant at the time in question, unless you are satisfied to the contrary from other evidence.]

[If you find there was an alcohol concentration of more than 0.00 but less than 0.8 at the time of the test, you should consider that fact as relevant evidence on the issue of whether the person was under the combined influence of alcohol and (a controlled substance) (a controlled substance analog) (any other drug) at the time in question, but it is not by itself a sufficient basis for a finding that the person was under the combined influence of alcohol and (a controlled substance) (a controlled substance analog) (any other drug) at the time in question.

#### **COMMENT**

This instruction and comment were originally published in 1961. They were revised in 1974, 1983, 1989, 1994, 1996, 2000, and 2003. This revision was approved by the Committee in January 2022; it added to the comment.

Evidence of chemical tests for intoxication is generally admissible if intoxication is at issue. Wis. Stat. § 885.235(1g). But if the sample (blood, breath, or urine) was taken more than three hours after the event, the analysis is admissible <u>only if</u> expert testimony establishes its probative value and may be given prima facie effect only if established by expert testimony. Wis. Stat. § 885.235(3).

With regard to the operation of a commercial motor vehicle, Wis. Stat. § 885.235(1g)(d) indicates that an alcohol concentration of 0.04 or more is prima facie evidence that he or she was under the influence of an intoxicant with respect to operation of a commercial motor vehicle and is prima facie evidence that he or she had an alcohol concentration of 0.04 or more.

"The provisions of this section relating to the admissibility of chemical tests for alcohol concentration or intoxication shall not be construed as limiting the introduction of any other competent evidence bearing on the question of whether or not a person was under the influence of an intoxicant. . . ." Wis. Stat. § 885.235(4).

See also Wis JI-Criminal 230, 232, 234, 235, 237, 1185, 1185A, 1186 1186A, 1188, 1190, and 1191 for jury instructions dealing with chemical test results.

**Prima Facie Evidence**. In drafting this instruction, the question arose whether "prima facie evidence" was the same as presumption. Wis. Stat. § 903.01 makes clear that it is. The statute reads:

Except as provided by statute, a presumption recognized at common law or created by statute, including statutory provisions that certain facts are prima facie evidence of other facts, imposes on the party relying on the presumption the burden of proving the basic facts, but once the basic facts are found to exist the presumption imposes on the party against whom it is directed the burden of proving that the nonexistence of the presumed fact is more probable than its existence. (Emphasis added.)

Wis Stat. § 885.235(1g)(c) is a statutory provision that makes a chemical test showing an alcohol concentration of 0.08 or more (the basic facts) "prima facie evidence" of being under the influence of an intoxicant (the other fact). Wis. Stat. § 903.01 makes this statutory provision a presumption. Wis. Stat. § 903.01 makes clear, also, that the introduction of the basic fact establishes the presumed fact for the jury and shifts the burden to the opposing party to overcome or rebut the presumption.

In terms of meeting the presumption, Chief Justice Heffernan's words in <u>Kruse v. Horlamus Indus.</u>, <u>Inc.</u>, 130 Wis.2d 357, 365 66, 387 N.W.2d 64 (1986) are instructive:

Under Wisconsin law, presumptions do not "disappear" or "burst" when evidence to the contrary of the presumed fact is introduced. This means that, even where rebutting evidence has been produced, the inference from the presumption survived and is sufficient to support a jury verdict until the presumption is met by evidence of equal weight.

This language supports the use of "should" in the civil instruction ("you should find from that fact alone that the person was under the influence of an intoxicant") rather than the permissive "may" used in the criminal instruction; it also supports the language "unless you are satisfied from other evidence to the contrary" because the presumption shifts the burden of production.

**Civil/Criminal Distinction**. In drafting this instruction, the Committee recognized that there is a distinction between Wis JI-Criminal 230 and Wis JI-Civil 1008. The Committee believes that Wis. Stat. § 903.01 supports the slightly different treatment in the civil instruction. Wis. Stat. § 903.03(3) supports the criminal instruction and indicates why the criminal instruction is worded as it is. The statute provides in the most relevant section:

(3) Instructing the jury. Whenever the existence of a presumed fact against the accused is submitted to the jury, the judge shall give an instruction that the law declares that the jury may regard the basic facts as sufficient evidence of the presumed fact but does not require it to do so. In addition, if the presumed fact establishes guilt or is an element of the offense or negatives a defense, the judge shall instruct the jury that its existence must, on all the evidence, be proved beyond a reasonable doubt. (Emphasis added.)

The criminal instruction must use the permissive "may" and the cautionary adjunct because of the higher burden of proof. The instruction also must instruct that the jury can only rely on the presumed fact if all the evidence proves the presumed fact beyond a reasonable doubt. The instruction may not suggest that the burden shifts to the defendant to overcome or rebut the presumption.

## 1023 MEDICAL NEGLIGENCE

In (treating) (diagnosing) (plaintiff)'s (injuries) (condition), (doctor) was required to use the degree of care, skill, and judgment which reasonable (doctors who are in general practice) (specialists who practice the specialty which (doctor) practices) would exercise in the same or similar circumstances, having due regard for the state of medical science at the time (plaintiff) was (treated) (diagnosed). A doctor who fails to conform to this standard is negligent. The burden is on (plaintiff) to prove that (doctor) was negligent.

A doctor is not negligent, however, for failing to use the highest degree of care, skill, and judgment or solely because a bad result may have followed (his) (her) (care and treatment) (surgical procedure) (diagnosis). The standard you must apply in determining if (doctor) was negligent is whether (doctor) failed to use the degree of care, skill, and judgment that reasonable (general practitioners) (specialists) would exercise given the state of medical knowledge at the time of the (treatment) (diagnosis) in issue.

[Use this paragraph only if there is evidence of two or more alternative methods of treatment or diagnosis recognized as reasonable: If you find from the evidence that more than one method of (treatment for) (diagnosing) (plaintiff)'s (injuries) (condition) was recognized as reasonable given the state of medical knowledge at that time, then (doctor) was at liberty to select any of the recognized methods. (Doctor) was not negligent because (he) (she) chose to use one of these recognized (treatment) (diagnostic) methods

rather than another recognized method if (he) (she) used reasonable care, skill, and judgment in administering the method.]

You have heard testimony during this trial from doctors who have testified as expert witnesses. The reason for this is because the degree of care, skill, and judgment that a reasonable doctor would exercise is not a matter within the common knowledge of laypersons. This standard is within the special knowledge of experts in the field of medicine and can only be established by the testimony of experts. You, therefore, may not speculate or guess what the standard of care, skill, and judgment is in deciding this case but rather must attempt to determine it from the expert testimony that you heard during this trial. In determining the weight to be given an opinion, you should consider the qualifications and credibility of the expert and whether reasons for the opinion are based on facts in the case. You are not bound by any expert's opinion.

(Insert the appropriate cause instruction. To avoid duplication, JI-1500 should not be given if the following two bracketed paragraphs are used.)

[The cause question asks whether there was a causal connection between negligence on the part of (doctor) and (plaintiff)'s (injury) (condition). A person's negligence is a cause of a plaintiff's (injury) (condition) if the negligence was a substantial factor in producing the present condition of the plaintiff's health. This question does not ask about "the cause" but rather "a cause." The reason for this is that there can be more than one cause of (an injury) (a condition). The negligence of one (or more) person(s) can cause (an

injury) (a condition) or (an injury) (a condition) can be the result of the natural progression of (the injury) (the condition). In addition, the (injury) (condition) can be caused jointly by a person's negligence and also the natural progression of the (injury) (condition).]

[If you conclude from the evidence that the present condition of (<u>plaintiff</u>)'s health was caused jointly by (<u>doctor</u>)'s negligence and also the natural progression of (<u>plaintiff</u>)'s (injury) (condition), then you should find that the (<u>doctor</u>)'s negligence was a cause of the (<u>plaintiff</u>)'s present condition of health.]

[The evidence indicates without dispute that when (<u>plaintiff</u>) retained the services of (<u>doctor</u>) and placed (himself) (herself) under (<u>doctor</u>)'s care, (<u>plaintiff</u>) was suffering from some (disability resulting from injuries sustained in an accident) (illness or disease). (<u>Plaintiff</u>)'s then physical condition cannot be regarded by you in any way as having been caused or contributed to by any negligence on the part of (<u>doctor</u>). This question asks you to determine whether the condition of (<u>plaintiff</u>)'s health, as it was when (<u>plaintiff</u>) placed (himself) (herself) under the doctor's care, has been aggravated or further impaired as a natural result of the negligence of (doctor)'s (treatment) (diagnosis).]

## (Insert appropriate damage instructions.)

[(<u>Plaintiff</u>) sustained injuries before the (treatment) (diagnosis) by (<u>doctor</u>). Such injuries have caused (and could in the future cause) (<u>plaintiff</u>) to endure pain and suffering and incur some disability. In answering these questions on damages, you will entirely exclude from your consideration all damages which resulted from the original injury; you

will consider only the damages (<u>plaintiff</u>) sustained as a result of the (treatment) (diagnosis) of by (<u>doctor</u>).]

[It will, therefore, be necessary for you to distinguish and separate, first, the natural results in damages that flow from (<u>plaintiff</u>)'s original (illness) (injuries) and, second, those that flow from (<u>doctor</u>)'s (treatment) (diagnosis) and allow (<u>plaintiff</u>) only the damages that naturally resulted from the (treatment) (diagnosis) by (<u>doctor</u>).]

#### **COMMENT**

This instruction was approved by the Committee in 1963. It was revised in 1966, 1974, 1984, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1995, 1996, 1998, 2002, 2009, 2011, and 2012. The comment was updated in 1990, 1992, 1996, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2009, 2011, 2012, 2016, 2017, 2019, and 2021. The 2009 revision added "(diagnosis)" throughout the instruction to the alleged negligence. This revision was approved by the Committee in October 2021; it added to the comment.

The Committee recommends that the basic inquiry with respect to the defendant's conduct be framed in simple terms of negligence. Failure on the part of the doctor to conform to the applicable standard of care constitutes negligence. This form of submission is preferable to the form previously employed, i.e., stating the duty in the question. The statement of the duty is the function of the instruction. The Committee recommends that the general negligence instruction, JI-Civil 1005, not be used in addition to this instruction.

There are a series of concepts involved in the instruction. The duty of the doctor in his or her care, treatment, and procedures; the effects of bad results on liability; the degree of care, skill, and judgment required to satisfy his or her duty; the duty allows a choice of accepted alternative methods of treatment; the doctor's liability cannot be predicated on other than expert testimony (except in a res ipsa case); and the issue is not on the judgment the doctor made but on the degree and skill he or she exercised in arriving at the judgment. The Committee concluded that foreseeability of injury or harm is inherent in the standard expressed in the first paragraph, and if an issue in the case, it must be addressed by expert testimony.

If the trial judge prefers, this instruction can be divided into its components (<u>i.e.</u>, negligence, cause, alternative care, damages, etc.) when instructing the jury and when providing the jury with written instructions during its deliberations.

**Standard of Care**. This instruction reflects the changes recommended by the Wisconsin Supreme Court in Nowatske v. Osterloh, 198 Wis.2d 419, 543 N.W.2d 25 (1996). The former version of this instruction was based on prevailing case law which measured ordinary care based on what an "average"

physician would have done. The court in <u>Nowatske</u> said "the standard of care applicable to physicians in Wisconsin can not be conclusively established either by a reflection of what the majority of practitioners do or by a sum of the customs which those practitioners follow." Instead, the court said "it must be established by a determination of what it is reasonable to expect of a professional given the state of medical knowledge at the time of the treatment." <u>Nowatske</u>, <u>supra</u>, at 438-39. See also the comment to Wis JI-Civil 1005.

**Standard of Care: Unlicensed First-Year Resident**. The Wisconsin Supreme Court in <u>Phelps v. Physicians Ins. Co.</u>, 2005 WI 85, 282 Wis.2d 69, 698 N.W.2d 643, has held that unlicensed first-year residents should be held to:

the standard of care applicable to an unlicensed first-year resident . . . Although we anticipate this new standard of care to be lower than that of an average licensed physician in some cases, we do not expect that it will become a grant of immunity. After all, unlicensed first-year residents are graduates of a medical school who provide sophisticated health care services appropriate to their "in training" status. Therefore, unlicensed residents could still be found negligent if, for example, they undertook to treat outside the scope of their authority and expertise, or they failed to consult with someone more skilled and experienced when the standard of care required it.

The court characterized the status of an unlicensed first-year resident as "unique." It said the resident's authority was limited:

Although [resident] could refer to himself as an "M.D.," his freedom of action was more restricted than that of a licensed physician. Indeed, the circuit court found that Dr. Lindemann "had no authority or privileges to provide primary obstetrical care," and "was not supposed to act as the primary attending physician." Rather, "[h]is primary duty was to assess and report findings and differential diagnoses to an upper level senior resident or to the attending obstetrician."

Effect of Bad Results. The second paragraph states the rule as to the effects of bad results on the doctor's liability. Bad results raise no presumption of negligence. DeBruine v. Voskuil, 168 Wis. 104, 169 N.W. 288 (1918); Ewing v. Goode, 78 F. 442 (S.D. Ohio 1897); Wurdemann v. Barnes, 92 Wis. 206, 66 N.W. 111 (1896); Francois v. Mokrohisky, supra; Finke v. Hess, 170 Wis. 149, 174 N.W. 466 (1920); Hoven v. Kelble, 79 Wis.2d 444, 256 N.W.2d 379 (1976). See also Nowatske v. Osterloh, supra.

The judgment of a doctor in his or her care, treatment, and procedures, whether good, bad, honest or mistaken, is not at issue on his or her liability. The issue raised is whether in making the judgment, he or she exercised that degree of care and skill imposed on him or her. If he or she failed to meet that standard, he or she was negligent and liable. Christianson v. Downs, supra; Hoven v. Kelble, supra; Carson v. Beloit, 32 Wis.2d 282, 145 N.W.2d 112 (1966); Wurdemann v. Barnes, supra; Jaeger v. Stratton, 170 Wis. 579, 176 N.W. 61 (1920).

"Not omniscience, but due care, diligence, judgment, and skill are required of physicians. When they meet such test, they are not liable for results or errors in judgment." <u>Jaeger v. Stratton, supra.</u>

"The question . . . is not whether a physician has made a mistake; rather, the question is whether he was negligent." <u>Francois v. Mokrohisky</u>, <u>supra</u>.

"The law . . . recognizes the medical profession for what it is: a class of fallible men, some of whom are unusually well qualified and expert, and some of whom are not. The standard to which they must conform is determined by the practices of neither the very best nor the worst of the class." <u>Francois v. Mokrohisky</u>, <u>supra</u>.

In 1988, the court in <u>Schuster v. Altenberg</u>, <u>supra</u>, reaffirmed the concept that liability will not be imposed under this negligence standard for mere errors in judgment. It quoted from its earlier holdings:

The law governing this case is well settled. A doctor is not an insurer or guarantor of the correctness of his diagnosis; the requirement is that he use proper care and skill. Knief v. Sargent, 40 Wis.2d 4, 8, 161 N.W.2d 232 (1968). The question is not whether the physician made a mistake in diagnosis, but rather whether he failed to conform to the accepted standard of care. Francois v. Mokrohisky, 67 Wis.2d 196, 201, 226 N.W.2d 470 (1975). Christianson v. Downs, 90 Wis.2d 332, 338, 279 N.W.2d 918 (1979).

The second paragraph also deals with the extent and quality of the doctor's treatment required to satisfy his or her duty. A doctor is not required to exercise the highest degree of care, skill, and judgment. Hrubes v. Faber, 163 Wis. 89, 157 N.W. 519 (1916); DeBruine v. Voskuil, supra; Jaeger v. Stratton, supra; Trogun v. Fruchtman, supra; Christianson v. Downs, supra; Carson v. Beloit, supra; Francois v. Mokrohisky, supra; Hoven v. Kelble, supra.

**Alternative Methods**. It is appropriate to instruct the jury using the bracketed language at the bottom of page one when there is evidence that more than one method of treatment or diagnosis is recognized as reasonable. See Nowatske v. Osterloh, supra, at 448. This is true even if an alternative method is not actually employed, as long as the treatment utilized is not the equivalent of "doing nothing." See Barney v. Mickelson, 2020 WI 40, ¶31, 391 Wis.2d 212, 942 N.W.2d 891. (In Barney, there was substantial testimony that the continued use of an external monitor was a reasonable method to continue to assess the patient's heart rate and was within the standard of care, even if accepted alternatives were available and could have been utilized). It is inappropriate, however, to give this instruction where the alleged negligence "lies in failing to do something, not in negligently choosing between courses of actions." Miller v. Kim, 191 Wis. 2d 187, 198, 528 N.W.2d 72 (1995). (The circuit court in Miller committed prejudicial error when it gave the alternative methods instruction because experts unanimously testified that a spinal tap is the only reasonable method of diagnosis for a young child with symptoms of spinal meningitis). The reasonable pursuit of an accepted alternative method does not establish a doctor's liability, even if experts disagree on the method used. A physician is required by statute to inform a patient about the availability of all alternate, viable medical treatments and the benefits and risks of these treatments, Wis. Stat. § 448.30. For claims based on a failure by a physician to adequately inform a patient, see Wis JI-Civil 1023.2 Malpractice: Informed Consent.

Unnecessary and improper treatment constitutes medical malpractice. <u>Northwest Gen. Hosp. v. Yee</u>, 115 Wis.2d 59, 61-62, 339 N.W.2d 583 (1983).

**Expert Testimony**. Expert testimony is needed to support a finding of negligence on the part of the doctor. Kuehnemann v. Boyd, 193 Wis. 588, 214 N.W. 326 (1927); Holton v. Burton, supra; Lindloff v. Ross, 208 Wis. 482, 243 N.W. 403 (1932); Ahola v. Sincock, 6 Wis.2d 332, 94 N.W.2d 566 (1959); Froh

<u>v. Milwaukee Medical Clinic, S.C.</u>, 85 Wis.2d 308, 270 N.W.2d 83 (Ct. App. 1978); <u>McManus v. Donlin</u>, 23 Wis.2d 289, 127 N.W.2d 22 (1964); <u>Treptau v. Behrens Spa, Inc.</u>, supra.

The degree of care and skill (of a physician) can only be proved by the testimony of experts. Without such testimony, the jury has no standard which enables it to determine whether the defendant failed to exercise the degree of care and skill required of him or her. Kuehnemann v. Boyd, supra; Holton v. Burton, supra; Lindloff v. Ross, supra. In 2011, the Committee added language which instructs the jury that in determining the weight of an expert's testimony, it should consider the qualifications and credibility of the expert and whether the reasons for the opinion are based on facts in the case. The jury is further instructed that it is not bound by any expert's opinion. See Weborg v. Jenny, 2012 WI 67 (Paragraph 73), 341 Wis.2d 668, 816 N.W.2d 191.

For a discussion of the admissibility of expert evidence in a medical negligence case, see <u>Seifert v. Balink</u>, 2017 WI 2, 372 Wis.2d 525, 888 N.W.2d 816.

The general instruction on expert testimony, Wis JI-Civil 260, should be used for issues in the trial other than standard of care.

Causation. The court in Young v. Professionals Ins. Co., 154 Wis.2d 742, 454 N.W.2d 24 (Ct. App. 1990), was critical of an earlier version of JI-1023 relating to cause. The present instruction concerning situations when there is evidence of both negligence and a condition of health resulting from the natural progression of a disease (injury) correctly states that a doctor's negligence may be causal, notwithstanding, that the plaintiff's present condition of health may in part be the result of the natural progression of plaintiff's disease (injury). This is because Wisconsin has long adopted the "substantial factor test" in deciding causation questions and no longer requires that the negligence be the sole or proximate cause. Matuschka v. Murphy, 173 Wis. 484, 180 N.W. 821 (1921), has been overruled because it is "likely to misstate the law of causation." See Young, supra, at 749.

This instruction comports with the supreme court's decision in Fischer v. Ganju, 168 Wis.2d 834, 485 N.W.2d 10 (1992). In Fischer, the supreme court stated that a paragraph from a prior version JI-1023 (1989) was "less than completely accurate." The version given by the trial judge in Fischer in January 1990 was based on the 1989 version of this instruction which was published in April of 1989. This version was revised by the committee following the decision in Young v. Professionals Ins. Co., supra. The revised JI-1023 was published in May of 1991 as part of the 1991 supplement. This revision (1991) changed the language of the prior version dealing with causation. It has not been revised since the 1991 supplement. The Committee has closely compared this present version of Wis JI-Civil 1023 to the court's criticism of the 1989 version of the instruction. The Committee concludes that the causation language of the present instruction is consistent with the discussion of causation in the Fischer decision and accurately states the law of causation in medical malpractice pre-existing condition cases.

**Specialists**. See <u>Johnson v. Agoncillo</u>, 183 Wis.2d 143, 515 N.W.2d 508 (Ct. App. 1994), where the First District Court of Appeals held that under current Wisconsin law, a doctor who practices one medical specialty is not held to the standard of care of another medical specialty, even when treating a patient in that latter specialty. Dr. Agoncillo was a family practitioner treating a high-risk obstetrical patient. Plaintiff Johnson requested an instruction that would hold Agoncillo to the standard of the "average physician who

treats high risk obstetrical patients. . . ." The trial judge refused to give such an instruction and the court of appeals affirmed, stating:

Thus, that Dr. Agoncillo chose to care for and treat Ms. Johnson during her high-risk pregnancy did not transform his class of physician to that of those who treat high-risk obstetrical patients; he was and he remained a general family practitioner who treated obstetrical patients and, as instructed by the trial court, he was thus 'required to use the degree of care, skill, and judgment which is usually exercised in the same or similar circumstances' by the average physician in that class

The court went on to say, however, that the physician who attempts to treat a patient outside her or his expertise is not, thereby, immunized from liability. Referring to a cardiologist who treats a cancer patient, the court said in Johnson at 152:

If competent evidence establishes that the average cardiologist would either refer the cancer patient to an oncologist or would consult with an oncologist, the cardiologist could be found negligent for not referring or consulting.

Captain of Ship Doctrine. In a recent decision, the plaintiff in a medical malpractice action argued that the surgeon should be held vicariously liable for the negligence of two hospital nurses from a county-owned hospital who were responsible for counting sponges. <u>Lewis v. Physicians Ins. Co.</u>, 2001 WI 60, 243 Wis.2d 648, 627 N.W.2d 484. The hospital was county-owned and, therefore, its liability at the time was limited to \$50,000.

The trial court, on summary judgment, agreed with the plaintiff's argument that, as a matter of law, the surgeon is the "captain of the ship" and is responsible for the actions of the parties that were in the operating room. Interestingly, the plaintiff did not argue that the surgeon was vicariously liable for the nurses' actions under the doctrine of respondeat superior. Both the court of appeals and supreme court rejected the adoption of the captain of the ship doctrine to impose liability on the doctor. The supreme court said the "captain of the ship doctrine" has lost its vitality across the country as plaintiffs have been able to sustain actions against full-care modern hospitals for the negligence of their employees.

**Psychiatric Malpractice Claims**. The Wisconsin Supreme Court recognized in <u>Schuster v.</u> <u>Altenberg</u>, <u>supra</u>, that a psychiatrist may be negligent by:

- 1. negligent diagnosing and treating, including failing to warn of side effects of medication,
- 2. failing to warn a patient's family of the patient's condition and its dangerous implications,
- 3. failing to seek the commitment of the patient.

Warning a patient of risks associated with a condition and the patient as to appropriate conduct constitutes treatment as to which a physician must use ordinary care. <u>Schuster v. Altenberg</u>, <u>supra</u>. A psychiatrist may be held liable to third parties for failing to warn of the side effects of medication if the side effects were such that a patient should have been cautioned against driving, because it was foreseeable that an accident could result causing harm to the patient or third parties.

A psychotherapist has the duty to warn third parties or to institute proceeding for the detention or commitment of a dangerous individual for the protection of the patient or the public.

**Dental Malpractice.** For dental malpractice, see Wis JI-Civil 1023.14.

**Determination of Future Economic Damages**. In a claim based on injury from any treatment or operation performed by, or from any omission by, a person who is a health care provider, the determination of future economic damages must reflect present value, life expectancy, and the effects of inflation. Specifically, Wis. Stat. § 893.55(4)(e) states:

(e) Economic damages recovered under ch 655 for bodily injury or death, including any action or proceeding based on contribution or indemnification, shall be determined for the period during which the damages are expected to accrue, taking into account the estimated life expectancy of the person, then reduced to present value, taking into account the effects of inflation.

The Committee interprets this subsection as requiring the jury to make a reduction based on the time value of money and to consider inflation in determining future economic damages. The Committee believes that the statutory language quoted above does not mean that the trial judge should make allowance for present value of money or inflation immediately after the jury has determined economic damages or on motions after verdict.

Medical Negligence Damage Caps. In Ferdon v. Wisc. Patients Compensation Fund, 2005 WI 125, 284 Wis.2d 573, 701 N.W.2d 440, the court held that the \$350,000 cap (adjusted for inflation) on noneconomic medical malpractice damages set forth in Wis. Stat. §§ 655.017 and 893.55(4) violates the equal protection guarantees of the Wisconsin Constitution. Previously, the court had held there is a single cap on noneconomic damages recoverable from health care providers for medical malpractice. Maurin v. Hall, 2004 WI 100, 274 Wis.2d 28, 682 N.W.2d 866. The amount of the cap is determined by whether the patient survives the malpractice or whether the patient dies. When the patient survives, the cap is contained in Wis. Stat. § 893.55(4)(d). When the patient dies, the cap is contained in Wis. Stat. § 895.04(4). In cases where medical malpractice leads to death, the wrongful death cap applies in lieu of - - not in addition to -- the medical malpractice cap. Following Ferdon, the legislature acted to impose a \$750,000 cap on noneconomic damages set forth ins Wis. Stat. § 893.55(1d)(b).

The court in Ferdon also created an intermediate level of constitutional review that it called "rational basis with teeth, or meaningful rational basis." However, in Mayo v. Wisconsin Injured Patients and Families Compensation Fund, 2018 WI 78, 383 Wis.2d 1, 914 N.W.2d 678, the court overruled Ferdon for erroneously invading the province of the legislature and found that rational basis with teeth has no standards for application and created uncertainty under the law. Instead, the court held that rational basis review is appropriate because the cap on noneconomic damages does not deny any fundamental right or implicate any suspect class. When the five-step rational basis scrutiny provided in Aicher v. Wis. Patients Comp. Fund, 2000 WI 98, 237 Wis.2d 99, 613 N.W.2d 849 was applied, the court concluded that "the legislature's comprehensive plan that guarantees payment while controlling liability for medical malpractice through the use of insurance, contributions to the Fund and a cap on noneconomic damages has a rational basis." Therefore, the \$750,000 cap on noneconomic damages in medical malpractice actions is not facially unconstitutional." See Mayo v. Wisconsin Injured Patients and Families Compensation Fund, 2018 WI 78, 383 Wis.2d 1, 31, 914 N.W.2d 678.

Bystander Recovery Claims for Negligent Infliction of Emotional Distress Based on Misdiagnosis. See the committee commentary to Wis. JI-Civil 1510 and 1511.

Answering Special Verdict Questions; Possibility of Inconsistent Verdicts. In medical negligence cases, allowing the jury to award damages regardless of how it answered negligence and cause verdict questions can lead to inconsistent verdicts under Runjo v. St. Paul Fire Marine Ins. Co., 197 Wis.2d 594, 541 N.W.2d 173 (Ct. App. 1995); LaCombe v. Aurora Medical Group, Inc., 2004 WI App 119, 274 Wis.2d 771, 683 N.W.2d 532; Hegarty v. Beauchaine, 2006 WI App 248, 297 Wis.2d 70, 727 N.W.2d 857. In Runjo, the jury was instructed to answer the damage questions only if it affirmatively answered the negligence and cause questions.

**Time limitations.** A circuit court may dismiss a plaintiff's medical malpractice claim as untimely. See Wis. Stat. § 893.55(1m)(a) concerning the statute of limitations for medical malpractice claims. See Wis. Stat. § 893.55(1m)(b) concerning the grounds on which the statute of repose bars such claims.

For time limitations concerning claims based on an alleged omission, specifically a misdiagnosis or failure to diagnose, see <u>Paul v. Skemp</u>, 2001 WI 42, ¶25, 242 Wis. 2d 507, 625 N.W.2d 860. See also <u>Brusa v. Mercy Health Sys., Inc.</u>, 2007 WI App 166, ¶¶11, 14, 304 Wis. 2d 138, 737 N.W.2d 1, and <u>Winzer v. Hartmann</u>, 2021 WI App 68, 399 Wis.2d 555, 966 N.W.2d 101.

## 1023.5 PROFESSIONAL NEGLIGENCE: LEGAL—STATUS OF LAWYER AS A SPECIALIST IS NOT IN DISPUTE

In providing legal services to a client, it is a lawyer's duty to use the degree of care, skill, and judgment which reasonably prudent lawyers practicing in this state would exercise under like or similar circumstances. A failure to conform to this standard is negligence. The burden is on (plaintiff) to prove that (lawyer) was negligent.

You are to determine whether (<u>lawyer</u>) was negligent in representing (<u>plaintiff</u>) in light of the facts and circumstances of which (<u>lawyer</u>) was aware or should have discovered at the time legal services were provided to (<u>plaintiff</u>). A lawyer is negligent if the lawyer fails to discover or recognize the importance of relevant facts or legal principles which reasonably prudent lawyers would discover or recognize or if the lawyer's skill or judgment was not consistent with that exercised by reasonably prudent lawyers. A lawyer is not negligent because of the results of (his) (her) representation, if (his)(her) efforts were those reasonably prudent lawyers would have taken.

[Use this paragraph if the parties stipulate or the trial judge finds as a matter of law that the lawyer presented himself or herself as a specialist in the relevant area of law: Lawyers who present themselves to the public or their clients as having special experience, knowledge, or skill in a particular area of law are held to the standard of care of reasonably prudent lawyers with that special experience, knowledge, or skill. This is the standard you should apply in considering question \_\_\_\_\_\_ of the special verdict.]

You have heard testimony during this trial from lawyers who have testified as expert witnesses. The reason for this is because the degree of care, skill, and judgment which a reasonably prudent lawyer would exercise is not a matter within the common knowledge of lay persons. This standard is within the special knowledge of experts in the field of law and can only be established by expert testimony. You, therefore, may not speculate or guess what that standard of care, skill, and judgment is in deciding this case, but rather must attempt to determine this from the expert testimony that you heard in this trial.

(Also Give Wis JI-Civil 265)

## SPECIAL VERDICT

1.	Was ( <u>lawyer</u> ) negligent in providing legal services to ( <u>plaintiff</u> )?
	Answer:  Yes or No

## **COMMENT**

This instruction and comment were approved in 1997. The comment was updated in 1998, 2002, 2003, 2016, 2020, and 2021. This revision was approved by the Committee in January 2022; it added to the comment.

If the status of the lawyer as a specialist is in dispute, see Wis JI-Civil 1023.5A.

Consistent with the supreme court's direction in medical malpractice cases, the Committee has eliminated reference to "guaranteed results" and has framed the duty of lawyers in terms of "reasonable care" rather than in reference to what is "usually exercised" by lawyers. See Nowatske v. Osterloh, 198 Wis. 2d 419, 543 N.W.2d 265 (1996), and Comment to Wis JI-Civil 1023.

**Elements**. The Wisconsin Supreme Court has said that the following rule governs legal malpractice actions:

In an action against an attorney for negligence or violation of duty, the client has the burden of proving the existence of the relation of attorney and client, the acts constituting the alleged negligence, that the negligence was the proximate cause of the injury, and the fact and extent of the injury alleged. The last element mentioned often involves the burden of showing that, but for the negligence of the attorney, the client would have been successful in the prosecution or defense of an action. <u>Lewandowski v. Continental Casualty Co.</u>, 88 Wis.2d 271, 277, 276 N.W.2d 284 (1979). See also <u>Kraft v. Steinhafel</u>, 2015 WI App 62, 364 Wis.2d 672, 869 N.W.2d 506.

To establish causation and injury in a legal malpractice action, the plaintiff is often compelled to prove the equivalent of two cases in a single proceeding or what has been referred to as a "suit within a suit." <a href="Lewandowski"><u>Lewandowski v. Continental Casualty Co.</u>, 88 Wis.2d 271, 277, 276 N.W.2d 284 (1979); <a href="Helmbrecht v. St."><u>Helmbrecht v. St.</u></a>
<a href="Paul Ins. Co.">Paul Ins. Co.</a>, 122 Wis.2d 94, 103, 362 N.W.2d 118 (1985); see also <a href="Pierce v. Colwell">Pierce v. Colwell</a>, 209 Wis.2d 355, 563 N.W.2d 166 (Ct. App. 1997). This entails establishing that, "but for the negligence of the attorney, the client would have been successful in the prosecution or defense of an action." <a href="Lewandowski"><u>Lewandowski</u></a>, 88 Wis.2d at 277, citing 7 Am. Jur. 2d, <a href="Attorneys at Law">Attorneys at Law</a>, sec. 188 at 156 (1963).

In <u>Helmbrecht v. St. Paul Ins. Co.</u>, <u>supra</u>, the court made several important holdings which cleared up some uncertainty. First, in calculating damages due to the loss of a claim, an objective standard should be used, <u>i.e.</u>, what a reasonable judge (jury) would have awarded in the initial action. Second, the court said the Code of Professional Responsibility, although beneficial as an ethical guide, "does not exhaustively define the obligations an attorney owes his client," nor does it "undertake to define standards for civil liability of lawyers for professional conduct." Helmbrecht, supra, at 111.

In <u>Denzer v. Rouse</u>, 48 Wis.2d 528, 534 180 N.W.2d 521 (1970), the court said that "between the end points of competence and malpractice lies a broad area of difficult and complex situations in which an attorney is bound to exercise his best judgment in the light of his education and experience, but is not held to a standard of perfection or infallibility of judgment."

Cause. The court of appeals in 1997 considered the following question: When a client is represented sequentially by two lawyers, both of whom were arguably negligent with respect to the same manner, can the first lawyer's alleged negligence be a cause of the client's damages if the client would not have sustained any damage if the second lawyer could have prevented the harm but did not? The court of appeals concluded that the answer to this question was "no." Seltrecht v. Bremer, 214 Wis.2d 110, 571 N.W.2d 686 (Ct. App. 1997).

Outcome of Representation. In <u>DeThorne v. Bakken</u>, 196 Wis. 2d 713, 539 N.W.2d 695 (1995), the court of appeals considered a lawyer's mistaken judgment that was made in good faith. The court stated: "we will not hold attorneys responsible when their decisions are ones that a reasonably prudent attorney might make even though they are later determined by a court of law to be erroneous." <u>Id</u>. at 724. The Committee believes that juries should be informed that the outcome of the representation is not determinative of lawyer's negligence. The jury should, instead, determine whether the representation conformed with reasonable care, considering all of the evidence.

**Nature of Representation**. If there is a dispute concerning the nature or scope of the representation, add the following paragraph:

Whether (<u>lawyer</u>) has discharged (his) (her) duty depends on the purpose for which (<u>lawyer</u>) was retained or agreed to provide representation. The purpose (or scope) of the representation for which the (<u>lawyer</u>) was retained is for you to determine from the evidence. It is irrelevant to the determination of the lawyer's negligence whether the lawyer was paid.

**Specialists**. The court of appeals has adopted the higher standard of care for lawyers who represent themselves as specialists in <u>Duffy Law Office v. Tank Transport, Inc.</u>, 194 Wis. 2d 675, 535 N.W.2d 91 (1995). The Committee recommends use of the higher standard paragraph when the trial court finds that there is credible evidence of such representation by the lawyer. See also Wis JI-Civil 1023.5A. Since most areas of practice do not have State Bar sanctioned specialty certification, these cases will generally present a question of fact concerning whether the lawyer held himself or herself out as a specialist to the public or to the particular client. (Patent and admiralty practice have recognition as specialists by policy and tradition in federal courts.)

**Contributory Negligence**. The contributory negligence of a client can be a defense in a legal malpractice action. Gustavson v. O'Brien, supra at 204.

**Tort Versus Contract Claim**. The Wisconsin Supreme Court has stated that legal malpractice may give rise to either a tort claim or a contract claim. The tort claim arises from a breach of the attorney's common law duty; whereas, the contract claim arises from a breach of a duty created by contractual agreement between the attorney and the client. See Milwaukee County v. Schmidt, Gardner, and Erickson, 43 Wis.2d 445, 168 N.W.2d 559 (1969); Klingbeil v. Saucerman, 165 Wis. 60, 160 N.W. 1051 (1917).

Expert Testimony. Expert testimony is not required to establish a standard of care in cases involving conduct not necessarily related to legal expertise where the matters to be proved do not involve special knowledge or skill or experience on subjects which are not within the realm of the ordinary experience of mankind and which require special learning, study, or experience. Nor is expert testimony required where no issue is raised as to defendant's responsibility, where the negligence of defendant is apparent and undisputed, and where the record discloses obvious and explicit carelessness in defendant's failure to meet the duty of care owed to plaintiff for the court will not require expert testimony to define further that which is already abundantly clear. Olfe v. Gordon, 93 Wis.2d 173, 286 N.W.2d 573 (1980). See also Kraft v. Steinhafel, 2015 WI App 62, 364 Wis.2d 672, 869 N.W.2d 506; DeThorne v. Bakken, 196 Wis. 2d 713, 718, 539 N.W.2d 695 (1995). In Olfe v. Gordon, supra, the client's claim alleged negligence by the attorney in failing to follow specific instructions. The court concluded that proof of this negligence does not require expert testimony. Such a claim is controlled by the law of agency. Thus, the duties of care owed by the attorney to the client are established not by the legal profession's standards but by the law of agency. The court held that a jury is competent to understand and apply the standards of care to which agents are held. Olfe v. Gordon, supra at 184 (citing Wis JI-Civil 4000, Agency: Definition, and Wis JI-Civil 4020, Agent's Duties Owed to Principal).

**Damages**. The supreme court has said it is appropriate, in some complex cases, for the trial judge to determine reasonable attorney's fees as a matter of law. See <u>Glamann v. St. Paul Fire & Marine Ins.</u>, 144 Wis.2d 865, 424 N.W.2d 924 (1988). For the determination and awarding of attorney fees (both trial and appellate), see <u>Glamann</u>, <u>supra</u> at 870-75.

**Legal Malpractice Claim for Criminal Defense**. The court of appeals has held that, in a legal malpractice claim for criminal defense, the plaintiff must prove that he or she did not commit the offenses of which he or she was convicted. <u>Hicks v. Nunnery</u>, 253 Wis.2d 721, 643 N.W.2d 809 (2002). This proof requirement is commonly referred to as the "actual innocence" rule, and was adopted in <u>Hicks</u> as a matter of public policy. More specifically, this rule is meant to prevent individuals who commit criminal offenses and are convicted of those crimes from recovering damages for legal malpractice. In such a case, the following language is suggested:

Question no.	asks whether ( <u>Plaintiff</u> ) is innocent of the	charge of	This
charge consists of the	e following elements: (Here explain the elemen	its of the offense from	ı the
appropriate instruction	n in Wisconsin Jury Instructions-Criminal.)		
·	rden of proof to satisfy you by the greater weight, that (he) (she) is innocent.	nt of the credible evide	nce,
[Give JI-Civil 200, On	rdinary Burden of Proof]		
The suggested question	on for the special verdict is:		
Was Plaintiff innocen	at of the charge of?		

The court of appeals in <u>Hicks</u> states that "the question of plaintiff's innocence is in addition to, not a substitute for, a jury question regarding whether the plaintiff would have been found not guilty absent the defendant's negligence. A defendant's negligence must . . . have been a substantial factor contributing to the plaintiff's conviction." Thus, the questions of existence of the attorney-client relationship, negligence, causation and damages would be first submitted for the jury's consideration.

Actual Innocence Rule. The application of the actual innocence rule has been considered in several Wisconsin decisions. As noted, the rule was first adopted in <u>Hicks v. Nunnery</u>, <u>supra</u>, which held that, in addition to proving the four elements of a standard legal malpractice claim, public policy considerations require that a criminal malpractice plaintiff must also establish that he or she "is innocent of the charges of which he [or she] was convicted." <u>Hicks</u>, <u>supra</u> at ¶46. This is true even if a plaintiff can prove that his or her conviction resulted from their attorney's failure "to bring a clearly meritorious motion to suppress evidence that establishes guilt, which the state could not prove without it[,]" Id. at ¶43.

The court of appeals later relied on the actual innocence rule adopted by <u>Hicks</u> in <u>Tallmadge v. Boyle</u>, 2007 WI App 47, 300 Wis.2d 510, 730 N.W.2d 173. In this decision, the court stated that the public policy considerations supporting the actual innocence rule require that the criminal malpractice plaintiff must "prove that 'but for' that defense counsel's actions, the convicted criminal would be free." <u>Id</u>. at ¶22. This principle was later refined in <u>Skindzelewski v. Smith</u>, 2020 WI 57, 392 Wis.2d 117, 944 N.W.2d 575. In that case, the claimant conceded his guilt to the underlying offense but advocated for an exception to the actual innocence rule because his attorney had negligently failed to raise a statute of limitations defense that would have precluded his conviction. Stating that such an exception would be contrary to public policy considerations and would reward criminality, the court in <u>Skindzelewski</u> explained that even if an attorney's negligence results in a conviction that is unauthorized by law, there is no applicable exception to the actual innocence rule if the error does not negate a guilty defendant's culpability. <u>Id</u>. at 128. The court concluded that "[T]he law bars such legal malpractice claims because even if an attorney's negligence harms a

defendant by adversely affecting the outcome of the case, attorney error does not negate a guilty defendant's culpability." <u>Id</u>. at 130.

**Split innocence**. In order to establish a claim for legal malpractice, a criminal malpractice plaintiff who claims "split innocence" need only show that they are actually innocent of the convictions that form the basis of their complaint of legal malpractice. See <u>Jama v. Gonzalez</u>, 2021 WI App 3, 395 Wis.2d 655, PP43-44, 954 N.W.2d 1 (Affirmed by an equally divided court in <u>Jama v. Gonzalez</u>, 2021 WI 79, 399 Wis.2d 392, 965 N.W.2d 458). The split innocence exception adopted in <u>Jama</u> is distinct from the exception to the actual innocence rule requested and denied in Skindzelewski, supra.

**Nonliability of an Attorney to a Non-Client.** A longstanding rule in Wisconsin is that an attorney is not liable to a non-client for "acts committed in the exercise of his [or her] duties as an attorney." See <u>Auric v. Continental Cas. Co.</u>, 111 Wis.2d 507, 512, 331 N.W.2d 325 (1983). However, there are exceptions to this rule in the context of estate planning. The "Auric exception," established in <u>Auric</u>, holds that the beneficiary of a will may maintain an action against an attorney who negligently drafted or supervised the execution of a will even though the beneficiary is a third-party not in privity with the attorney. In general, this exception allows a named beneficiary to sue an attorney for malpractice when the beneficiary can show that he or she was harmed by attorney negligence that frustrated the intent of the attorney's client.

In 2009, the post-Auric decision of <u>Tensfeldt v. Haberman</u>, 2009 WI 77, 319 Wis.2d 329, 768 N.W.2d 641 seemed to narrowly limit the Auric exception to negligence by an attorney in drafting or supervising the execution of an estate-planning document which resulted in a loss to a named beneficiary. However, the supreme court's holding in <u>MacLeish v. Boardman Clark LLP</u>, 2019 WI 31, 386 Wis.2d 50, 924 N.W.2d 799, provided that "[t]he narrow <u>Auric</u> exception to the rule of nonliability of an attorney to a non-client applies to the administration of an estate in addition to the drafting of a will. That is, a non-client who is a named beneficiary in a will has standing to sue an attorney for malpractice if the beneficiary can demonstrate that the attorney's negligent administration of the estate thwarted the testator's clear intent." <u>Id</u>. at ¶48.

For estate planning post-<u>MacLeish</u>, see <u>Pence v. Slate</u>, 387 Wis.2d 685, 928 N.W.2d 806 (Table), 2019 WI App 26.

Negligence; Standard of Care. See the comment to Wis JI-Civil 1005.

### 1153 RIGHT OF WAY: AT INTERSECTION WITH THROUGH HIGHWAY

A safety statute provides that the operator of a vehicle shall stop before entering a through highway and shall yield the right of way to other vehicles which have entered or are approaching the intersection upon the through highway.<sup>1</sup>

"Right of way" means the privilege of the immediate use of the roadway.<sup>2</sup>

The highway on which (<u>operator</u>) was operating a vehicle was a "through highway" as defined by the statute<sup>3</sup> at the time of the collision.

A vehicle on a through highway is approaching an intersection when it is so close to the intersection that, considering the rate of speed at which it is traveling, it would be reasonable to assume that a collision would occur if the vehicle which stopped, as required, before entry onto the through highway moves onto the highway and into the path of the oncoming vehicle.

If you find that the oncoming vehicle on the through highway had entered the intersection, or was approaching it as here defined, it then became the duty of the operator of the vehicle entering the through highway to yield the right of way to the vehicle on the through highway.

### **NOTES**

- 1. Wis. Stat. §§ 346.18(3).
- 2. Wis. Stat. § 340.01(51).

3. Wis. Stat. § 340.01(67).

#### **COMMENT**

This instruction and comment were originally published in 1966. The comment was, revised in 1983 and the instruction was revised in 2008. This revision was approved by the Committee in September 2021.

**Driver or Operator**. This instruction applies to either an operator or a driver of a motor vehicle. If "driver" is more appropriate to the evidence, then substitute "driver" for "operator."

This instruction is based on the assumption that there is no issue on the record about one highway being a through highway, as defined by Wis. Stat. § 340.01(67). If, however, an issue develops as to whether the highway in question is a through highway, then a preliminary question would be required and would be covered by an instruction giving the statutory definition.

Although the law in Wisconsin gives the operator of a vehicle on a through highway a preference, such preference is not absolute. <u>Leckwee v. Gibson</u>, 90 Wis.2d 275, 280 N.W.2d 186 (1979). In <u>Leckwee</u>, the court, citing prior decisions, stated:

### It is clear that:

. . . while one may have the right of way and may presume others will respect it, he may nevertheless be negligent in respect to management and control if his right of way is not respected and he does not do what he can do to prevent the accident. <u>Chille v. Howell</u> (1967), 34 Wis.2d 491, 497, 149 N.W.2d 600. <u>Tombal v. Farmers Ins. Exchange</u>, 62 Wis.2d 64, 69, 214 N.W.2d 291 (1974).

The operator of an automobile having the right of way on an arterial highway must still maintain a proper lookout. Having the right of way does not relieve one of the duty of watching the road for vehicles on the highway or entering thereon. <u>Puhl v. Milwaukee Automobile Ins. Co.</u>, 8 Wis.2d 343, 348, 99 N.W.2d 163 (1959).

The former version of the comment to this instruction included an optional paragraph based on <u>Ogle v. Avina</u>, 33 Wis.2d 125, 146 N.W.2d 422 (1966). This optional paragraph expressed a view which held that a "special dignity" was to be afforded to an operator of a vehicle traveling on an arterial. The optional portion stated that the right of way of the operator of a vehicle on the through highway meant "not only the right to the immediate use of the roadway; but the enjoyment of such right without being required to brake one's rate of speed or divert one's course to the right or left."

Because of the contrary holdings in <u>Leckwee</u> and cases cited by the court in <u>Leckwee</u>, which refused to extend an absolute preference to an operator of a vehicle on a through highway, the optional paragraph is withdrawn.

Where the issue is presented as to the negligence of the operator of a vehicle on a through highway with respect to management and control or lookout, see Wis JI-Civil 1030, 1090, 1190, and 1191.

Wis. Stat. § 346.18(3) is the stopping statute referred to in the first paragraph. If stopping is at issue, it would be covered by a separate question and by Wis JI-Civil 1325.

In regard to the duty to look and to calculate, see Plog v. Zolper, 1 Wis.2d 517, 85 N.W.2d 492 (1957).

### 1155 RIGHT OF WAY: AT INTERSECTIONS OF HIGHWAYS

A safety statute provides that when two vehicles approach or enter an intersection at approximately the same time, the operator of the vehicle on the left shall yield the right of way to the vehicle on the right. The statute does not make the right of way on the part of the vehicle on the right depend on whether it reaches or begins to enter the intersection first.<sup>1</sup>

"Right of way" means the privilege of the immediate use of the roadway.<sup>2</sup>

The phrase "approach or enter an intersection at approximately the same time" means the approach or entry of two vehicles toward or into the intersection so nearly at the same time that there is imminent danger of a collision if both vehicles continue their same courses at their same speeds.

If you find that the vehicles in question approached or entered the intersection at approximately the same time, then it became the duty of (the operator of the vehicle on the left) to yield the right of way to the vehicle on the right. This duty compelled (operator) either to stop the vehicle, if necessary, or to control and manage it so that (he) (she) could yield the right of way to the vehicle within the zone of danger on the right and avoid colliding with it.

### **NOTES**

1. Wis. Stat. § 346.18(1).

2. Wis. Stat. § 340.01(51).

### **COMMENT**

This instruction and comment were approved in 1977. The instruction was revised in 2002 and 2008. This revision was approved by the Committee in September 2021.

**Driver or Operator**. This instruction applies to either an operator or a driver of a motor vehicle. If "driver" is more appropriate to the evidence, then substitute "driver" for "operator."

The question of right of way is to be answered only in the event the operator of the vehicle on the right is not negligent with respect to speed. The last sentence of Wis. Stat. § 346.18(1) provides that, "The operator of any vehicle driving at an unlawful speed forfeits any right of way which he (or she) would otherwise have under this subsection."

This instruction is based on the language adopted in the case of <u>Home Fire & Marine Ins. Co. v. Farmers Mut. Auto Ins. Co.</u>, 274 Wis. 210, 214, 79 N.W.2d 834 (1956), and <u>Kraskey v. Johnson</u>, 266 Wis. 201, 206, 63 N.W.2d 112 (1954), citing <u>Vogel v. Vetting</u>, 265 Wis. 19, 25, 60 N.W.2d 399 (1953). See also <u>Nessler v. Nowicki</u>, 12 Wis.2d 421, 425, 107 N.W.2d 616 (1961).

It is recommended that the verdict contain a direction to the jury that they should first consider the question of speed on the part of the operator who has the geographical right of way before the right of way of the competing operator is considered. See <u>Burkhalter v. Hartford Accident & Indem. Ins. Co.</u>, 268 Wis. 385, 388, 68 N.W.2d 2 (1955); <u>Leonard v. Employers Mut. Liab. Ins. Co.</u>, 265 Wis. 464, 468, 62 N.W.2d 10 (1953); Johnson v. Fireman's Fund Indem. Co., 264 Wis. 358, 361, 59 N.W.2d 660 (1953).

# 1157 RIGHT OF WAY: AT INTERSECTION OF HIGHWAYS; ULTIMATE VERDICT QUESTION

The Wisconsin statutes define "right of way" as the privilege of the immediate use of the roadway.<sup>1</sup>

The statutes further provide that when two vehicles approach or enter an intersection at approximately the same time, the operator of the vehicle on the left shall yield the right of way to the vehicle on the right. The statute does not make the right of way on the part of the vehicle on the right depend on whether it reaches or begins to enter the intersection first.<sup>2</sup>

The phrase "approach or enter an intersection at approximately the same time" means the approach or entry of two vehicles toward or into the intersection so nearly at the same time that there is imminent danger of a collision if both vehicles continue their same courses at their same speeds.

If you find that the vehicles in question approached or entered the intersection at approximately the same time, then it became the duty of the operator of the vehicles on the left to yield the right of way to the vehicle on the right. This duty compelled the operator either to stop the operator's vehicle, if necessary, or to control and manage it so that the operator could yield the right of way to the vehicle within the zone of danger on the operator's right and avoid colliding with it.

The safety statute provides that the operator of any vehicle operating at an unlawful

speed on a highway is negligent and forfeits any right of way which he or she would otherwise have. Thus, before you can find negligence for failure to yield the right of way, you must first find that the vehicle on the right was being operated at a lawful speed.

### **NOTES**

- 1. Wis. Stat. § 340.01(51).
- 2. Wis. Stat. § 346.18(1).

### **COMMENT**

This instruction and comment were approved in 1977. The instruction was revised in 1992 and 2008. This revision was approved by the Committee in September 2021.

Baier v. Farmers Mut. Auto Ins. Co., 8 Wis.2d 506, 99 N.W.2d 709 (1959); Van Wie v. Hill, 15 Wis.2d 98, 103, 105, 112 N.W.2d 168 (1961).

**Driver or Operator**. This instruction applies to either an operator or a driver of a motor vehicle. If "driver" is more appropriate to the evidence, then substitute "driver" for "operator."

**Speed**. Speed need not be causal to deprive an operator of his or her statutory right of way. Van Wie v. Hill, supra.

Home Fire & Marine Ins. Co. v. Farmers Mut. Auto Ins. Co., 274 Wis. 210, 79 N.W.2d 834 (1956).

Kraskey v. Johnson, 266 Wis. 201, 63 N.W.2d 112 (1954).

Nessler v. Nowicki, 12 Wis.2d 421, 107 N.W.2d 616 (1961).

Burkhalter v. Hartford Accident & Indem. Ins. Co., 268 Wis. 385, 68 N.W.2d 2 (1955).

<u>Leonard v. Employers Mut. Liab. Ins. Co.</u>, 265 Wis. 464, 62 N.W.2d 10 (1953).

Paragraph 5 should not be used unless, under the evidence, the right hand operator can be found negligent as to speed. "Unlawful speed" mentioned in paragraph 5 is defined in Wis JI-Civil 1285. See <u>Drake v. Farmers Mut. Auto Ins. Co.</u>, 22 Wis.2d 56, 125 N.W.2d 391 (1963).

Rights and duties of bicyclists. Different right-of-way standards apply depending on whether a bicyclist was using the roadway as any other vehicle or as a pedestrian upon a sidewalk or within a

crosswalk. See <u>Chernetski v. American Family Mutual Insurance Co.</u>, 183 Wis.2d 68, 515 N.W.2d 283 (1994) and <u>Estate of Zhu v. Hodgson</u>, 2021 WI App 10, 395 Wis.2d 768, 954 N.W.2d 748.

# 1158 RIGHT OF WAY: TO PEDESTRIAN CROSSING AT CONTROLLED INTERSECTION

The Wisconsin statutes define "right of way" as the privilege of the immediate use of the roadway.<sup>1</sup>

The statutes further provide that at an intersection or crosswalk where traffic is controlled by (traffic control signals) (a traffic officer), the operator of a vehicle shall yield the right of way to a pedestrian crossing or who has started to cross the highway on a green or 'WALK' signal.<sup>2</sup>

If you find that (<u>pedestrian</u>) was crossing or had started to cross the highway (at the direction of a traffic officer) (with the green or 'WALK' signal in his or her favor), it became the duty of (<u>operator</u>) to yield the right of way to (<u>pedestrian</u>).

#### **NOTES**

- 1. Wis. Stat. § 340.01(51).
- 2. Wis. Stat. § 346.18(1).

### **COMMENT**

This instruction and comment were approved in 1977. Editorial changes were made in 1992 to address gender references in the instruction. This revision was approved by the Committee in September 2021.

Schoehauer v. Wendinger, 49 Wis.2d 415, 182 N.W.2d 441 (1971).

If the highway is a divided highway or contains safety zones, use Wis JI-Civil 1160.

**Driver or Operator**. This instruction applies to either an operator or a driver of a motor vehicle. If "driver" is more appropriate to the evidence, then substitute "driver" for "operator."

### 1159 RIGHT OF WAY: PEDESTRIAN CONTROL SIGNAL: WALK SIGNAL

Question \_ asks whether (<u>name</u>) failed to yield the right of way to (<u>name</u>).

The Wisconsin statutes define "right of way" as the privilege of the immediate use of the roadway.<sup>1</sup>

The statutes further provide that, "A pedestrian facing a 'Walk' signal may proceed across the roadway in the direction of the signal and shall be given the right of way by the operators of all vehicles."<sup>2</sup>

If you find that (<u>pedestrian</u>) faced a 'Walk' signal and was proceeding across the roadway in the direction of the signal, then it became the duty of (<u>operator</u>) to yield the right of way to (<u>pedestrian</u>).

### **NOTES**

- 1. Wis. Stat. § 340.01(51).
- 2. Wis. Stat. § 346.38(1).

### **COMMENT**

This instruction and comment were approved in 1977. The instruction was revised in 1992 and 2008. Editorial changes were made in 1992 to address gender references in the instruction. This revision was approved by the Committee in September 2021.

The pedestrian also retains the right of way if he or she has partially completed his or her walk to the far curb or to a safety island when the light changes to "Wait" or "Don't Walk." Wis. Stat. § 346.38(2).

# 1160 RIGHT OF WAY: TO PEDESTRIAN AT INTERSECTIONS OR CROSSWALKS ON DIVIDED HIGHWAYS OR HIGHWAYS PROVIDED WITH SAFETY ZONES

The Wisconsin statutes define "right of way" as the privilege of the immediate use of the roadway.<sup>1</sup>

In a divided highway, the term "roadway" refers to each roadway separately but not to all the roadways collectively.<sup>2</sup>

The statutes further provide that at intersections or crosswalks on divided highways or highways provided with safety zones where traffic is controlled by traffic control signals or by a traffic officer, the operator of a vehicle shall yield the right of way to a pedestrian who (is crossing or) has started to cross the roadway either from the near curb or shoulder or from the center dividing strip or safety zone with the green or "WALK" signal in his or her favor.<sup>3</sup>

Divided highway is defined as a highway with two or more roadways separated by spaces not intended for the use of vehicular traffic.<sup>4</sup>

The term "safety zone" means the area or space officially set apart within a roadway for the exclusive use of pedestrians, including those about to board or alighting from public conveyances, and which is protected or is so marked or indicated by adequate signs as to be plainly visible at all times while set apart as a safety zone.<sup>5</sup>

If you find that (pedestrian) (was crossing or) had started to cross the roadway either

from the near curb or shoulder or from the center dividing strip or safety zone (at the direction of a traffic officer) (with the green or "WALK" signal in (his) (her) favor), then it became the duty of (operator) to yield the right of way to (pedestrian).

### **NOTES**

- 1. Wis. Stat. § 340.01(51).
- 2. Wis. Stat. § 340.01(54).
- 3. Wis. Stat. § 346.23(2).
- 4. Wis. Stat. § 340.01(15).
- 5. Wis. Stat. § 340.01(55).

#### **COMMENT**

This instruction and comment were approved in 1977. The instruction was revised in 1992 and 2008. Editorial changes were made in 1992 to address gender references in the instruction. This revision was approved by the Committee in September 2021.

If the facts warrant it, the court should instruct that the pedestrian no longer enjoys the right of way over a vehicle if the signal turns against the pedestrian before the pedestrian leaves the center dividing space or safety zone. If that occurs, the right of way belongs to the vehicle lawfully proceeding directly ahead on a green or "GO" signal. Wis. Stat. § 346.23(2).

**Driver or Operator**. This instruction applies to either an operator or a driver of a motor vehicle. If "driver" is more appropriate to the evidence, then substitute "driver" for "operator."

# 1165 RIGHT OF WAY: TO PEDESTRIAN AT UNCONTROLLED INTERSECTION OR CROSSWALK

The Wisconsin statutes define "right of way" as the privilege of the immediate use of the roadway.<sup>1</sup>

The statutes further provide that, at an intersection or crosswalk where traffic is not controlled by traffic control signals or by a traffic officer, the operator of a vehicle shall yield the right of way to a pedestrian who is crossing the roadway within a marked or unmarked crosswalk.<sup>2</sup>

(A marked crosswalk is any portion of a roadway clearly indicated for pedestrian crossing by signs, lines, or other markings on the surface of the roadway.)

(An unmarked crosswalk is formed by extending imaginary lines the width of the sidewalk at an intersection, across the roadway, to the sidewalk on the opposite side of the intersection.)

(If there is a sidewalk on only one side of an intersection, an unmarked crosswalk is formed by extending imaginary lines the width of the sidewalk, at right angles to the centerline of the roadway, to the opposite side of the intersection.)

If you find that (<u>plaintiff</u>) was crossing the roadway within a (marked) (unmarked) crosswalk, then it became the duty of (<u>defendant</u>) to yield the right of way to (<u>plaintiff</u>). If, however, you find that (<u>plaintiff</u>) was crossing the roadway and was not within a (marked) (unmarked) crosswalk, then it became (<u>plaintiff</u>)'s duty to yield the right of way to

(defendant).

### **NOTES**

- 1. Wis. Stat. § 340.01(51).
- 2. Wis. Stat. § 346.24(1).

#### **COMMENT**

This instruction was approved in 1978 and revised in 1989. Editorial changes were made in 1992 to address gender references in the instruction. This revision was approved by the Committee in September 2021.

"Marked" or "Unmarked" crosswalk. The appropriate statutory definition of "marked" or "unmarked" crosswalk should be given. Definitions are found in Wis. Stat. § 340.01(10)(a) or (b). There may be marked crosswalks at places other than intersections.

Burke v. Tesmer, 224 Wis. 667, 670 71, 272 N.W. 857 (1937), indicates that there are no unmarked crosswalks at intersections in the country where there are no sidewalks and that a pedestrian crossing at such an intersection is under a duty to yield the right of way to a vehicle on the highway. Wis. Stat. § 346.24(2) is a statutory admonition to pedestrians not to suddenly leave a curb or other place of safety and walk or run into the path of a vehicle.

**Driver or Operator**. This instruction applies to either an operator or a driver of a motor vehicle. If "driver" is more appropriate to the evidence, then substitute "driver" for "operator."

### 1170 RIGHT OF WAY: BLIND PEDESTRIAN ON HIGHWAY

The Wisconsin statutes define "right of way" as the privilege of the immediate use of the roadway.<sup>1</sup>

The statutes further provide that a operator of a vehicle must stop the vehicle before approaching closer than 10 feet to a pedestrian carrying a cane or walking stick which is white in color or white trimmed with red and which is held in an extended or raised position and shall take such precautions as may be necessary to avoid accident or injury to the pedestrian. The fact that the pedestrian may be violating any of the laws applicable to pedestrians does not relieve the operator of a vehicle from the duties imposed by the rule just stated.<sup>2</sup>

If you find that (<u>pedestrian</u>) was carrying a cane or walking stick identified by the specified colors and extended or raised in position, then it became the duty of (operator) to stop the vehicle before approaching closer than 10 feet to (him) (her) and to take such precautions as might be necessary to avoid accident or injury to the pedestrian.

### **NOTES**

- 1. Wis. Stat. § 340.01(51).
- 2. Wis. Stat. § 346.26(1).

### **COMMENT**

This instruction and comment were approved in 1978. The instruction was revised in 1992 and 2008. Editorial changes were made in 1992 to address gender references in the instruction. This revision was

approved by the Committee in September 2021.

**Driver or Operator**. This instruction applies to either an operator or a driver of a motor vehicle. If "driver" is more appropriate to the evidence, then substitute "driver" for "operator."

A blind person unidentified by cane or walking stick enjoys the rights of other pedestrians in crossing highways. Wis. Stat. § 346.26(2).

# 1175 RIGHT OF WAY: ENTERING HIGHWAY FROM AN ALLEY OR NONHIGHWAY ACCESS POINT

The Wisconsin statutes define "right of way" as the privilege of the immediate use of the roadway.<sup>1</sup>

The statutes further provide that the operator of a vehicle entering a highway from an alley or from a point of access other than another highway shall yield the right of way to all vehicles approaching on the highway which the operator is entering.<sup>2</sup>

The word "entering" means going or moving into.

The phrase "point of access" means a place where an entry can be made onto a highway.

A vehicle is said to be approaching the point where the entry on a highway is to be made when it is not so far distant the entry point that, considering the rate of speed at which it is traveling, it would be reasonable to assume that a collision would occur if the operator of the vehicle intending to enter the highway undertakes to do so and operates a vehicle across or into the path of the oncoming vehicle.

If you find that the vehicle on the highway was approaching the place where the entry onto the highway was to be made, then it became the duty of the operator entering the highway to yield the right of way to the vehicle on the highway.

### **NOTES**

- 1. Wis. Stat. § 340.01(51).
- 2. Wis. Stat. § 346.18(4).

### **COMMENT**

The instruction and comment were originally published in 1960. The instruction was revised in 1992 and 2008. Editorial changes were made in 1992 to address gender references in the instruction. This revision was approved by the Committee in September 2021.

**Driver or Operator**. This instruction applies to either an operator or a driver of a motor vehicle. If "driver" is more appropriate to the evidence, then substitute "driver" for "operator."

If there is need for a definition of "alley," see Wis. Stat. § 340.01(2).

Plog v. Zolper, 1 Wis.2d 517, 525 29, 85 N.W.2d 492, 498 99 (1957).

The negligence of one using excessive speed on an arterial does not excuse one approaching the arterial for not yielding the right of way. Ogle v. Avina, 33 Wis.2d 125, 132, 146 N.W.2d 422 (1966). One entering an arterial must be reasonably sure he or she can enter into the flow of traffic thereon without disrupting it. Ogle v. Avina, supra at 133. However, having the right of way does not relieve an operator of the duty of watching the road for vehicles entering onto the highway. Leckwee v. Gibson, 90 Wis.2d 275, 287, 280 N.W.2d 186 (1979).

# 1180 RIGHT OF WAY: FUNERAL PROCESSIONS; MILITARY CONVOYS

The Wisconsin statutes define "right of way" as the privilege of the immediate use of the roadway.<sup>1</sup>

The statutes further provide that, "(Funeral processions) ([M]ilitary convoys) have the right of way at intersections when vehicles comprising such procession have their bright headlights lighted. . . ."<sup>2</sup>

[Note: The preceding paragraph may be subject to certain conditions and exceptions in Wis. Stat. § 346.20(4)(a), (b), or (c). Conclude the paragraph with the statement of the law as to the applicable condition or exception.]

### **NOTES**

- 1. Wis. Stat. § 340.01(51).
- 2. Wis. Stat. § 346.20(1).

#### **COMMENT**

This instruction and comment were approved in 1978. The instruction was revised in 2008. This revision was approved by the Committee in September 2021.

This instruction is prepared solely as a suggested general pattern. It can be adapted to fit the particular need of any given situation.

# 1185 RIGHT OF WAY: GREEN ARROW

The Wisconsin statutes define "right of way" as the privilege of the immediate use of the roadway.<sup>1</sup>

The statutes further provide that vehicular traffic facing a green arrow signal may enter the intersection only to make the movement indicated by the arrow but shall yield the right of way to pedestrians lawfully within a crosswalk and to other traffic lawfully using the intersection.<sup>2</sup>

["Vehicular traffic," includes any device in, upon, or by which persons or property may be transported or drawn upon a highway. The term includes (bicycles) (\_\_\_\_\_).]

If you find that (\_\_\_\_\_) faced a green arrow signal before entry into the intersection, then it became (\_\_\_\_\_)'s duty to yield the right of way (to pedestrians lawfully within a crosswalk at the intersection) (to other traffic lawfully using the intersection).

### **NOTES**

- 1. Wis. Stat. §§ 346.18(3).
- 2. Wis. Stat. § 346.37(1)(d).

### **COMMENT**

This instruction and comment were approved in 1978. The instruction was revised in 1992 and 2008. Editorial changes were made in 1992 to address gender references in the instruction. This revision was approved by the Committee in September 2021.

The blank in the third paragraph is for the inclusion of other vehicles about which the jury may be in doubt. Wis. Stat. § 340.01(74) has a specific mention of snowmobiles.

# 1190 RIGHT OF WAY: GREEN SIGNAL

The Wisconsin statues define "right of way" as the privilege of the immediate use of the roadway.<sup>1</sup>

The statutes further provide that vehicular traffic facing a green signal may proceed straight through or turn right or left unless a sign at the place prohibits either turn, but vehicular traffic shall yield the right of way to other vehicles and to pedestrians lawfully within the intersection or an adjacent crosswalk at the time the signal is exhibited.<sup>2</sup>

"Vehicular traffic," includes any device in, upon, or by which persons or property may be transported or drawn upon a highway. The term includes (bicycles) ( \_\_\_\_\_).

"Adjacent" means near, close, or adjoining. As here used, it refers to (the crosswalk the driver of the vehicle will be compelled to cross if the driver moves straight ahead) (the crosswalk the driver will be compelled to cross on the intersecting street if the driver turns right or left).

### **NOTES**

- 1. Wis. Stat. § 340.01(51).
- 2. Wis. Stat. § 346.37(1)(a).

### **COMMENT**

This instruction and comment were approved in 1978. The instruction was revised in 1992 and 2008. Editorial changes were made in 1992 to address gender references in the instruction. This revision was approved by the Committee in September 2021.

The blank in the third paragraph is for the inclusion of other vehicles about which the jury may be in doubt. Wis. Stat. § 340.01(74) has a specific mention of snowmobiles.

# 1190.5 PLAINTIFF AND DEFENDANT EACH CLAIMS GREEN LIGHT IN THEIR FAVOR

Both operators claim that the green traffic light (or "Go" signal) was facing them as they proceeded to cross the intersection in question. It was a physical impossibility for this to happen, in the absence of evidence that the lights were not in good working order. It is for you to determine which operator the green light was facing and which operator, at that same time, the red light was facing as each operator proceeded into the intersection.

#### **COMMENT**

This instruction and comment were approved in 1978. The instruction was revised in 1992 and 2008. Editorial changes were made in 1992 to address gender references in the instruction. This revision was approved by the Committee in September 2021.

Matthews v. Schuh, 5 Wis.2d 521, 526, 93 N.W.2d 364 (1958).

**Driver or Operator**. This instruction applies to either an operator or a driver of a motor vehicle. If "driver" is more appropriate to the evidence, then substitute "driver" for "operator."

# 1191 DUTY OF OPERATOR ENTERING INTERSECTION WITH GREEN LIGHT IN OPERATOR'S FAVOR: LOOKOUT

An operator entering an intersection with the light in his or her favor does not have an absolute right of way. The operator, when entering the intersection, has the duty of maintaining an efficient lookout to determine the presence of other vehicles approaching his or her course of travel and must also exercise reasonable judgment in calculating the distance and speed of any approaching vehicles so as to determine whether such approaching vehicle will run the light. If after such lookout and calculation it is apparent that the approaching vehicle is going to run the light, then the operator having the light in his or her favor must exercise ordinary care in an attempt to avoid a collision.

If the operator entering the intersection with the light in his or her favor properly determined that any automobile approaching the intersection was traveling at such speed and was at such distance from the intersection that the approaching operator could, as a matter of physical fact, yield the right of way if the operator responded to the red light, then the operator with lights in his or her favor, after entering the intersection, need not make continuing observations to either side for approaching traffic.

#### **COMMENT**

The instruction and comment were originally published in 1972, and editorial changes were made in 1992 to address gender references in the instruction. The comment was updated in 2008. This revision was approved by the Committee in September 2021.

See Wis JI-Civil 1190, Right of Way: Green Signal; Wis JI-Civil 1030, Right to Assume Due Care; and Wis JI-Civil 1090, Driver at Arterial Approaching Intersection: Lookout; Right of Way; Flashing Yellow Signal.

<u>Hardware Dealers Mut. Fire Ins. Co. v. Home Mut. Ins. Co.</u>, 24 Wis.2d 381, 129 N.W.2d 214 (1964); <u>Oelke v. Earle</u>, 271 Wis. 479, 74 N.W.2d 336 (1956); <u>Wilson v. Koch</u>, 241 Wis. 594, 6 N.W.2d 659 (1942); <u>Gleason v. Gillihan</u>, 32 Wis.2d 50, 55, 145 N.W.2d 90 (1966).

When approaching a green light, if an operator's view of traffic approaching on the intersection road is obstructed, the operator has a duty to make further observation at a point which will enable the operator to take effective steps to avoid a collision. <u>Oelke v. Earle</u>, <u>supra</u>, at 483. See also <u>Battice v. Michaelis</u>, 255 Wis. 571, 576, 39 N.W.2d 702 (1949).

**Driver or Operator**. This instruction applies to either an operator or a driver of a motor vehicle. If "driver" is more appropriate to the evidence, then substitute "driver" for "operator."

# 1192 DUTY OF OPERATOR APPROACHING INTERSECTION WHEN AMBER LIGHT SHOWS

A safety statute provides that an operator facing a yellow signal shown with or following a green light, shall stop before entering the intersection unless so close to it that a stop cannot be made in safety.<sup>1</sup>

If you find that the yellow or amber light, which signifies caution, was showing before (operator) entered the intersection, then (operator) was required to stop unless (he) (she) was so close to the traffic signal that a stop could not be made in safety.

### **NOTES**

Wis. Stat. § 346.37(1)(b).

### **COMMENT**

The instruction and comment were originally published in their present form in 1966. The instruction was revised in 1992 and 2008. Editorial changes were made in 1992 to address gender references in the instruction. This revision was approved by the Committee in September 2021.

**Driver or Operator**. This instruction applies to either an operator or a driver of a motor vehicle. If "driver" is more appropriate to the evidence, then substitute "driver" for "operator."

### 1193 RED TRAFFIC CONTROL LIGHT SIGNALING STOP

A safety statute provides that vehicles facing a red traffic light shall stop before entering the crosswalk on the near side of an intersection, or, if there is no crosswalk, at a point indicated by a clearly visible sign or other marking, or if there is no sign or marking, before entering the intersection, and shall remain standing until a green light or other signal permitting movement is shown.<sup>1</sup>

### **NOTES**

1. Wis. Stat. § 346.37(1)(c).

### **COMMENT**

This instruction and comment were approved in 1977. The instruction was revised in 2008. This revision was approved by the Committee in September 2021.

#### 1193.5 FLASHING RED TRAFFIC CONTROL LIGHT

When a red traffic control light is illuminated with rapid intermittent flashes, operators of vehicles shall stop before entering the intersection at the nearest crosswalk or at a limit line if marked, or, if there is no crosswalk or limit line, then before entering the intersection; the right to proceed is subject to the rules applicable after making a stop at a stop sign.<sup>1</sup>

[Here add appropriate parts of Wis JI-Civil 1325 Stop at Stop Signs.]

#### **NOTES**

1. Wis. Stat. § 346.39(1).

#### **COMMENT**

This instruction and comment were approved in 1977. The instruction was revised in 2008. This revision was approved by the Committee in September 2021.

**Driver or Operator**. This instruction applies to either an operator or a driver of a motor vehicle. If "driver" is more appropriate to the evidence, then substitute "driver" for "operator."

#### 1195 RIGHT OF WAY: LEFT TURN AT INTERSECTION

The Wisconsin statutes define "right of way" as the privilege of the immediate use of the roadway<sup>1</sup> and, further provide, that the operator of a vehicle within an intersection intending to turn to the left across the path of any vehicle approaching from the opposite direction shall yield the right of way to that vehicle.<sup>2</sup>

The word "approaching" involves a concept of nearness in space and time. A vehicle is approaching an intersection when it is not so far distant from the intersection that, considering the speed at which it is traveling, it is reasonable to assume that a collision will occur if the operator of the vehicle intending to turn left undertakes to do so by changing the course of the vehicle from the right lane, across the center line, and into the path of the oncoming vehicle.

If you find that the oncoming vehicle was approaching the intersection, it became the duty of the operator turning left to yield the right of way to the approaching vehicle.

#### **NOTES**

- 1. Wis. Stat. § 340.01(51).
- 2. Wis. Stat. § 346.18(2).

#### **COMMENT**

The instruction and comment were originally published in their present form in 1967. The instruction was revised in 1992 and 2008. Editorial changes were made in 1992 to address gender references in the instruction. This revision was approved by the Committee in September 2021.

**Driver or Operator**. This instruction applies to either an operator or a driver of a motor vehicle. If "driver" is more appropriate to the evidence, then substitute "driver" for "operator."

Wis. Stat. § 346.18(7) provides: "The operator of any vehicle intending to turn to the left into an alley or private driveway across the path of any vehicle approaching from the opposite direction shall yield the right of way to such vehicle." Thus this statute does impose a duty on the left turning operators independent of lookout. Zartner v. Scopp, 28 Wis.2d 205, 216, 137 N.W.2d 107 (1965).

For the definition of "intersection," see Wis. Stat. § 340.01(25).

See Plog v. Zolper, 1 Wis.2d 517, 529, 85 N.W.2d 492 (1957).

#### 1205 RIGHT OF WAY: MOVING FROM PARKED POSITION

The Wisconsin statutes define "right of way" as the privilege of the immediate use of the roadway<sup>1</sup> and, further provide, that the operator of any vehicle that has been parked or standing shall, while moving the vehicle from its position, yield the right of way to all vehicles approaching on the highway.<sup>2</sup>

A vehicle is said to be "approaching" when it is not so far distant that, considering the rate of speed at which it is traveling, it would be reasonable to assume that a collision would occur if the vehicle parked or standing is put in motion and moved onto the roadway and into the path of the oncoming vehicle.

If you find that the oncoming vehicle on the highway was approaching, then it became the duty of the operator of the parked or standing vehicle, while moving it from its position, to yield the right of way to a vehicle approaching on the highway.

#### **NOTES**

- 1. Wis. Stat. § 340.01(51).
- 2. Wis. Stat. § 346.18(5).

#### **COMMENT**

The instruction and comment were originally published in their present form in 1960 and revised in 2008. This revision was approved by the Committee in September 2021.

**Driver or Operator**. This instruction applies to either an operator or a driver of a motor vehicle. If "driver" is more appropriate to the evidence, then substitute "driver" for "operator."

#### 1210 RIGHT OF WAY: ON APPROACH OF EMERGENCY VEHICLE

The Wisconsin statutes define "right of way" as the privilege of the immediate use of the roadway<sup>1</sup> and, further provide, that upon the approach of any authorized emergency vehicle giving audible signal by siren, the operator of a vehicle shall yield the right of way and shall immediately operate the vehicle to a position as near as possible and parallel to the right curb or to the right hand edge of the shoulder of the roadway, clear of any intersection and, unless otherwise directed by a traffic officer, shall stop and remain standing in such position until the authorized emergency vehicle has passed.<sup>2</sup>

[The (type of vehicle) was an emergency vehicle, as defined in the statutes.]

[Note: In the alternative, the language of Wis. Stat. § 340.01(3)(a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f), or (g) may appropriately be used in defining "emergency vehicle."]

"Audible" means capable of being heard.<sup>3</sup>

"Roadway" means that portion of a highway between the regularly established curb lines or that portion which is improved, designed or ordinarily used for vehicular travel.<sup>4</sup>

If you find that the emergency vehicle of (<u>name</u>) was approaching, giving audible signal by siren, then it became the duty of (<u>name</u>) to yield the right of way.

#### **NOTES**

- 1. Wis. Stat. § 340.01(51).
- 2. Wis. Stat. § 346.19(1).

- 3. The definition of "audible" is its common meaning.
- 4. "Roadway" is defined in Wis. Stat. § 340.01(54).

#### COMMENT

The instruction and comment were originally published in their present form in 1960. The instruction was revised in 2008. An editorial correction was made in 1996. This revision was approved by the Committee in September 2021.

**Driver or Operator**. This instruction applies to either an operator or a driver of a motor vehicle. If "driver" is more appropriate to the evidence, then substitute "driver" for "operator."

As to "audible signal," see <u>Frankland v. Peterson</u>, 268 Wis. 394, 397, 67 N.W.2d 865, 866 (1955); <u>Swinkles v. Wisconsin Michigan Power Co.</u>, 221 Wis. 280, 287 88, 267 N.W. 1, 4 5 (1936).

If the fact of hearing the signal is in issue, and the evidence warrants, it may be desirable to expand the definition of "audible" to cover a siren in good operating condition, and a reasonably attentive vehicle operator or pedestrian. The operator giving the signal need not show that the signal was actually heard by the operator. Werner Trans. Co. v. Zimmerman, 201 F.2d 687, 691 (1953). Testimony that the signal was not heard may be negative testimony and may require an instruction on the value of such testimony. Anderson v. Stricker, 266 Wis. 1, 5 6, 62 N.W.2d 396, 398 (1953); Hunter v. Sirianni Candy Co., 233 Wis. 130, 132 33, 288 N.W. 766, 769 (1939); Zenner v. Chicago, St. P., M. & O. Ry., 219 Wis. 124, 126 27, 262 N.W.2d 581, 582 83 (1935). See Wis JI-Civil 315, Negative Testimony.

This instruction is based on the assumption that there is no issue on the emergency nature of the vehicle involved. If this issue develops, it may require a separate preliminary question with an instruction defining emergency vehicles.

## 1220 RIGHT OF WAY: PEDESTRIAN'S DUTY: AT PEDESTRIAN CONTROL SIGNAL

The Wisconsin statutes define "right of way" as the privilege of the immediate use of the roadway<sup>1</sup> and, further provide, that no pedestrian may start to cross the roadway (or other vehicular crossing) in the direction of a "Don't Walk" signal, but a pedestrian who has partially completed crossing on the "Walk" signal may proceed to a sidewalk or safety island while the "Don't Walk" signal is showing.<sup>2</sup>

If you find that (<u>pedestrian</u>) was facing a "Don't Walk" signal, then it was (<u>pedestrian</u>)'s duty before entering into the roadway to yield the right of way to an approaching vehicle on the roadway. If, however, you find that (<u>pedestrian</u>) started to cross the roadway on a "Walk" signal and had partially completed crossing when the signal turned to "Don't Walk," then (<u>pedestrian</u>) had the right to proceed to the (sidewalk) (safety island).

#### **NOTES**

- 1. Wis. Stat. § 340.01(51).
- 2. Wis. Stat. § 346.38(2).

See City of <u>Hartford v. Godfrey</u>, 92 Wis.2d 815, 286 N.W.2d 10 (Ct. App. 1979); <u>Schoenauer v. Wendinger</u>, 49 Wis.2d 415, 182 N.W.2d 441 (1971).

#### **COMMENT**

The instruction and comment were originally published in 1960. The comment was updated in 1989. Editorial changes were made in 1992 to address gender references in the instruction. The instruction was

revised in 1992 and 2008. This revision was approved by the Committee in September 2021.

The first paragraph refers to Wis. Stat. §§ 340.01(51) and 346.38(2). See <u>City of Hartford v. Godfrey</u>, 92 Wis.2d 815, 286 N.W.2d 10 (Ct. App. 1979); <u>Schoenauer v. Wendinger</u>, 49 Wis.2d 415, 182 N.W.2d 441 (1971).

"Roadway" is defined in Wis. Stat. § 340.01(54).

See Sub. (1) of § 346.38 giving the pedestrian the right of way if on a "walk" signal.

## 1225 RIGHT OF WAY: PEDESTRIAN'S DUTY: CROSSING AT CONTROLLED INTERSECTION OR CROSSWALK

The Wisconsin statutes define "right of way" as the privilege of the immediate use of the roadway<sup>1</sup> and, further provide, that at an intersection or crosswalk where traffic is controlled by traffic control signals or by a traffic officer, the operator of a vehicle shall yield the right of way to a pedestrian who has started to cross the highway on a green or "Walk" signal and in all other cases pedestrians shall yield the right of way to vehicles lawfully proceeding directly ahead on a green signal.<sup>2</sup>

If you find that at (<u>intersection</u>), where traffic was controlled by (traffic control signals) (a traffic officer), (<u>pedestrian</u>) was in the act of crossing the highway on the (green) (Walk) signal, then (<u>pedestrian</u>) was entitled to the right of way over an approaching vehicle. However, if you find that (<u>pedestrian</u>) was not crossing or had not started to cross the highway on a (green) (Walk) signal, then it became (<u>pedestrian</u>)'s duty to yield the right of way to an approaching vehicle on the highway proceeding directly ahead on the (green) signal.

#### **NOTES**

- 1. Wis. Stat. § 340.01(51).
- 2. Wis. Stat. § 346.23(1).

See also, See <u>City of Hartford v. Godfrey</u>, 92 Wis.2d 815, 286 N.W.2d 10 (Ct. App. 1979); <u>Schoenauer v. Wendinger</u>, 49 Wis.2d 415, 182 N.W.2d 441 (1971).

#### **COMMENT**

The instruction and comment were originally published in their present form in 1972. This comment was updated in 1989 and 2008. The instruction was revised in 1992 and 2008. Editorial changes were made in 1992 to address gender references in the instruction. This revision was approved by the Committee in September 2021.

For the definition of "intersection," see Wis. Stat. § 340.01(25); for "traffic control signal," see § 340.01(39); for "pedestrian,": see 340.01(43); and for "crosswalk," see § 340.01(10)(a) and (b). For the right of way at intersections or crosswalks on divided highways or highway provided with safety zones, see Wis. Stat. § 346.23(2).

An instruction defining "crosswalk" was approved in <u>Van Galder v. Snyder</u>, 254 Wis. 120, 123, 35 N.W.2d 187, 188 89 (1948). The changing of a light does not justify an operator of a vehicle to move forward until a reasonable opportunity is given to the pedestrian to reach the sidewalk. <u>Raaber v. Brzoskowski</u>, 204 Wis. 319, 321, 236 N.W. 133, 134 (1931).

**Driver or Operator**. This instruction applies to either an operator or a driver of a motor vehicle. If "driver" is more appropriate to the evidence, then substitute "driver" for "operator."

## 1230 RIGHT OF WAY: PEDESTRIAN'S DUTY: CROSSING ROADWAY AT POINT OTHER THAN CROSSWALK

The Wisconsin statutes define "right of way" as the privilege of the immediate use of the roadway¹ and, further provide, that a pedestrian crossing a roadway at any point other than within a marked or unmarked crosswalk shall yield the right of way to all vehicles upon the roadway.²

If you find that (<u>pedestrian</u>) was crossing the roadway at a point other than a marked or unmarked crosswalk, then it became (<u>pedestrian</u>)'s duty to yield the right of way to a vehicle approaching on the roadway.

#### NOTES

- 1. Wis. Stat. § 340.01(51).
- 2. Wis. Stat. § 346.25.

See also, the notes to these sections in Wis. Stat. Annot.

#### **COMMENT**

The instruction and comment were originally published in their present form in 1972. The comment was updated in 1989. The instruction was revised in 1992 and 2008. Editorial changes were made in 1992 to address gender references in the instruction. This revision was approved by the Committee in September 2021.

For the definition of "roadway," see Wis. Stat. § 340.01(54); for "marked" or "unmarked crosswalk," see § 340.01(10)(a) and (b).

Wis. Stat. § 891.44 provides an exception to § 346.25, and this instruction is not to be given when the pedestrian is a child under 7 years of age. <u>Thoreson v. Milwaukee & Suburban Transp. Corp.</u>, 56 Wis.2d 231, 201 N.W.2d 745 (1972).

The duty of a pedestrian to yield the right of way under Wis. Stat. § 346.25 is absolute, regardless of

any negligence on the part of the operator. Failure to yield is causal negligence as a matter of law. <u>Field v. Vinograd</u>, 10 Wis.2d 500, 505, 103 N.W.2d 671 (1960); <u>Staples v. Glienke</u>, 142 Wis.2d 19, 416 N.W.2d 920 (Ct. App. 1987).

## 1235 RIGHT OF WAY: PEDESTRIAN'S DUTY: DIVIDED HIGHWAYS OR HIGHWAYS WITH SAFETY ZONES

The Wisconsin statutes define "right of way" as the privilege of the immediate use of the roadway¹ and, further provide, that at intersections or crosswalks on divided highways or highways provided with safety zones where traffic is controlled by traffic control signals or by a traffic officer, the operator of a vehicle shall yield the right of way to a pedestrian who has started to cross the roadway either from the near curb or shoulder or from the center dividing strip or safety zone with the green or "Walk" signal in his or her favor.² If the signal turns against a pedestrian before the pedestrian leaves the center dividing space or safety island, the pedestrian shall yield the right of way to vehicles lawfully proceeding directly ahead on a green signal.

If you find that at (<u>intersection on a divided highway</u>), where traffic was controlled by traffic control signals, (<u>pedestrian</u>) was in the act of crossing the roadway from the near curb or shoulder with the (green) (Walk) signal in (his) (her) favor, then (<u>pedestrian</u>) was entitled to the right of way over an approaching vehicle. However, if you find that the signal turned against (<u>pedestrian</u>) before (he) (she) left the center dividing space or safety island, then it was (<u>pedestrian</u>)'s duty to yield the right of way to a vehicle on the roadway lawfully proceeding directly ahead on the (green) signal.

#### **NOTES**

- 1. Wis. Stat. § 340.01(51).
- 2. Wis. Stat. § 346.23(2).

#### **COMMENT**

The instruction and comment were originally published in their present form in 1960. The instruction was revised in 1992 and 2008. Editorial changes were made in 1992 to address gender references in the instruction. This revision was approved by the Committee in September 2021.

For the definition of specific words and phrases, see Wis. Stat. § 340.01.

The instruction should be changed to accommodate it to the factual situation, as to crosswalk, or divided highway, or highways provided with safety zones, or if traffic is controlled by a traffic officer.

**Driver or Operator**. This instruction applies to either an operator or a driver of a motor vehicle. If "driver" is more appropriate to the evidence, then substitute "driver" for "operator."

#### 1240 RIGHT OF WAY: PEDESTRIAN'S DUTY: FACING GREEN ARROW

The Wisconsin statutes define "right of way" as the privilege of the immediate use of the roadway<sup>1</sup> and, further provide, that no pedestrian facing a green arrow signal shall enter the roadway unless the pedestrian can do so safely and without interfering with any vehicular traffic.<sup>2</sup>

If you find that (<u>pedestrian</u>) was facing a green arrow, then it became (<u>pedestrian</u>)'s duty, before entering onto the roadway, to yield the right of way to an approaching vehicle unless (<u>pedestrian</u>) could enter the roadway safely and without interference with vehicle traffic on the roadway.

#### **NOTES**

- 1. Wis. Stat. § 340.01(51).
- 2. Wis. Stat. § 346.37(1)(d)(2).

#### **COMMENT**

The instruction and comment were originally published in their present form in 1960. The instruction was revised in 1992 and 2008. Editorial changes were made in 1992 to address gender references in the instruction. This revision was approved by the Committee in September 2021.

"Roadway" is defined in Wis. Stat. § 340.01(54).

#### 1245 RIGHT OF WAY: PEDESTRIAN'S DUTY: FACING RED SIGNAL

The Wisconsin statutes define "right of way" as the privilege of the immediate use of the roadway<sup>1</sup> and, further provide, that no pedestrian facing a red signal shall enter the roadway unless the pedestrian can do so safely and without interfering with any vehicular traffic.<sup>2</sup>

If you find that (<u>pedestrian</u>) was facing a red signal, then it was (<u>pedestrian</u>)'s duty before entering onto the highway to yield the right of way to an approaching vehicle unless (he) (she) could enter the roadway safely and without interference with traffic on the roadway.

#### **NOTES**

- 1. Wis. Stat. § 340.01(51).
- 2. Wis. Stat. § 346.37(1)(c)(2).

#### **COMMENT**

The instruction and comment were originally published in their present form in 1960. The instruction was revised in 1992 and 2008. Editorial changes were made in 1992 to address gender references in the instruction. This revision was approved by the Committee in September 2021.

"Roadway" is defined in Wis. Stat. § 340.01(54).

## 1250 RIGHT OF WAY: PEDESTRIAN'S DUTY: STANDING OR LOITERING ON HIGHWAY

The Wisconsin statutes define "right of way" as the privilege of the immediate use of the roadway<sup>1</sup> and, further provide, that no person shall be on a roadway for the purpose of soliciting a ride from the operator of any vehicle other than a public passenger vehicle.<sup>2</sup>

If you find that (<u>pedestrian</u>) was on the roadway for the purpose of soliciting a ride from the operator of any vehicle other than a public passenger vehicle, then it was (<u>pedestrian</u>)'s duty to yield the right of way to a vehicle approaching on the roadway.

#### **NOTES**

- 1. Wis. Stat. § 340.01(51).
- 2. Wis. Stat. § 346.29(1).

#### **COMMENT**

The instruction and comment were originally published in their present form in 1960. The instruction was revised in 1992 and 2008. Editorial changes were made in 1992 to address gender references in the instruction. This revision was approved by the Committee in September 2021.

The instruction should be changed to accommodate it to the factual situation if the pedestrian is loitering on the roadway, as prohibited by Wis. Stat. § 346.29(2), or if the pedestrian is on a bridge, or approach thereto, to fish or swim, in violation of signs prohibiting his or her presence thereon for such purpose, as prohibited by subsection (3).

"Roadway" is defined in Wis. Stat. § 340.01(54).

**Driver or Operator**. This instruction applies to either an operator or a driver of a motor vehicle. If "driver" is more appropriate to the evidence, then substitute "driver" for "operator."

Rights and duties of bicyclists. Different right-of-way standards apply depending on whether a bicyclist was using the roadway as any other vehicle or as a pedestrian upon a sidewalk or within a

crosswalk. See <u>Chernetski v. American Family Mutual Insurance Co.</u>, 183 Wis.2d 68, 515 N.W.2d 283 (1994) and <u>Estate of Zhu v. Hodgson</u>, 2021 WI App 10, 395 Wis.2d 768, 954 N.W.2d 748.

1255 RIGHT OF WAY: PEDESTRIAN'S DUTY AT UNCONTROLLED INTERSECTION OR CROSSWALK; SUDDENLY LEAVING CURB OR PLACE OF SAFETY

A safety statute provides that at an intersection or crosswalk where traffic is not controlled by traffic control signals or by a traffic officer, the operator of a vehicle shall yield the right of way to a pedestrian who is crossing the highway within a marked or unmarked crosswalk.

"Right of way" means the privilege of the immediate use of the roadway.1

The statute further provides that a pedestrian shall not suddenly leave a curb or other place of safety and walk or run into the path of a vehicle which is so close that it is difficult for the operator of the vehicle to yield the right of way.<sup>2</sup>

If you find that (<u>pedestrian</u>) suddenly left the curb [or other place of safety] and walked or ran into the path of (<u>operator</u>)'s vehicle which was so close that it was difficult for (<u>operator</u>) to yield, then (<u>operator</u>) did not have a duty to yield the right of way; but if you find that (<u>pedestrian</u>) did not enter the roadway, then it became the duty of (<u>operator</u>) to yield the right of way to (<u>pedestrian</u>).

#### **NOTES**

- 1. Wis. Stat. § 340.01(51).
- 2. Wis. Stat. § 346.24(2).

#### **COMMENT**

This instruction and comment were approved in 1977. The instruction was revised in 1992 and 2008. Editorial changes were made in 1992 to address gender references in the instruction. This revision was approved by the Committee in September 2021.

**Driver or Operator**. This instruction applies to either an operator or a driver of a motor vehicle. If "driver" is more appropriate to the evidence, then substitute "driver" for "operator."

Wis JI-Civil 1165 covers the duty of the motorist to yield the right of way to a pedestrian crossing an uncontrolled intersection within a crosswalk. Wis JI-Civil 1225 covers the right of way situation where the pedestrian crosses at a controlled intersection or crosswalk. Wis JI-Civil 1230 covers the duty of a pedestrian who crosses at a point other than a crosswalk.

This instruction covers the situation where the pedestrian is within the crosswalk but has darted into the street from a place of safety. Other combinations of pedestrian motorist right of way situations can be handled in the manner suggested by this instruction.

<u>Hintz v. Mielke</u>, 15 Wis.2d 258, 263, 112 N.W.2d 720 (1961); <u>Schoenauer v. Wendinger</u>, 49 Wis.2d 415, 182 N.W.2d 441 (1971); Schueler v. City of Madison, 49 Wis.2d 695, 183 N.W.2d 116 (1971).

## 1260 POSITION ON HIGHWAY: PEDESTRIAN'S DUTY; WALKING ON HIGHWAY

A safety statute provides that a pedestrian walking along and upon a highway other than a sidewalk shall walk on and along the left side of the highway and upon meeting a vehicle shall, if practicable, step to the extreme outer edge of the traveled portion of the highway. The traveled portion of the highway includes the shoulder.<sup>1</sup>

If you find that (<u>pedestrian</u>) was on the left side of the highway as (he) (she) walked on and along it, then it became (<u>pedestrian</u>)'s duty upon meeting a vehicle, if it could be practicably done by (him) (her), to step to the extreme outer limits of the traveled portion of the highway.

#### **NOTES**

1. Wis. Stat. § 346.28(1).

#### **COMMENT**

This instruction and comment were approved in 1977. The comment was updated in 1989. The instruction was revised in 1992 and 2008. Editorial changes were made in 1992 to address gender references in the instruction. This revision was approved by the Committee in September 2021.

Pedestrian walking on right side of highway is negligent as a matter of law. <u>Panzer v. Hesse</u>, 249 Wis. 340, 24 N.W.2d 613 (1946); Staples v. Glienke, 142 Wis.2d 19, 416 N.W.2d 920 (Ct. App. 1987).

The traveled portion of the highway includes the shoulder. Wojciechowski v. Baron, 274 Wis. 364, 80 N.W.2d 424 (1957).

The jury may find a pedestrian walking on the edge of the blacktop roadway not negligent. <u>Dahl v. Ellis</u>, 35 Wis.2d 441, 151 N.W.2d 61 (1967).

#### 1265 RIGHT OF WAY: PERSONS WORKING ON HIGHWAY

A safety statute provides that an operator of a vehicle shall yield the right of way to persons engaged in maintenance or construction work on a highway whenever the operator is notified of their presence by flagmen or warning signs.<sup>1</sup>

"Right of way" means the privilege of the immediate use of the roadway.<sup>2</sup>

If you find that (<u>plaintiff</u>) was engaged in maintenance or construction work on a highway at the time and place in question and that a flagman or warning signs were present to notify (<u>defendant</u>) of (<u>plaintiff</u>)'s presence and occupation, then it became the duty of (<u>defendant</u>) to yield the right of way to (<u>plaintiff</u>).

#### NOTES

- 1. Wis. Stat. § 346.27.
- 2. Wis. Stat. § 40.01(51).

#### **COMMENT**

This instruction and comment were approved in 1977. The instruction was revised in 1992 and 2008. Editorial changes were made in 1992 to address gender references in the instruction. This revision was approved by the Committee in September 2021.

As to the lessened duty of care imposed on persons so engaged in highway construction, see <u>Knowles v. Stargel</u>, 261 Wis. 106, 109 10, 52 N.W.2d 387 (1952); <u>Gunning v. King</u>, 249 Wis. 176, 180 81, 23 N.W.2d 602 (1946); <u>Isgro v. Plankington Packing Co.</u>, 176 Wis. 507, 514 16, 186 N.W. 606 (1922).

**Driver or Operator**. This instruction applies to either an operator or a driver of a motor vehicle. If "driver" is more appropriate to the evidence, then substitute "driver" for "operator."

## 1270 RIGHT OF WAY: WHEN VEHICLE USING ALLEY OR NONHIGHWAY ACCESS TO STOP

A safety statute provides that the operator of a vehicle emerging from an alley or about to cross or enter a highway from any point of access other than another highway shall stop the vehicle immediately prior to moving onto the sidewalk, or onto the sidewalk area extending across the path of the vehicle, and shall yield the right of way to any pedestrian, and upon crossing or entering the roadway shall yield the right of way to all vehicles approaching on the roadway.<sup>1</sup>

"Right of way" means the privilege of the immediate use of the roadway.<sup>2</sup>

The words "emerging from" mean "leaving or coming out of."

"Point of access," means "a place where an entry can be made onto a highway."

#### **NOTES**

- 1. Wis. Stat. § 346.47(1).
- 2. Wis. Stat. § 340.01(51).

#### **COMMENT**

This instruction and comment were approved in 1977. The instruction was revised in 2008. This revision was approved by the Committee in September 2021.

**Driver or Operator**. This instruction applies to either an operator or a driver of a motor vehicle. If "driver" is more appropriate to the evidence, then substitute "driver" for "operator."

Wis. Stat. § 346.18(4) provides for yielding the right of way to vehicles approaching on the highway under these circumstances. Wis JI-Civil 1175 Right of Way: Entering Highway from an Alley or Non Highway Access Point covers this situation.

#### 1275 RIGHT OF WAY: WHEN YIELD SIGN INSTALLED

A safety statute provides that the operator of a vehicle when approaching any intersection at which has been installed a yield right of way sign, shall yield the right of way to other vehicles which have entered the intersection from an intersecting highway or which are approaching so closely on the intersecting highway as to constitute a hazard of collision and, if necessary, shall reduce speed or stop to yield.<sup>1</sup>

"Right of way" means the privilege of the immediate use of the roadway.2

#### **NOTES**

- 1. Wis. Stat. § 346.18(6)
- 2. Wis. Stat. § 340.01(51)

#### **COMMENT**

This instruction and comment were approved in 1977. The instruction was revised in 2008. This revision was approved by the Committee in September 2021.

**Driver or Operator**. This instruction applies to either an operator or a driver of a motor vehicle. If "driver" is more appropriate to the evidence, then substitute "driver" for "operator."

#### 1393 LIABILITY OF A PARTICIPANT IN A RECREATIONAL ACTIVITY

A person participating in recreational activities, including (specify recreational activity, e.g., camping), accepts the risk inherent in the recreational activity of which the ordinary prudent person is or should be aware.

A participant in a recreational activity must do all of the following:

- 1. Act within the limits of his or her ability.
- 2. Heed all warnings regarding participating in the recreational activity.
- 3. Maintain control of his or her person and the (equipment) (devices) (animals) he or she is using while participating in the activity.
- 4. Refrain from acting in any manner that may cause or contribute to the death or injury to himself or herself or to other persons while participating in the recreational activity.

A participant who fails to do so is negligent.

#### **COMMENT**

This instruction and comment were approved in September 2021.

This instruction provides the duties of a recreational participant pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 895.525(4)(a).

See Wis. Stat. Sec. 895.525(2)(b) for the definition of "recreational activity".

For liability of contact sports participants, see Wis JI-Civil 2020.

§ 895.525 "does not impose a greater duty on an individual than that which exists under the common law." <u>Rockweit by Donohue v. Senecal</u>, 197 Wis.2d 409, 417, 541 N.W.2d 742.

In Ansani v. Cascade Mountain, Inc., 223 Wis.2d 39, 49, 588 N.W.2d 321 (Ct. App. 1998), the court

of appeals concluded that pursuant to § 895.525, a skier had a duty to exercise ordinary care to avoid foreseeable harms, including adherence to four statutorily enumerated conditions stated in subsec. (4). Additionally, citing Rockweit, supra, the Ansani court concluded that § 895.525 does not mandate that all who ski are negligent under all circumstances as a matter of law. 223 Wis.2d 39 at 49.

See Wis JI-Civil 1005 for the definition of "ordinary care."

Wis. Stat. § 895.525; Jury Instructions. The court in Ansani, supra, held that the trial court properly instructed the jury that the person participating in the recreational activity of skiing was obligated to comply with all four conditions enumerated in § 895.525(4) and that the participant had a duty of ordinary care to avoid foreseeable harms. 223 Wis.2d 39 at 59. This was opposed to instructing the jury that the participant was negligent as a matter of law solely because he skied. Id. at 59.



# WISCONSIN JURY INSTRUCTIONS

## **CIVIL**

## **VOLUME II**

**Wisconsin Civil Jury Instructions Committee** 

• 2022 Supplement (Release No. 53)

## **WIS JI-CIVIL**

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

## **VOLUME II**

## **NEGLIGENCE** (Continued)

1501	Cause: Normal Response (1998)
1505	Cause: Where Cause of Death is in Doubt (1998)
1506	Cause: Relation of a Medical Procedure to the Accident (1998)
1510	Negligent Infliction of Severe Emotional Distress (Bystander Claim) (2014)
1511	Personal Injuries: Negligent Infliction of Severe Emotional Distress
	(Separate or Direct Claim) (2018)
	Comparative Negligence
1580	Comparative Negligence: Plaintiff and One or More Defendants (2011)
1582	Comparative Negligence: Adult and Child (1990)
1585	Comparative Negligence: Plaintiff-Guest and Host-Defendant Negligent (1992)
1590	Comparative Negligence: Plaintiff-Guest Passively Negligent; Host (Or Other Driver) Negligent (2003)
1591	Comparative Negligence: Guest Passively Negligent; Claims Against and
1371	Among Drivers; Apportionment from One Comparative Negligence
	Question (2015)
1592	Comparative Negligence: Guest Passively Negligent; Claims Against and
1392	Among Drivers; Apportionment of Comparative Negligence from Two
	Questions (2003)
1595	Comparative Negligence: Where Negligence or Cause Question Has Been
1393	Answered by Court (1990)
	Allswered by Court (1990)
	Imputed Negligence

(2003)

1600

Cause (2021)

1500

Servant: Driver of Automobile (Presumption from Ownership of Vehicle)

- 1605 Driver: Scope of Employment (2014)
- 1610 Joint Adventure (Enterprise): Automobile Cases (1990)

## **Damages**

- Damages: General (2016)
  Damages: Burden of Proof in Tort Actions: Future Damages [Withdrawn 2001]
  Punitive Damages: Nonproducts Liability [For Actions Commenced Before May 17, 1995] (1996)
  Punitive Damages: Products Liability [For Actions Commenced Before May 17, 1995] (1996)
  Punitive Damages: Nonproducts Liability (2018)
  Punitive Damages: Products Liability (2008)
- 1700. Detterm Denities Denies Midientical Den
- 1708 Battery: Punitive Damages: Mitigation by Provocation [Withdrawn © 2010]
- 1710 Aggravation of Injury Because of Medical Negligence (2015)
- 1715 Aggravation of Pre-existing Injury (1990)
- 1720 Aggravation or Activation of Latent Disease or Condition (1992)
- 1722 Damages from Nonconcurrent or Successive Torts (1992)
- 1722A Damages from Nonconcurrent or Successive Torts (To be used where several tortfeasors are parties) (1996)
- 1723 Enhanced Injuries (2009)
- 1725 Further Injury in Subsequent Event (2003)
- 1730 Damages: Duty to Mitigate: Physical Injuries (2012)
- Damages: Duty to Mitigate: Negligence or Breach of Contract (2012)
- 1732 Damages: Duty to Mitigate: Intentional Tort (2012)
- 1735 Damages: Not Taxable as Income (1990)
- Damages: Common Scheme or Plan; Concerted Action (Wis. Stat. § 895.045(2)) (2009)
- 1741 Personal Injuries: Negligence in Informing the Patient (2015)
- 1742 Personal Injuries: Medical Care: Offsetting Benefit from Operation Against Damages for Negligence in Informing the Patient (2015)
- 1749 Personal Injuries: Conversion Table for 1998 Revision of Damage Instructions (1998)
- 1750.1 Personal Injuries: Subdivided Question as to Past and Future Damages (1998)
- 1750.2 Personal Injuries: Past and Future: One Verdict Question (Except Past Loss of Earnings and Past Medical Expenses) (1998)
- Personal Injury: One Subdivided Question as to Past Damages [Withdrawn © 1998]
- 1756 Personal Injuries: Past Health Care Expenses (2015)

1757	Personal Injuries: Past Health Care Expenses (Medical Negligence Cases)
	(Negligence of Long-Term Care Provider): Collateral Sources (2013)
1758	Personal Injuries: Future Health Care Expenses (2010)
1760	Personal Injuries: Past Loss of Earning Capacity (2016)
1762	Personal Injuries: Future Loss of Earning Capacity (2022)
1766	Personal Injuries: Past Pain, Suffering, and Disability (Disfigurement) (2009)
1767	Personal Injuries: Future Pain, Suffering, and Disability (Disfigurement) (1999)
1768	Personal Injuries: Past and Future Pain, Suffering, and Disability
	(Disfigurement) (1998)
1770	Personal Injuries: Severe Emotional Distress (2006)
1780	Personal Injuries: Loss of Business Profits [Withdrawn 1998]
1785	Personal Injuries: Past Loss of Professional Earnings [Withdrawn 1998]
1788	Loss of Earnings: Delay in Obtaining Degree [Withdrawn 1999]
1795	Personal Injury: Life Expectancy and Mortality Tables (1992)
1796	Damages: Present Value of Future Losses (2003)
1797	Damages: Effects of Inflation (1993)
1800	Property: Loss of Use of Repairable Automobile (1997)
1801	Property: Loss of Use of Nonrepairable Automobile (1997)
1803	Property: Destruction of Property (2010)
1804	Property: Damage to Repairable Property (2010)
1805	Property: Damage to Nonrepairable Property (2010)
1806	Property: Damage to a Growing Crop (1997)
1810	Trespass: Nominal Damages (2013)
1812	Quantum Meruit: Measure of Services Rendered (1992)
1815	Injury to Spouse: Loss of Consortium (2012)
1816	Injury to Spouse: Past Loss of Earning Capacity: Household Services (1993)
1817	Injury to Spouse: Future Loss of Earning Capacity: Household Services (2001)
1820	Injury to Spouse: Nursing Services: Past and Future (1992)
1825	Injury to Wife: Medical and Hospital Expenses [Withdrawn 1995]
1830	Injury to Wife: Medical and Hospital Bills: Dispute over Ownership of Claim
1005	[Withdrawn 1995]
1835	Injury to Minor Child: Parent's Damages for Loss of Child's Earnings and Services: Past and Future (2001)
1837	Injury to Minor Child: Parent's Damages for Loss of Society and
1037	Companionship (2001)
1838	Injury to Parent: Minor Child's Damages for Loss of Society and
	Companionship (2001)
1840	Injury to Minor Child: Parents' Damages for Medical Expenses: Past and
-	Future (1996)
1845	Injury to Child: Parents' Damages for Services Rendered to Child: Past and
	Future (1992)

CONTENTS	WIS JI-CIVIL	CONTENTS
----------	--------------	----------

1850	Estate's Recovery for Medical, Hospital, and Funeral Expenses (2016)		
1855	Estate's Recovery for Pain and Suffering (2018)		
1860	Death of Husband: Pecuniary Loss [Withdrawn 1992]		
1861	Death of Spouse (Domestic Partner): Pecuniary Loss (2010)		
1865	Death of Wife: Pecuniary Loss [Withdrawn 1992]		
1870	Death of Spouse: Surviving Spouse's Loss of Society and Companionship (2019)		
1875	Death of Spouse: Medical, Hospital, and Funeral Expenses (1992)		
1880	Death of Parent: Pecuniary Loss (2016)		
1885	Death of Adult Child: Pecuniary Loss (2001)		
1890	Damages: Death of Minor Child: Premajority Pecuniary Loss (2001)		
1892	Damages: Death of Minor Child: Postmajority Pecuniary Loss (2001)		
1895	Death of Child: Parent's Loss of Society and Companionship (2019)		
1897	Death of Parent: Child's Loss of Society and Companionship (2019)		
	Safe Place		
1900.2	Safe-Place Statute: Duty of Employer (1992)		
1900.4	Safe-Place Statute: Injury to Frequenter: Negligence of Employer or Owner of		
	a Place of Employment (2022)		
1901	Safe-Place Statute: Definition of Frequenter (1996)		
1902	Safe-Place Statute: Negligence of Plaintiff Frequenter (2004)		
1904	Safe-Place Statute: Public Buildings: Negligence of Owner (1990)		

## **Nuisance**

1920	Nuisance: Law Note (2019)
1922	Private Nuisance: Negligent Conduct (2010)
1924	Private Nuisance: Abnormally Dangerous Activity: Strict Liability (2010)
1926	Private Nuisance: Intentional Conduct (2010)
1928	Public Nuisance: Negligent Conduct (2010)
1930	Public Nuisance: Abnormally Dangerous Activity: Strict Liability (2010)
1932	Public Nuisance: Intentional Conduct (2010)

Safe-Place Statute: Place of Employment: Business (1990)

Safe-Place Statute: Control (1992)

1910

1911

## **INTENTIONAL TORTS**

# **Assault and Battery**

2000	Intentional Tort: Liability of Minor (2014)
2001	Intentional Versus Negligent Conduct (1995)
2004	Assault (2011)
2005	Battery (2011)
2005.5	Battery: Offensive Bodily Contact (2015)
2006	Battery: Self-Defense (2013)
2006.2	Battery: Self-Defense; Defendant's Dwelling, Motor Vehicle, Place of Business
	Wis. Stat. § 895.62 (2016)
2006.5	Battery: Defense of Property (2013)
2007	Battery: Liability of an Aider and Abettor (2011)
2008	Battery: Excessive Force in Arrest (2002)
2010	Assault and Battery: Offensive Bodily Contact [Renumbered JI-Civil- 2005.5
	2011]
2020	Sports Injury: Reckless or Intentional Misconduct (2018)
	False Imprisonment
2100	False Imprisonment: Definition (2014)
2110	False Imprisonment: Compensatory Damages (2014)
2115	False Arrest: Law Enforcement Officer; Without Warrant (1993)
	Federal Civil Rights
2150	Federal Civil Rights: §§ 1981 and 1982 Actions (1993)
2151	Federal Civil Rights: § 1983 Actions [Withdrawn 2014]
2155	Federal Civil Rights: Excessive Force in Arrest (in Maintaining Jail Security)
	[Withdrawn 2014]
	Conversion

2200	Conversion:	Dispossession (2014)
2200.1	Conversion:	Refusal to Return Upon Demand (Refusal by Bailee) (1993)
2200.2	Conversion:	Destruction or Abuse of Property (1991)
2201	Conversion:	Damages (2016)

# Misrepresentation

2400	Misrepresentation: Bases for Liability and Damages - Law Note for Trial Judges (2021)
2401	Misrepresentation: Intentional Deceit (2018)
2402	Misrepresentation: Strict Responsibility (2018)
2403	Misrepresentation: Negligence (2018)
2405	Intentional Misrepresentation: Measure of Damages in Actions Involving Sale
	[Exchange] of Property (Benefit of the Bargain) (2018)
2405.5	Strict Responsibility: Measure of Damages in Actions Involving Sale
	[Exchange] of Property (Benefit of the Bargain) (2018)
2406	Negligent Misrepresentation: Measure of Damages in Actions Involving Sale
	[Exchange] of Property (Out of Pocket Rule) (2014)
2418	Unfair Trade Practice: Untrue, Deceptive, or Misleading Representation: Wis.
	Stat. § 100.18(1) (2021)
2419	Property Loss Through Fraudulent Misrepresentation: Wis. Stat. § 895.446
	(Based on Conduct (Fraud) Prohibited by Wis. Stat. § 943.20) (2018)
2420	Civil Theft: Wis. Stat. § 895.446 (Based on Conduct (Theft) Prohibited by Wis.
	Stat. § 943.20(1)(a)) (2019)
Z <b>4</b> ZU	·

## **Defamation**

2500	Defamation - Law Note for Trial Judges (2016)
2501	Defamation: Private Individual Versus Private Individual, No Privilege (2003)
2505	Defamation: Truth as a Defense (Nonmedia Defendant) (2014)
2505A	Defamation: Truth of Statement (First Amendment Cases) (1989)
2507	Defamation: Private Individual Versus Private Individual with Conditional
	Privilege (2020)
2509	Defamation: Private Individual Versus Media Defendant (Negligent Standard)
	(2003)
2510	Defamation: Truth as Defense Where Plaintiff Charged with Commission of a
	Crime [Withdrawn 1993]
2511	Defamation: Public Figure Versus Media Defendant or Private Figure with
	Constitutional Privilege (Actual Malice) (2003)
2512	Defamation: Truth as Defense Where Plaintiff Not Charged with Commission
	of a Crime [Withdrawn 1993]
2513	Defamation: Express Malice (1993)
2514	Defamation: Effect of Defamatory Statement or Publication [Withdrawn 1993]
2516	Defamation: Compensatory Damages (1991)

CONTENTS WIS JI-CIVIL CONTENT	ITS
-------------------------------	-----

2517	Defamation: Conditional Privilege: Abuse of Privilege [Renumbered JI-Civil 2507 1993]
2517.5	Defamation: Public Official: Abuse of Privilege [Renumbered JI-Civil 2511 1993]
2518	Defamation: Express Malice [Renumbered JI-Civil 2513 1993]
2520	Defamation: Punitive Damages (2003)
2550	Invasion of Privacy (Publication of a Private Matter) Wis. Stat. § 995.50(2)(c) (2015)
2551	Invasion of Privacy: Highly Offensive Intrusion; Wis. Stat. § 995.50(2)(a) (2011)
2552	Invasion of Privacy: Publication of a Private Matter: Conditional Privilege (2003)
	Misuse of Procedure
2600	Malicious Prosecution: Instituting a Criminal Proceeding (2022)
2605	Malicious Prosecution: Instituting a Civil Proceeding (2022)
2610	Malicious Prosecution: Advice of Counsel: Affirmative Defense (Criminal Proceeding) (2015)
2611	Malicious Prosecution: Advice of Counsel: Affirmative Defense (Civil Proceeding) (2015)
2620	Abuse of Process (2013)
	Trade Practices
2720	Home Improvement Practices Act Violation; Wisconsin Administrative Code Chapter ATCP 110; Wis. Stat. § 100.20 (2013)
2722	Theft by Contractor (Wis. Stat. § 779.02(5)) (2015)
	Domestic Relations
2725	Intentional Infliction of Emotional Distress (2020)
	<b>Business Relations</b>
2750 2760 2761 2762	Employment Relations: Wrongful Discharge - Public Policy (2020) Bad Faith by Insurance Company (Excess Verdict Case) (2003) Bad Faith by Insurance Company: Assured's Claim (2012) Bad Faith by Insurance Company: Third Party Employee Claim Against Worker's Compensation Carrier [Withdrawn] (2009)

2769	Wisconsin Fair Dealership Law: Existence of Dealership (2020)			
2770	Wisconsin Fair Dealership Law: Good Cause for Termination, Cancellation,			
	Nonrenewal, Failure to Renew, or Substantial Change in Competitive			
	Circumstances (Wis. Stat. § 135.03) (2022)			
2771	Wisconsin Fair Dealership Law: Adequate Notice by Grantor (Wis. Stat. § 135.04) (2005)			
2772	Wisconsin Fair Dealership Law: Special Verdict (2005)			
2780	Intentional Interference with Contractual Relationship (2020)			
2790	Trade Name Infringement (2022)			
2791	Trade Name Infringement: Damages (2010)			
	Civil Conspiracy			
2800	Conspiracy: Defined (2018)			
2802	Conspiracy: Proof of Membership (2003)			
2804	Conspiracy: Indirect Proof (2003)			
2806	Conspiracy to be Viewed as a Whole (1993)			
2808	Conspiracy between Affiliated Corporations [Withdrawn 2009]			
2810	Conspiracy: Overt Acts (2003)			
2820	Injury to Business: (Wis. Stat. § 134.01) (2008)			
2822	Restraint of Will (Wis. Stat. § 134.01) (2003)			
Tort Immunity				
2900	Tort Immunity: Immunities Abrogated - Law Note for Trial Judges (1993)			
	CONTRACTS			
	General			

3010	Agreement (2011)
3012	Offer: Making (1993)
3014	Offer: Acceptance (1993)
3016	Offer: Rejection (1993)
3018	Offer: Revocation (1993)
3020	Consideration (1993)
3022	Definiteness and Certainty (1993)
3024	Implied Contract: General (1993)
3026	Implied Contract: Promise to Pay Reasonable Value (1993)
3028	Contracts Implied in Law (Unjust Enrichment) (2020)

2020	M. J.C 4: 1 M-4 1 A 4 (1002)			
3030	Modification by Mutual Assent (1993)			
3032	Modification by Conduct (1993)			
3034	Novation (1993)			
3040	Integration of Several Writings (1993)			
3042	Partial Integration: Contract Partly Written, Partly Oral (1993)			
3044	Implied Duty of Good Faith (Performance of Contract) (2007)			
3045	Definitions – "Bona Fide" (1993)			
3046	Implied Promise of No Hindrance (1993)			
3048	Time as an Element (2016)			
3049	Duration (2016)			
3050	Contracts: Subsequent Construction by Parties (1993)			
3051	Contracts: Ambiguous Language (2012)			
3052	Substantial Performance (1994)			
3053	Breach of Contract (2007)			
3054	Demand for Performance (2014)			
3056	Sale of Goods: Delivery or Tender of Performance (1993)			
3057	Waiver (2018)			
3058	Waiver of Strict Performance (1993)			
3060	Hindrance or Interference with Performance (1993)			
3061	Impossibility: Original (1993)			
3062	Impossibility: Supervening (1993)			
3063	Impossibility: Partial (1993)			
3064	Impossibility: Temporary (1993)			
3065	Impossibility: Superior Authority (1993)			
3066	Impossibility: Act of God (1993)			
3067	Impossibility: Disability or Death of a Party (1993)			
3068	Voidable Contracts: Duress, Fraud, Misrepresentation (2016)			
3070	Frustration of Purpose (2020)			
3072	Avoidance for Mutual Mistake of Fact (2014)			
3074	Estoppel: Law Note for Trial Judges (2018)			
3076	Contracts: Rescission for Nonperformance (2001)			
3078	Abandonment: Mutual (1993)			
3079	Termination of Easement by Abandonment (2022)			
3082	Termination of Servant's Employment: Indefinite Duration (1993)			
3083	Termination of Servant's Employment: Employer's Dissatisfaction (1993)			
3084	Termination of Servant's Employment: Additional Consideration Provided by			
	Employee (1993)			

## **Real Estate**

3086	Real Estate Listing Contract: Validity: Performance (2019)			
3088	Real Estate Listing Contract: Termination for Cause (1993)			
3090	Real Estate Listing Contract: Broker's Commission on Sale Subsequent to			
	Expiration of Contract Containing "Extension" Clause (1993)			
3094	Residential Eviction: Possession of Premises (2020)			
3095	Landlord - Tenant: Constructive Eviction (2013)			

#### 1762 PERSONAL INJURIES: FUTURE LOSS OF EARNING CAPACITY

(Question \_\_\_\_\_) (Subdivision \_\_\_\_\_ of question \_\_\_\_\_) asks what sum of money will fairly and reasonably compensate (<u>plaintiff</u>) for future loss of earning capacity.

If you are satisfied that (<u>plaintiff</u>) has suffered a loss of future earning capacity as a result of the injuries sustained in the accident, your answer to this question will be the difference between what (<u>plaintiff</u>) will reasonably be able to earn in the future in view of the injuries sustained and what (he) (she) would have been able to earn had (he) (she) not been injured.

[Where appropriate add the following paragraph: Because (<u>plaintiff</u>) was the owner and operator of a business at the time of the accident, you should, in determining (his) (her) loss of future earning capacity, consider the character and size of the business, the capital and labor employed in the business, (and) the extent and quality of (<u>plaintiff</u>)'s services to the business, (and the profits of the business).]

While the plaintiff has the burden of establishing loss of future earning capacity, the evidence relating to this item need not be as exact or precise as evidence needed to support your findings as to other items of damage. The reason for this rule is that the concept of (loss of future earning capacity) requires that you consider factors which, by their very nature, do not admit of any precise or fixed rule. You, therefore, are not required in determining the loss of future earning capacity to base your answer on evidence which is

exact or precise but rather upon evidence which, under all of the circumstances of the case, reasonably supports your determination of damages.

#### **COMMENT**

This instruction and comment were approved in 1998 and revised in 2000 and 2003. This revision was approved by the Committee in October 2021; it added to the comment.

**Burden**. The injured party bears the burden "to establish to a reasonable certainty the damages sustained[.]" Ghiardi, James D., <u>Personal Injury Damages in Wisconsin</u> (1964). "The evidence must be sufficient to enable the jury to estimate with reasonable probability what would have happened had the injury not occurred." <u>Schulz v. St. Mary's Hosp.</u>, 81 Wis. 2d 638, 657, 260 N.W.2d 783 (1978).

**Determining damages.** Damages for loss of earning capacity are "generally arrived at by comparing what the injured party was capable of earning before and after the time of the injury." <u>Klink v. Cappelli</u>, 179 Wis. 2d 624, 630, 508 N.W.2d 435 (Ct. App. 1993). Without a showing of evidence, "the jury must speculate or conjecture as to the amount of lost earning capacity." <u>Klink, supra</u>, at 630, citing <u>Schulz v. St. Mary's Hosp.</u>, 81 Wis.2d 638, 658, 260 N.W.2d 783, 790 (1978). The Wisconsin Supreme Court has held that the jury may not "speculate" when it determines a damages award for loss of future earning capacity. <u>Ianni v. Grain Dealers Mut. Ins. Co.</u>, 42 Wis. 2d 354, 364, 166 N.W.2d, 148 (1969).

**Evidence of permanent injury.** "It is true that evidence of a permanent injury may be sufficient in itself for the inference of a loss of earning capacity where the nature of the injury by common knowledge disables the plaintiff from performing the only type of work he or she is fitted to do, but, except in such situation, the fact of injury, standing alone, is not sufficient to establish a loss of earning capacity." <u>Ianni, supra</u>, at 363, citing <u>Wells v. National Indemnity Co</u>. (1968), 41 Wis.2d 1, 162 N.W.2d 562.

Loss of Earning Capacity – Business Profits. Where an injured plaintiff is the owner and operator of a business, the profits of which business are mainly dependent on plaintiff's personal exertions, the profits of the business, along with all other evidence pertaining to the operation of the business, may be considered in determining plaintiff's loss of earning capacity. However, if the income of the business is chiefly the result of capital invested, the labor of others, or other factors than the personal services of the owner, evidence of business profits should not be received. See <u>Featherly v. Continental Ins. Co.</u>, 73 Wis.2d 273, 243 N.W.2d 806 (1976).

**Evidence of Future Loss.** See Comment to Wis. JI-Civil 1760. The last paragraph of the instruction was previously contained in Wis JI-Civil 1705 as a general instruction. The Committee believed it was important and more convenient to users to add this general language from Wis JI-Civil 1705 to each instruction on future loss of earning capacity and pecuniary loss.

# 1900.4 SAFE PLACE STATUTE: INJURY TO FREQUENTER: NEGLIGENCE OF EMPLOYER OR OWNER OF A PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT

#### (Give Wis JI-Civil 1005.)

Question 1 asks: Was (<u>defendant</u>) negligent in failing to (construct) (repair) (maintain) the premises as safe as the nature of its business would reasonably permit.

The Wisconsin Legislature enacted a law which is known as the Safe-Place Statute, which applies to this case. That law imposes a duty upon (defendant) in this case to (construct) (repair) (maintain) the premises upon which (plaintiff) was injured so as to make them safe. The law requires (defendant) to (furnish and use safety devices and safeguards) (adopt and use methods and processes) reasonably adequate to render the place of employment safe. Violation of this law is negligence.

The term "safe" or "safety," as used in this law, does not mean absolute safety. The term "safe" or "safety," as applied to the premises in this case, means such freedom from danger to the life, health, safety, or welfare of (<u>plaintiff</u>) as the nature of the premises will reasonably permit.

(<u>Defendant</u>) was not required to guarantee (<u>plaintiff</u>)'s safety but rather was required to (construct) (repair) (maintain) the premises as safe as the nature of the place would reasonably permit.

In determining whether (<u>defendant</u>)'s premises were as free from danger as its nature would permit, you will consider the adequacy of the (construction) (repair) (maintenance) of the premises, bearing in mind the nature of the business and the manner in which the business is customarily conducted.

[Note: The following paragraph should not be given where the defect is a structural defect: To find that (defendant) failed to (construct) (repair) (maintain) the premises in question as safe as the nature of the place reasonably permitted, you must find that (defendant) had actual notice of the alleged defect in time to take reasonable precautions to remedy the situation or that the defect existed for such a length of time before the accident that (defendant) or its employees in the exercise of reasonable diligence (this includes the duty of inspection) should have discovered the defect in time to take reasonable precautions to remedy the situation. However, this notice requirement does not apply where (defendant)'s affirmative act created the defect.]

#### **COMMENT**

The instruction and comment were approved by the Committee in 1974. The instruction was revised in 1986, 1992, 1995, 1996, 1998, and 2003. This instruction was renumbered in 1976 from Wis JI-Civil 1900. The comment was updated in 1990, 1993, 1995, 1998, 2001, 2003, 2004, 2006, 2014, and 2020. This revision was approved by the Committee in September 2021, it added to the comment.

See <u>Petoskey v. Schmidt</u>, 21 Wis.2d 323, 124 N.W.2d 1 (1963); For the form of the question, see <u>Petoskey</u>, <u>supra</u>; <u>Krause v. V. F. W. Post 6498</u>, 9 Wis.2d 547, 101 N.W.2d 645 (1960).

The safe-place statute imposes a higher standard of care than ordinary negligence at common law, <u>Krause</u>, <u>supra</u>; <u>Saxhaug v. Forsyth Leather Co.</u>, 252 Wis. 376, 31 N.W.2d 589 (1948); <u>Dykstra v. Arthur</u> G. McKee & Co., 92 Wis.2d 17, 26, 284 N.W.2d 692 (1979); Topp v. Continental Ins. Co., 83 Wis.2d 780,

266 N.W.2d 397 (1978). Although the safe-place statute establishes a higher standard, failure of a safe place claim does not necessarily preclude a common law negligence claim arising out of the same condition. A safe-place statute addresses the condition of the premises while the common law claim looks at negligent acts. Megal v. Green Bay Area Visitor & Convention Bureau, et al., 2004 WI 98, Case No. 02-2932.

The giving of common-law negligence instruction followed by the safe-place instruction was approved in <u>Carr v. Amusement, Inc.</u>, 47 Wis.2d 368, 375, 177 N.W.2d 388 (1970).

Although the statute creates a presumption that an injury was caused by a violation of the statute, the presumption does not establish as a matter of law that the defendant's negligence was greater than the plaintiff's, <u>Brons v. Bischoff</u>, 89 Wis.2d 80, 88, 277 N.W.2d 854 (1979); <u>Fondell v. Lucky Stores</u>, <u>supra</u>; <u>Imnus v. Wisconsin Public Ser. Corp.</u>, 260 Wis. 433, 51 N.W.2d 42 (1952).

In reading Wis. Stat. § 101.11, it is suggested that parts dealing solely with employment be omitted, as well as other portions inappropriate under the facts of the case. A community-based residential facility, as defined in Wis. Stat. § 50.01(1), is a place of employment. Wis. Stat. § 101.11(3).

This instruction applies to an injury to a frequenter. For the definition of "frequenter," see Wis. Stat. § 101.01(2)(e) and JI-Civil 1901. Independent contractor employee as frequenter – McNally v. Goodenough, 5 Wis.2d 293, 300, 92 N.W.2d 890 (1958); Dykstra, supra; Sampson v. Laskin, 66 Wis.2d 318, 326, 224 N.W.2d 594 (1975); Hortman v. Becker Constr. Co., Inc., 92 Wis.2d 210, 226, 284 N.W.2d 621 (1979).

The definition of "safe" and "safety" is from Wis. Stat. § 101.01(2)(g).

Nature of Business. Neitzke v. Kraft-Phenix Dairies, Inc., 214 Wis. 441, 446, 253 N.W. 579 (1934). Free from danger — Olson v. Whitney Bros. Co., 160 Wis. 606, 612-13, 150 N.W. 959 (1915); Dykstra v. Arthur G. McKee & Co., supra; Topp v. Continental Ins. Co., supra, at 788; Fondell v. Lucky Stores, Inc., 85 Wis.2d 220, 230-31, 270 N.W.2d 205 (1978). An Elks Club was held to be a "place of employment" in Schmorrow v. Sentry Ins. Co., 138 Wis.2d 31, 405 N.W.2d 672 (Ct. App. 1987).

The defendant is not a guarantor of a frequenter's safety. <u>Hipke v. Industrial Comm'n</u>, 261 Wis. 226, 52 N.W.2d 401 (1952).

A business is not an insurer of a frequenter's safety. Zehren v. F. W. Woolworth Co., supra; Dykstra, supra; Stefanovich v. Iowa Nat'l Mut. Ins. Co., 86 Wis.2d 161, 166, 271 N.W.2d 867 (1978); May v. Skelly Oil Co., 83 Wis.2d 30, 36, 264 N.W.2d 574 (1978).

Safety is a relative, not an absolute, term. <u>Sykes v. Bensinger Recreation Corp.</u>, 117 F.2d 964, 967 (7th Cir. 1941); <u>Heckel v. Standard Gateway Theater</u>, 229 Wis. 80, 281 N.W. 640 (1938); <u>May v. Skelly, supra</u>.

The statutory duty is to make the place as safe as the nature and place of employment will reasonably permit. Mullen v. Larson-Morgan Co., 212 Wis. 52, 249 N.W. 67 (1933); Saxhaug v. Forsyth Leather Co., supra. This duty is not a lesser standard than that imposed by the common law, Balas v. St. Sebastian's Congregation, 66 Wis.2d 421, 425, 225 N.W.2d 428 (1975).

A place is safe if it is as free from danger as the nature of the employment will reasonably permit when used in a customary or usual manner for the work intended or in such a manner as an ordinarily prudent and careful person might anticipate it might be used. Olson v. Whitney Bros. Co., supra; Topp v. Continental, supra.

The words "construction" or "constructing" should be used when, on the facts, faulty construction is involved.

**Notice**. Werner v. Gimbel Bros., 8 Wis.2d 491, 99 N.W.2d 708 (1959). There is no requirement of notice where the condition was created by the party sought to be charged. Merriman v. Cash-Way, Inc., 35 Wis.2d 112, 150 N.W.2d 472 (1967); Kosnar v. J. C. Penney Co., 6 Wis.2d 238, 242, 277, 132 N.W.2d 595 (1965).) Or where the alleged defect is a structural defect Hannebaum v. DiRenzo & Bomier, 162 Wis.2d 488, 469 N.W.2d 900 (Ct. App. 1991); see also Fitzgerald v. Badger State Mut. Casualty Co., 67 Wis.2d 321, 227 N.W.2d 444 (1975). Also, if the defendant claims that no defective condition existed, then proof of notice is not necessary. Petoskey v. Schmidt, supra.

The employer must have notice of the defect except where the alleged defect is a structural defect, <u>Fitzgerald</u>, <u>supra</u>. <u>Krause v. V. F. W. Post 6498</u>, <u>supra</u>; <u>Pettric v. Gridley Dairy Co.</u>, 202 Wis. 289, 232 N.W. 595 (1930). As to the length of time of notice required, see <u>Bergevin v. Chippewa Falls</u>, 82 Wis. 505, 52 N.W. 588 (1892); <u>Topp v. Continental Ins. Co.</u>, <u>supra</u> at 780; <u>Fitzgerald v. Badger State Mut. Casualty Co.</u>, <u>supra</u>, at 326; <u>Dykstra</u>, <u>supra</u>; <u>May v. Skelly Oil Co.</u>, <u>supra</u>, at 36.

**Defect Versus Unsafe Condition**. This instruction provides that a property owner is liable for injuries caused by a structural defect regardless of whether the owner knew or should have known that the defect existed. However, where the property condition that causes the injury is an unsafe condition associated with the structure, the owner is liable only if it had actual or constructive notice of the condition. This instruction contains an optional paragraph to be used in cases involving a structural defect. This paragraph reads:

[Note: The following paragraph should not be given where the defect is a structural defect. To find that (defendant) failed to (construct) (repair) or (maintain) the premises in question as safe as the nature of the place reasonably permitted, you must find that (defendant) had actual notice of the alleged defect in time to take reasonable precautions to remedy the situation or that the defect existed for such a length of time before the accident that (defendant) or its employees in the exercise of reasonable diligence (this includes the duty of inspection) should have discovered the defect in time to take reasonable precautions to remedy the situation. However, this notice requirement does not apply where (defendant)'s affirmative act created the defect.]

A decision of the supreme court discussed whether a loose stairway nosing that caused the plaintiff to fall down stairs was a "structural defect" or an "unsafe condition associated with the structure." The trial judge found that the loose nosing was a structural defect and, therefore, did not instruct the jury on notice. The court said that the classification of the loose nosing was a question of law. Barry v. Employers Mut. Casualty Co., 2001 WI 101, 245 Wis.2d 560, 630 N.W.2d 517. The court concluded that the nosing was an "unsafe condition." Thus, the court said the plaintiff was required to prove the defendant property owner had notice of the condition. Because the jury was not instructed on the notice issue, the court said the case

was not fully tried and remanded the case. For a discussion of defect versus unsafe condition, see <u>Mair v. Trollhaugen Ski Resort</u>, 2006 WI 61, 291 Wis.2d 132, 715 N.W.2d 598.

Constructive Notice. Constructive notice requires evidence as to the length of time that the condition existed Kaufman v. State Street Ltd. Partnership, 187 Wis.2d 54, 59 (Ct. App., 1994). An owner or employer is deemed to have constructive notice when that defect or condition has existed a long enough time for a reasonably diligent owner to discover and repair it. May v. Skelley Oil Co., 83 Wis.2d 30, 36 (1978); Strack v. Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Co., 35 Wis.2d 51, 55 (1967). Determining the exact point in time at which an unsafe condition commenced is not an essential condition in establishing constructive notice. Although a plaintiff is still obligated to prove the unsafe condition lasted long enough to establish constructive notice, it is not necessary for the plaintiff to locate the "temporal commencement" of the unsafe condition if the evidence shows it existed long enough to give a reasonably diligent owner an opportunity to discover and remedy it. Correa v. Woodman's Food Market, 2020 WI 43, ¶26, 391 Wis. 2d 651, 943 N.W.2d 535.

"Speculation as to how long the unsafe condition existed and what reasonable inspection would entail are insufficient to establish constructive notice." <u>Kochanski v. Speedway SuperAmerica, LLC</u>, 2014 WI 72, ¶36, 356 Wis.2d 1, 850 N.W.2d 160. Therefore, before a case may reach the jury, the plaintiff "must present a quantum of evidence sufficient to render the eventual answer non-speculative." See <u>Correa v. Woodman's Food Market</u>, <u>supra</u>, at 662.

Length of time required for constructive notice depends on the surrounding facts and circumstances, including the nature of the business and the nature of the defect. May, 83 Wis.2d 30 at 37. The need for "length of time" evidence (and therefore any constructive notice) is obviated where harm from the method of merchandising is reasonably foreseeable. See Strack, 35 Wis.2d 51 at 55.

**Duty to Inspect**. Wisconsin Bridge and Iron Co. v. Industrial Comm'n, 8 Wis.2d 612, 618, 99 N.W.2d 817 (1959). There is no duty to inspect and warn unless it is shown that the premises were not in a reasonably safe condition. Balas v. St. Sebastian's, supra.

Acts of Operation Versus an Unsafe Condition. In Stefanovich v. Iowa Nat'l Mut. Ins. Co., supra, at 166, the court stated that liability under the safe-place statute is based on unsafe conditions, not unsafe acts. See also Korenak v. Curative Workshop Adult Rehabilitation Center, 71 Wis.2d 77, 84, 237 N.W.2d 43 (1976). Similarly, the court in Leitner v. Milwaukee County, 94 Wis.2d 186, 195, 287 N.W.2d 803 (1980), concluded that injuries to a frequenter caused by unsafe conditions of an employer's premises are covered by the safe-place statute, while injuries caused by negligent, inadvertent, or even intentional acts committed therein are not. See also Viola v. Wisconsin Electric Power Co., 352 Wis.2d 541, 842 N.W.2d 515 (2014).

**Recreational Use Immunity**. If a private property owner is immune from liability under Wis. Stat. § 895.52(2), the owner is not subject to liability under the safe-place statute. However, if the recreational use immunity of § 895.52(2) is negated by Wis. Stat. § 895.52(6) (because the owner collects over \$500 in payments), then the safe-place statute may apply to premises used for recreational purposes. <u>Douglas v. Dewey</u>, 154 Wis.2d 451, 453 N.W.2d 500 (Ct. App. 1990).

Construction statute of repose. Wis. Stat. § 893.89 sets forth a seven-year statute of repose during which a plaintiff must bring an action for injuries resulting from improvements to real property. The

"construction statute of repose" bars safe place claims "resulting from injuries caused by structural defects, but not by unsafe conditions associated with the structure," beginning seven years after a structure is substantially completed. See Mair, supra, at ¶29. For purposes of determining whether the construction statute of repose is applicable, the fundamental inquiry is "whether the safe place claims resulted from an injury caused by a structural defect or by an unsafe condition associated with the structure." Nooyen v. Wisconsin Electric Power Company, 390 Wis.2d 687, ¶12, 939 N.W.2d 621 (Ct. App. 2020). See also the comment on "Defect Versus Unsafe Condition" above.

Wisconsin Stat. § 893.89(4)(a)-(d) creates four exceptions to which the construction statute of repose does not apply. See, <u>Hocking v. City of Dodgeville</u>, 2010 WI 59, 326 Wis.2d 115, 785 N.W.2d 398, and <u>Soletski v. Krueger International, Inc.</u>, 2019 WI App 7, 385 Wis.2d 787, 924 N.W.2d 207 concerning exceptions to the statute of repose.

# 2600 MALICIOUS PROSECUTION: INSTITUTING A CRIMINAL PROCEEDING

Question \_\_\_\_\_ asks did (<u>defendant</u>) maliciously prosecute (<u>plaintiff</u>).

To establish malicious prosecution, (<u>plaintiff</u>) must prove the following six elements:

- 1) A criminal proceeding was brought against (plaintiff).
- 2) (<u>Defendant</u>) was actively involved in instituting the criminal proceeding (prosecution) against (<u>plaintiff</u>).
- 3) The criminal proceeding was terminated in favor of (<u>plaintiff</u>).
- 4) (<u>Defendant</u>) acted with malice in instituting the criminal proceeding (prosecution).
- 5) The criminal charges were made without probable cause.
- 6) (<u>Plaintiff</u>) suffered damages as a result of the criminal proceeding (prosecution) on those charges.

The fourth element requires that (<u>defendant</u>) acted with malice in instituting the criminal proceeding in causing (the prosecution) (charges to be brought). A person acts with malice when he or she has a hostile or vindictive motive, or acts primarily for a purpose other than bringing a guilty person to justice.

The fifth element relates to whether the charges made by (<u>defendant</u>) were without probable cause. This element is satisfied if, at the time (<u>defendant</u>) made the charges against (<u>plaintiff</u>), (<u>defendant</u>) knew or had reason to believe that (<u>plaintiff</u>) was not guilty of the

charge(s). There is no probable cause if you are satisfied that (<u>defendant</u>) did not have sufficient facts concerning (<u>plaintiff</u>)'s conduct that would lead a person of ordinary caution and prudence to believe (<u>plaintiff</u>) had committed a criminal offense.

It is not enough that (<u>plaintiff</u>) establish that (<u>defendant</u>) acted with malice in instituting the criminal proceeding (in causing the prosecution); (<u>plaintiff</u>) must also prove that (<u>defendant</u>) had no probable cause to make the charges.

#### **SPECIAL VERDICT**

Question 1:	Did ( <u>defendant</u> ) maliciously prosecute ( <u>plaintiff</u> )?		
	Answer:		
	(Yes or No)		
Question 2:	What sum of money will compensate ( <u>plaintiff</u> ) for [insert damages]?		
	Answer:		

#### **COMMENT**

The instruction and comment were initially approved by the Committee in 1966. The instruction and comment were revised in 1986, 1991, 2014, and 2015. This revision was approved by the Committee in September 2021; it added to the comment.

**Elements**. The six essential elements in an action for malicious prosecution are:

- (1) a prior institution of judicial proceedings against the plaintiff;
- (2) such former proceedings must have been put in motion by or at the instance of the defendant in the malicious prosecution action;

- (3) such proceedings must have terminated in favor of the defendant in such criminal proceedings;
- (4) malice in instituting the former proceedings;
- (5) want of probable cause for instituting the former proceedings;
- (6) damage.

See Strid v. Converse, 111 Wis.2d 418, 331 N.W.2d 350 (1983); Elmer v. Chicago & N.W. Ry., 257 Wis. 228, 43 N.W.2d 244 (1950).

The first three elements may be determined by the court. Ordinarily, the first three elements do not arise in a malicious prosecution action, as they are generally established beyond question by the records in the criminal proceedings. Therefore, no special instruction is necessary on these elements.

The fourth element, "malice in instituting the criminal proceedings," and the fifth element, lack of probable cause, are submitted in this instruction.

**Instigation of Prior Proceedings**. A party will be found to have instigated prior criminal proceedings against the present plaintiff if that party was instrumental in prosecuting the present plaintiff. Thus, the malicious swearing and signing of a criminal complaint can satisfy the instigation-of-prior-proceedings element for malicious prosecution. <u>Peters v. Hall</u>, 263 Wis. 450, 57 N.W.2d 723 (1952). But, no malicious prosecution action will lie where the defendant supplied the authorities with information and the prosecution was begun only after the authorities conducted their own independent investigation. <u>Pollock v. Vilter Mfg. Corp.</u>, 23 Wis.2d 29, 126 N.W.2d 602 (1964).

Element 3; Termination of Prior Criminal Actions. A termination of the original proceeding resulting from a voluntary settlement or agreement between the parties does not satisfy the "favorable termination" element and, thus, bars a subsequent malicious prosecution suit. Lechner v. Ebenreiter, 235 Wis. 244, 292 N.W. 913, 916 (1940). However, the discharge by an examining magistrate, or a nolle prosequi by the district attorney, except under certain circumstances, does satisfy the "favorable termination" element. Id. at 917. Additionally, dismissal of one count of a criminal complaint does not constitute favorable termination of the proceedings where the defendant in the prior action is convicted on another count arising out of the same incident. Heilgeist v. Chasser, 98 Wis.2d 97, 295 N.W.2d 26 (Ct. App. 1980).

Element 4; Malice. The plaintiff must prove that the defendant acted "maliciously" in order to recover in a malicious prosecution suit. Meyer v. Ewald, 66 Wis.2d 168, 224 N.W.2d 419 (1974). While the voluntary dismissal of the prior proceeding may be used to establish the lack of probable cause for the prior action, a voluntary dismissal may not be used to infer the existence of malice. Id; Yelk v. Seefeldt, 35 Wis.2d 271, 151 N.W.2d 4 (1967). There must be some independent evidence of conduct from which improper motives can be inferred. Id. Malice may be proven by showing "malice in fact" or "malice in law." Meyer, supra.

"Malice in fact" involves situations where the defendant acted chiefly from motives of ill will. <u>Id</u>. A willful and wanton disregard for the facts or law may provide a basis for malice in fact but such willful and wanton conduct must be of such a nature and character as to evince a hostile or vindictive motive. Id.

"Malice in law" may exist even when the defendant cannot be shown to have acted from motives of

actual ill will or vindictiveness. Malice in law exists if evidence is presented from which the jury might infer that the defendant instigated the former proceedings for an improper motive or purpose, that is, for a primary purpose other than bringing an offender to justice. Meyer, supra; Yelk, supra. An example of malice in law is where a criminal prosecution is instituted for the purpose of collecting a debt or compelling the delivery of property. See Peters, supra.

Element 5; Lack of Probable Cause for the Prior Proceedings. Lack of probable cause is an essential element for an action for malicious prosecution. Krieg v. Dayton-Hudson Corp., 104 Wis.2d 455, 311 N.W.2d 641 (1981). Probable cause is an objective standard measured by the reasonably prudent person's belief in the cause of action in light of the facts known or reasonably ascertainable. Id. However, probable cause for the prior action is not necessarily lacking where the present defendant acted without knowledge of all of the facts or acted negligently. See Neumann v. Industrial Sound Engineering, Inc., 31 Wis.2d 471, 143 N.W.2d 543 (1966).

For prior criminal proceedings, the court should not apply the state of mind of a prosecutor in determining whether a private party had probable cause to believe that another person committed a crime. Rather, the court should decide whether there was a quantum of evidence that would lead an ordinary and reasonable layman in the circumstances to believe that the present plaintiff committed a crime. Hajec v. Novitzke, 46 Wis.2d 402, 175 N.W.2d 193 (1970). Discharge of the present plaintiff in the prior criminal proceeding is prima facie evidence of want of probable cause. Id.

**Advice of Counsel**. Advice of counsel is an affirmative defense. If the defense of advice of counsel is in the case, then the Committee suggests that the trial judge submit that question to the jury first. In <u>Elmer</u>, <u>supra</u>, the court held that advice of counsel is a complete defense. This was affirmed in <u>Peters v. Hall</u>, 263 Wis. 450, 57 N.W.2d 723 (1953).

If full disclosure of all facts within the knowledge of the defendant was made to the district attorney or his lawyer for the purpose of obtaining legal guidance and the disclosure results in advice which is honestly followed in commencing the criminal proceedings, such proof constitutes a complete defense. The result is that one of the essential elements of malicious prosecution, i.e., want of probable cause, is negated and the entire malicious prosecution action fails. Also, in some instances, the determination of whether there has been such a full and fair disclosure is a matter of law and not properly for the jury. See Smith v. Federal Rubber Co., 170 Wis. 497, 175 N.W. 808 (1920).

**Differences Between Abuse of Process and Malicious Prosecution**. For a discussion of the differences between the tort of malicious prosecution and abuse of process, see <u>Brownsell v. Klawitter</u>, 102 Wis.2d 108, 306 N.W.2d 41 (1981), <u>Strid v. Converse</u>, 111 Wis.2d 418, 331 N.W.2d 350 (1983), and Maniaci v. Marquette University, 50 Wis.2d 287, 184 N.W.2d 168 (1971).

**Burden of Proof**. The Committee believes the burden of proof to establish malicious prosecution is the middle burden. See Wis JI-Civil 205.

#### 2605 MALICIOUS PROSECUTION: INSTITUTING A CIVIL PROCEEDING

Question \_\_\_\_\_ asks: did (<u>plaintiff</u>) maliciously prosecute (<u>defendant</u>) [by instituting a civil proceeding].

To establish a malicious prosecution based on instituting a civil proceeding, (<u>plaintiff</u>) must prove the following six elements:

- 1) A judicial proceeding was (brought) (continued) against (<u>plaintiff</u>). [Insert type of civil proceeding] is a judicial proceeding.
- 2) The proceeding was (brought) (continued) by, or at the instance of, (<u>defendant</u>).
- 3) The proceeding was terminated in favor of (<u>plaintiff</u>).
- 4) (<u>Defendant</u>) acted with malice in instituting the proceedings.
- 5) The proceeding was instituted without probable cause.
- 6) (<u>Plaintiff</u>) suffered damages as a result of the proceeding.

The fourth element requires that (<u>defendant</u>) acted with malice in instituting the proceeding. A proceeding is maliciously instituted when a person who brings the proceeding has a hostile or vindictive motive or when the person's primary purpose was something other than succeeding on the merits of the claim.

The fifth element relates to whether the proceeding instituted by (<u>defendant</u>) was without probable cause. This element is satisfied if, at the time (<u>defendant</u>) initiated the proceeding against (<u>plaintiff</u>), (<u>defendant</u>) knew or had reason to believe that (<u>plaintiff</u>)

was not [insert facts necessary to establish probable cause]. There is no probable cause if you are satisfied (<u>defendant</u>) did not have sufficient facts concerning (<u>plaintiff</u>)'s conduct that would lead a person of ordinary caution and prudence to believe (<u>plaintiff</u>) [insert facts establishing a claim.]

### **SPECIAL VERDICT**

Question 1:	Did ( <u>defendant</u> ) maliciously prosecute ( <u>plaintiff</u> )?			
	ANSWER:			
	(Yes or No)			
Question 2:	What sum of money will compensate ( <u>plaintiff</u> ) for [insert damages]?			
	$\Delta$ NSWER.			

#### **COMMENT**

This instruction and comment were approved in 2015. This revision was approved by the Committee in September 2021; it removed language following the elements of the instruction and added to the comment.

See also, the Comment to Wis JI-Civil 2600.

**Institution of a Prior Civil Action**. In Wisconsin, the unjustified institution of a prior criminal or civil action may provide a valid claim for malicious prosecution as long as the other five elements of malicious prosecution are present. <u>Strid v. Converse</u>, 111 Wis.2d 418, 331 N.W.2d 350 (1983); <u>Maniaci v. Marquette Univ.</u>, 50 Wis.2d 287, 184 N.W.2d 168 (1970).

Element 3; Termination of Prior Action in Present Plaintiff's Favor. The prior civil action is terminated in the present plaintiff's favor when the prior action results in a defense verdict or dismissal on the merits with prejudice. However, the voluntary compromise and settlement of a prior civil suit does not satisfy the "favorable termination" element and, thus, bars a subsequent malicious prosecution suit. Thompson v. Beecham, 72 Wis. 2d 356 (1976); Tower Special Facilities, Inc. v. Investment Club, Inc., 104

Wis.2d 221 (Ct. App. 1981); <u>Lechner v. Ebenreiter</u>, 235 Wis. 244, 292 N.W. 913 (1940). Similarly, termination of the prior proceeding by some act, trick, or device of the present defendant does not constitute a "favorable termination." See <u>Bristol v. Eckhardt</u>, 254 Wis. 297 (1948); <u>Schwartz v. Schwartz</u>, 206 Wis. 420 (1932) (no bar to malicious prosecution suit where settlement of prior action induced by duress).

In <u>Monroe v. Chase</u>, 2021 WI 66, ¶3, 397 Wis.2d 805, 961 N.W.2d 50, the Wisconsin Supreme Court clarified that a withdrawal of a prior proceeding <u>may</u> satisfy the favorable-termination element of a malicious prosecution action. The Court came to this conclusion after adopting the approach of the Restatement (Second) of Torts §674 cmt. J., which "focuses on the circumstances of the termination to determine whether it was favorable." <u>Id</u>. at ¶20. The Restatement (Second) of Torts §674 cmt. J, provides as follows:

Termination in favor of the person against whom civil proceedings are brought. Civil proceedings may be terminated in favor of the person against whom they are brought . . . by (1) the favorable adjudication of the claim by a competent tribunal, or (2) the withdrawal of the proceedings by the person bringing them, or (3) the dismissal of the proceedings because of his [or her] failure to prosecute them . . . Whether a withdrawal or abandonment constitutes a final termination of the case in favor of the person against whom the proceedings are brought, and whether the withdrawal is evidence of a lack of probable cause for the initiation, depends upon the circumstances under which the proceedings are withdrawn.

Whether or not a withdrawal of a prior proceeding constitutes a favorable termination is a question for a fact-finder. Monroe, supra, at ¶26.

Element 4; Malice. The plaintiff must prove that the defendant acted "maliciously" to recover in a malicious prosecution suit. Meyer v. Ewald, 66 Wis.2d 168, 224 N.W.2d 419 (1974). While the voluntary dismissal of the prior proceeding may be used to establish the lack of probable cause for the prior action, the voluntary dismissal may not be used to infer the existence of malice. Id.; Yelk v. Seefeldt, 35 Wis.2d 271, 151 N.W.2d 4 (1967). There must be some independent evidence of conduct from which improper motives can be inferred. Id. Malice may be proven by showing "malice in fact" or "malice in law." Meyer, supra.

"Malice in fact" involves situations where the defendant acted chiefly from motives of ill will. <u>Id.</u> A willful and wanton disregard for the facts or law may provide a basis for malice in fact but such willful and wanton conduct must be of such a nature and character as to evince a hostile or vindictive motive. <u>Id.</u>

"Malice in law" may exist even when the defendant cannot be shown to have acted from motives of actual ill will or vindictiveness. Malice in law exists if evidence is presented from which the jury might infer that the defendant instigated the former proceedings for an improper motive or purpose, that is, for a primary purpose other than bringing an offender to justice. Meyer, supra; Yelk, supra. An example of malice in law is where a criminal prosecution is instituted for the purpose of collecting a debt or compelling the delivery of property. See Peters v. Hall, 263 Wis. 450, 57 N.W.2d 723 (1953).

Element 5; Lack of Probable Cause for the Prior Civil Proceedings. Lack of probable cause is an essential element for an action for malicious prosecution. <u>Krieg v. Dayton-Hudson Corp.</u>, 104 Wis.2d

455, 311 N.W.2d 641 (1981). Probable cause is an objective standard measured by the reasonably prudent person's belief in the cause of action in light of the facts known or reasonably ascertainable. <u>Id</u>. However, probable cause for the prior action is not necessarily lacking where the present defendant acted without knowledge of all of the facts or acted negligently. See <u>Neumann v. Industrial Sound Engineering, Inc.</u>, 31 Wis.2d 471, 143 N.W.2d 543 (1966).

Probable cause may be lacking with respect to prior civil proceedings where the party initiating the prior proceedings acted without a reasonable belief in the existence of the facts underlying the claim or did not reasonably believe that such facts state a valid claim. Neumann, supra. Generally, for purposes of a malicious prosecution action, no inference of want of probable cause arises from the dismissal of the prior civil proceeding. Novick v. Becker, 4 Wis.2d 432, 90 N.W.2d 620 (1958). However, the dismissal of an involuntary bankruptcy petition or insanity proceeding is prima facie evidence of lack of probable cause because these actions "stand in the same class as a criminal case." Neumann, supra.

#### Advice of Counsel. See Wis JI-Civil 2611.

**Element 6; Damages.** For malicious prosecution suits involving prior civil proceedings, Wisconsin adheres to the minority "English" rule that the plaintiff must plead and prove special damages. Krieg, supra; Schier v. Denny, 9 Wis.2d 340 (1960); Johnson v. Calado, 159 Wis.2d 446; 464 N.W.2d 647 (1991). "Special damages" are injuries in the nature of an interference with the person or property of the present plaintiff by the prior action. See Schier, supra, Myhre v. Hessey, 242 Wis. 638, 9 N.W.2d 106 (1943). Special damages are present where the present plaintiff has been subjected to a wrongfully brought garnishment action (Novick, supra) or a wrongful winding up of a partnership which interfered with the plaintiff's possession and use of property (Luby v. Bennett, 111 Wis. 613 (1901)).

An allegation that the present plaintiff incurred expenses in defending himself against the prior proceeding fails to allege special damages. See Myhre, supra. In Schier, supra, the Wisconsin Supreme Court concluded that the plaintiff's claims of business reputation damage, mental anguish, public ridicule, humiliation, embarrassment, and attorney fees failed to allege such interference with the plaintiff's person or property as to amount to special damages.

**Burden of Proof**. The committee believes the burden of proof to establish malicious prosecution is the middle burden. See Wis JI-Civil 205.

2770 WISCONSIN FAIR DEALERSHIP LAW: GOOD CAUSE FOR TERMINATION, CANCELLATION, NONRENEWAL, FAILURE TO RENEW, OR SUBSTANTIAL CHANGE IN COMPETITIVE CIRCUMSTANCES (WIS. STAT. § 135.03)

The plaintiff claims that (grantor) violated the Wisconsin Fair Dealership Law by (terminating) (cancelling) (failing to renew) (substantially changing the competitive circumstances) of its dealership agreement w/\_\_\_\_ without good cause. Question \_\_\_\_ of the special verdict asks:

Was the dealership agreement between (dealer) and (grantor) (e.g. terminated, cancelled, etc.) by (grantor) for good cause?

To answer this question "yes" you must determine whether (grantor) had good cause to (e.g. terminate) the dealership agreement it had with (dealer). The burden of proof on this question is on (grantor) to satisfy you that it had good cause to (e.g. terminate) the dealership agreement.

To determine if good cause existed, you must consider the efforts of (<u>dealer</u>) in fulfilling the terms of the agreement. [(<u>Grantor</u>) had good cause to (<u>e.g. terminate</u>) its dealership agreement with (<u>dealer</u>) if (<u>dealer</u>) did not substantially comply with an essential and reasonable requirement imposed, or sought to be imposed, by (<u>grantor</u>). [A requirement that discriminates against (<u>dealer</u>) and does not apply to other similar dealers either by its terms or in the way it is enforced is not an essential and reasonable requirement.)]

[Where evidence of bad faith by a dealer is presented: (Grantor) had good cause to

(<u>insert act</u>) if (<u>dealer</u>) acted in bad faith in carrying out the dealership agreement. Bad faith means an intention to take unfair advantage of (<u>grantor</u>) through fraud, dishonesty, or failure to cooperate or to provide accurate information, or by other activities that render the transaction unfair to (<u>grantor</u>).]

#### **SPECIAL VERDICT**

See Wis JI-Civil 2772.

#### **COMMENT**

This instruction was approved in 2002 and revised in 2004. This revision was approved by the Committee in January 2022; it revised the language of the instruction to more accurately mirror the statute.

Wis. Stat. § 135.03. For the definition of "good cause," and the burden of proof, see Wis. Stat. § 135.02(4).

#### **2790 TRADE NAME INFRINGEMENT**

(<u>Plaintiff</u>) alleges that (<u>defendant</u>) has infringed (<u>plaintiff</u>)'s trade name. Trade names are entitled to protection from infringement to protect the reputation and goodwill of the trade name owner.

A trade name is a word or designation (symbol), or a combination of words or designations, that is used in a manner that identifies a business and distinguishes it from the business or enterprise of others.

To find infringement in this case, you must find first that (<u>plaintiff</u>)'s use of the name

"\_\_\_\_\_\_" is a trade name; and, second, that the use of the name

"\_\_\_\_\_\_" by (<u>defendant</u>) creates a likelihood of confusion among the consuming public with (<u>plaintiff</u>)'s trade name, "\_\_\_\_\_\_."

A designation is protectable as a trade name only if the designation is distinctive. Designations can be either inherently distinctive or can acquire distinctiveness, through secondary meaning. Inherently distinctive designations are designations that are likely to be perceived by prospective purchasers as symbols that indicate an association with a particular source. Secondary meaning describes the function of identifying goods or services with a particular or single source. A name that is inherently distinctive does not require secondary meaning to be protectable. A name that is not inherently distinctive requires secondary meaning to be protectable. Secondary meaning occurs when the

consuming public has come to recognize the trade name as one that identifies the business. The consuming public must recognize the trade name as identifying and distinguishing a (plaintiff)'s goods or services. Secondary meaning can be established through: direct evidence, such as consumer testimony or consumer surveys, or through circumstantial evidence, such as evidence of exclusivity, length and manner of the trade name's use, the amount and manner of advertising, amount of sales, market share, and number of customers.

To constitute an infringement, it is not necessary that every word of the trade name be appropriated. It is sufficient that enough be taken to deceive the public. If one word of the trade name is the prominent portion, it may be given greater weight than surrounding words.

(<u>Plaintiff</u>) and (<u>defendant</u>) do not have to be in direct competition for you to find infringement.

[A designation that is understood by prospective customers to denominate the general category of services or business with which it is used is a generic designation. The user of a generic designation, for example, barber shop, lumber company, hospital, or plumber, can never acquire rights in the generic designation as a trade name.]

Once (<u>plaintiff</u>) has established that the designation it seeks to protect is distinctive, either inherently or through secondary meaning, it must prove that (<u>defendant</u>)'s use of a similar designation will cause a likelihood of confusion. In determining whether there is

or was a likelihood of confusion	between ( <u>plaintiff</u> )'s [trade] name and ( <u>defendant</u> )'s use
of "	" you may draw on your common experience as
citizens of the community.	

The factors you may consider in determining likelihood of confusion are:

- the degree of similarity between the names
- the similarity of the products and overlap of marketing channels
- the area and manner of concurrent use
- the degree of care likely to be used by consumers in selecting the (goods) (services)
- the strength and distinctiveness of (plaintiff)'s name
- evidence of actual confusion, and (<u>defendant</u>)'s intent when selecting the name.

No one factor or consideration is conclusive. Each aspect should be weighed in light of the total evidence presented at the trial. However, while actual confusion or deception is not essential to a finding of trade name infringement, this evidence is entitled to substantial weight.

#### SPECIAL VERDICT

Question 1:	Did ( <u>plaintiff</u> ) establish that its use of the name "		
	name?		
	AN	ISWER:	

Yes or No

If you answe	red "yes" to question 1, then answer the following question.
Question 2:	Does (defendant)'s use of the name "" infringe
	( <u>plaintiff</u> )'s trade name?
If you answe	red "yes" to question 2, then answer the following question.
Question 3:	Was (defendant)'s infringement a cause of damages to (plaintiff)?
	ANSWER:
	Yes or No
If you answe	red "yes" to question 3, then answer the following question.
Question 4:	What sum of money, if any, do you award against (defendant) as damages
	for the trade name infringement?
	\$

#### **COMMENT**

This instruction and comment were approved in 2009. The comment was updated in 2020. This revision was approved by the Committee in September 2021; it updated the comment.

In <u>Ritter v. Farrow</u>, 2021 WI 14, 395 Wis.2d 787, 955 N.W.2d 122, the Wisconsin Supreme Court provided a brief primer on trademarks and trade names. The Court concluded that while Wisconsin law has long recognized a common law and statutory cause of action for trademark and trade name infringement, "the state's jurisprudence on trademark law is 'undeveloped." <u>Id.</u> at ¶25. Therefore, the Court provided that it "look to federal law for guidance and key principles, as well as to treatises" when interpreting such infringement matters. Id. at ¶25. See also <u>First Wis. Nat'l Bank of Milwaukee v. Wichman</u>, 85 Wis.2d 54, 63, 270 N.W.2d 168 (1978), <u>Koepsell's Olde Popcorn Wagons</u>, <u>Inc. v. Koepsell's Festival Popcorn Wagons</u>, <u>Ltd.</u>, 2004 WI App 129, ¶34, 275 Wis.2d 397, 685 N.W.2d 853.

Trade Name. The Wisconsin Supreme Court defined trade name in <u>First Wisconsin National Bank of Milwaukee v. Wichman</u>, 85 Wis.2d 54, 270 N.W.2d 168 (1978), in which the court adopted the rationale of Restatement (Second) of Torts, Tentative Draft No. 8 as the common law in Wisconsin. The court said:

Restatement (Second) of Torts capsulizes this trend of the courts to bring the definitions of trade names and trademarks in harmony with their function. Tentative Draft No. 8 (1963), sec. 715, defines both trademarks and trade names which have acquired a secondary meaning as trademarks. The term, "trade name," standing alone, refers to a business name. Sec. 716, supra. Sec. 715 defines trademark:

"A trademark is a word, name, symbol, device, letter, numeral, or picture, or any combination of any of them in any form or arrangement, which is used by a person on or in connection with his goods or services in a manner which identifies them as his and distinguishes them from those of others, provided such use is not prohibited by legislative enactment or by an otherwise defined public policy."

"[i]f a trade name has acquired distinctiveness, or secondary meaning, and thus identifies a particular business entity, the user of such trade name is entitled to protection against infringement of that trade name in the same manner and to the same extent as the user of a trademark which has acquired a secondary meaning, that is, to protect the user of the trade name in his business and to protect the public against confusion and deception. The mere fact of the use of a trade name, however, is not sufficient to entitle the user to enjoin all other uses. It is necessary to show that the effect of the use has been to identify the particular business entity and to distinguish it from others and that the actor's use of likely to cause confusion and deception." 85 Wis.2d 54, at p. 62-63; Sec. 717, supra, comment a.

**Infringement Claims; Jury Instructions**. In <u>D. L. Anderson</u>, 2008 WI 126, 314 Wis.2d 560, 757 N.W.2d 803, the Wisconsin Supreme Court discussed the elements, proof, damages, and jury instructions for trade infringement cases.

The supreme court approved the <u>Wichman</u> analysis of trade name infringement for use in jury instructions, in D. L. Anderson's Lakeside Leisure Co., Inc. v. Anderson:

"¶42 The trade name infringement jury instructions given by the circuit court were based directly on language in Wisconsin case law.[fn15] In First Wisconsin National Bank of Milwaukee v. Wichman, 85 Wis.2d 54, 270 N.W.2d 168 (1978), this court adopted the approach enunciated in the Restatement (Second) of Torts §§ 715, 716, 717 (Tentative Draft No. 8, 1963). There this court said, "[T]he user of [a] trade name is entitled to protection against infringement of that trade name." Wichman, Page 1985 Wis.2d at 62-63. Spheeris Sporting Goods, Inc. v. Spheeris on Capitol, 157 Wis.2d 298, 459 N.W.2d 581 (Ct. App. 1990), which like this case dealt with a trade name in connection with the purchase of a business appears to be the source of the sections in the jury instructions on trade names that include family names: "Ordinarily, a party has a right to do business under his or her own name. The right may, however, be voluntarily limited by contract. . . . [W]hen a family name is part of a trade name, the family name may be transferred to the purchaser the same as any other asset of the business." Id. at 308 (citations omitted).

**Elements**. The plaintiff must prove two elements to establish infringement: First, that the plaintiff's trade name has acquired a secondary meaning, and, second, that there is a likelihood of confusion between plaintiff's name and the one the defendant is using.

Anderson approved the trial court's instructions on secondary meaning and likelihood of confusion as

#### follows:

¶ 50 Next we proceed to the question of whether the evidence was sufficient to support the jury's verdict. The jury was instructed as follows regarding trade name infringement:

When a trade name has acquired a secondary meaning, the name is entitled to protection from unfair competition based on trade name infringement. . . . If you find that plaintiff's trade name has acquired secondary meaning, you must then determine whether there is a likelihood of confusion between plaintiff's trade name, "D. L. Anderson Co." and defendant's name, "Anderson Marine" . . . . It is not necessary to constitute an infringement that every word of the trade name be appropriated. It is sufficient that enough be taken to deceive the public. If one word of the trade name is the salient portion, it may be given greater weight than surrounding words.

- ¶ 51 The jury instructions thus lay out the two elements a plaintiff must establish to prevail on a trade name infringement Page 23 claim: that the name had secondary meaning and that a second party's use created a likelihood of confusion.
- ¶ 52 Secondary meaning "describes the function of identifying goods or services with a particular or single source. . . . Key to establishing secondary meaning for a trade name is evidence that the relevant target group mentally identifies the trade name as the single source for the product." Spheeris, 157 Wis.2d at 312 (citations omitted). . .

**Damages for Infringement**. Anderson approved the use of the tort damage instruction, modified Wis JI-Civil 1700. On this point, the supreme court reversed the court of appeals, and clarified that a damage verdict for trade name infringement does not require precise mathematical evidence:

- ¶ 62 As we noted, the jury was instructed here that the party claiming damages must "satisfy [the jury] by the greater weight of the credible evidence, to a reasonable certainty, that the person sustained damages . . . and the amount of the damages." Wis JI-Civil 1700.
- ¶ 63 In evaluating the sufficiency of the evidence on a damage award in tort, there is thus a two-step analysis: the fact of damages and the amount.
- ¶ 64 "[T]he fact of damage need only be proved with reasonable, not absolute, certainty. And once the fact of damage is established with reasonable certainty, the amount of damages need only be shown with as much certainty as the nature of the tort and the circumstances of the case permit." 4 Rudolf Callmann, <u>Callmann on Unfair Competition</u>, <u>Trademarks and Monopolies</u> § 23:55 (4th ed. 2003).

Infringement claims in connection with the purchase of a business. In <u>Ritter v. Farrow</u>, <u>supra</u>, the Wisconsin Supreme Court, citing <u>McCarthy on Trademarks and Unfair Competition</u> § 18:37 (5th ed. 2019), provided that "It is an 'old and clear rule, universally followed' that when a business is sold, 'trademarks and the good will of the business that the trademarks symbolize are presumed to pass with the sale of the business." 2021 WI 14 at ¶27. Therefore, when a business sells the entirety of its assets, the trade name is presumably included, and passes to the buyer.

**Reverse trademark confusion**. For a decision discussing the theory of reverse trademark confusion, see <u>Fabick, Inc. v. JFTCO, Inc.</u>, 944 F.3d 649, (7th Cir. 2019).

#### 3028 CONTRACTS IMPLIED IN LAW (UNJUST ENRICHMENT)

This case involves a claim based upon alleged unjust enrichment.

The elements of unjust enrichment are: (1) a benefit conferred upon the defendant by the plaintiff; (2) knowledge or appreciation of the benefit by the defendant; and (3) acceptance and retention by the defendant of such benefit under such circumstances that it would be unfair for him or her to retain it without paying the value thereof.

It is not necessary to prove that the recipient of the benefit was at fault or guilty of wrongdoing in any way, but it must be established that as between the parties it would be unfair for the recipient to retain the benefit without paying the reasonable value of the benefit.

A benefit to the defendant may be (services rendered for (<u>defendant</u>)) (goods or merchandise received by (<u>defendant</u>)) (improvements to (<u>defendant</u>)'s real estate) (money paid to (<u>defendant</u>) or someone else on (<u>defendant</u>)'s behalf).

A loss to the plaintiff without an actual benefit to the defendant is not recoverable as unjust enrichment.

If a person declines in advance a benefit to be conferred by another, then the person conferring the benefit may not recover for unjust enrichment.

[It is not a defense to the action that (<u>defendant</u>) is a minor or otherwise incompetent to make a contract, but a minor may show that in equity and good conscience, (<u>plaintiff</u>) is

not entitled to recover in whole or in part.]

[In this case, (<u>plaintiff</u>) has alleged fault or wrongdoing on the part of (<u>defendant</u>) (fraud) (duress) (nonperformance or breach of contract) which is elsewhere in these instructions defined for you. The burden of proof is on (<u>plaintiff</u>) to establish wrongdoing by (<u>defendant</u>).]

#### **COMMENT**

This instruction was originally approved by the Committee in 1979 and revised in 2015 and 2020. This revision was approved by the Committee in September 2021; it added to the comment.

In cases where an unjust enrichment claim is based on contributions made by one party for the benefit of another, the unjust enrichment claim must demonstrate that, viewed in their entirety, the contributions were made to a "joint enterprise" in which the parties were mutually engaged, and which resulted in an accumulation of wealth that a party had unfairly retained. See <u>Sands v. Menard</u>, 2017 WI 110, ¶43, 379 Wis.2d 1, 904 N.W.2d 789.

"A claim for unjust enrichment may exist when two people work together or when two people combine assets for defendant's benefit." See <u>Lawlis v. Thompson</u>, 137 Wis.2d 490, 493, 405 N.W.2d 317 (1987).

**Knowledge of Benefit**. When the benefit conferred can be easily returned, like money for example, the benefited party need not have knowledge or appreciation of the gain at the precise time it is conferred. Instead, the party asserting an unjust enrichment claim satisfies the knowledge or appreciation element by proving that the benefited party had knowledge of or appreciated the benefit at a time which provided the party a fair opportunity to choose whether to accept or reject that benefit. <u>Buckett v. Jante</u>, 2009 WI App.55, 316 Wis.2d 804, 767 N.W.2d 376.

**Subject matter covered in contract**. The doctrine of unjust enrichment does not apply where parties have entered into a contract, and the subject matter of that contract covers the aspects of a plaintiff's equitable claim. <u>Greenlee v. Rainbow Auction/Realty Co.</u>, 202 Wis.2d 653, 671-672, 553 N.W.2d 257 (1996). However, "Wisconsin law does not bar a party from seeking equitable relief for a benefit conferred, if that benefit falls outside the scope of the parties' contractual relationship." <u>Meyer v. Laser Vision Inst., LLC</u>, 2006 WI App 70, 290 Wis. 2d 764, 781, 714 N.W.2d 223 quoting <u>Northern Crossarm Co., Inc. v. Chemical Specialties, Inc.</u>, 318 F.Supp.2d 752. This is known as the "total business relationship exception."

**Issue triable of right by a jury**. Recovery based on unjust enrichment is sometimes referred to as an action for "quasi contract," <u>Watts v. Watts</u>, 137 Wis.2d 506, 530-531, 405 N.W.2d 303 (1987). This doctrine has been a well-recognized and long-accepted as part of Wisconsin law since 1844. See <u>Rogers v.</u>

Bradford, 1 Pinney Wis. 418 (1844). Quasi contracts are legal obligations in the sense that they originated in the courts of law and are enforced by legal remedies. Graf v. Neith Co-op. Dairy Products Association, 216 Wis. 519, 257 N.W. 618, 619 (1934). See also Arjay Investment Co. v. Kohlmetz, 9 Wis.2d 535, 539, 101 N.W.2d 700 (1960), Watts, supra, at 530, and Lawlis, supra, at 496. Because actions on the theory of quasi contract are actions at law, they are triable as of right to a jury. See State v. Schweda, 2007 WI 100, ¶20, 303 Wis.2d 353, 736 N.W.2d 49 (2007).

#### 3079 TERMINATION OF EASEMENT BY ABANDONMENT

(Servient landowner) contends that the easement was abandoned by (easement holder). To prove this abandonment, (servient landowner) must prove that (easement holder) has shown by (his) (her) (its) conduct a clear intention to forgo all future uses authorized by the easement. The fact that (easement holder) has not used the easement for (specify period of nonuse, e.g., three years) is not by itself proof of abandonment, but it is evidence that you may consider in deciding whether (he) (she) (it) intended to abandon the easement. You must find that (easement holder)'s conduct clearly indicates an intention to give up the use of the easement for the future as well as for the present.

[Conduct, that is inconsistent with the continued use of the easement, indicates an intention to give it up].

[Use this paragraph if there is evidence of that the easement holder made verbal expressions indicative on an intent to abandon: Verbal expressions, by themselves are insufficient to constitute the type of conduct required to forgo all future uses authorized by an easement. However, verbal expressions may give meaning to acts that indicate an intention to abandon an easement but do not conclusively demonstrate such an intention on their own.]

#### **COMMENT**

This instruction and comment were approved by the Committee in September 2021.

This instruction should be used when a servient landowner sues or defends by claiming that the dominant owner's easement has been abandoned.

In <u>Burkman v. New Lisbon</u>, 246 Wis. 547, 18 N.W.2d 4 (1945), the Wisconsin Supreme Court adopted comments (c) and (d) of the RESTATEMENT OF THE LAW OF PROPERTY, VOL. V, § 504 (1940) to determine whether flowage rights acquired by prescription were lost by abandonment. Comments (c) and (d) read as follows:

- c. Conduct as to Use. An intentional relinquishment of an easement indicated by conduct respecting the use authorized by it constitutes an abandonment of the easement. The intention required in the abandonment of an easement is the intention not to make in the future the uses authorized by it. The benefit of an easement lies in the privilege of use of the land subject to it. There is no abandonment unless there is a giving up of that use. The giving up must be evidenced by conduct respecting the use of such a character as to indicate an intention to give up the use for the future as well as for the present. Conduct, when inconsistent with the continuance of the use, indicates an intention to give it up. The conduct required for abandonment cannot consist of verbal expressions of intention. Such expressions are effective to extinguish an easement only when they comply with the requirements of a release and operate as such. Verbal expressions of an intention to abandon are relevant, however, for the purpose of giving meaning to acts which are susceptible of being interpreted as indicating an intention to give up the use authorized by an easement, but which do not give themselves conclusively demonstrate the intention which animated them.
- d. Non-use. Conduct from which an intention to abandon an easement may be inferred may consist in a failure to make the use authorized. Non-use does not of itself produce an abandonment no matter how long continued. It but evidences the necessary intention. Its effectiveness as evidence is dependent upon the circumstances. Under some circumstances a relatively short period of non-use may be sufficient to give rise to the necessary inference; under other circumstances a relatively long period may be insufficient. The duration of the period of nonuse, though never conclusive as to the intention to abandon, is ordinarily admissible for the purpose of showing intention in that regard. (Emphasis added).

Comments (c) and (d) of the RESTATEMENT OF THE LAW OF PROPERTY, VOL. V, § 504 (1940) were also adopted by the Wisconsin Court of Appeals in Spencer v. Kosir, 2007 WI App 135, 301 Wis.2d 521, 733 N.W.2d 921 and Bohn v. Leiber, 2020 WI App 52, 393 Wis.2d 757, 948 N.W.2d 370.

**Demonstrating an intention to permanently abandon**. In <u>Spencer v. Kosir</u>, 2007 WI App 135, 301 Wis.2d 521, ¶10, 733 N.W.2d 921, the Wisconsin Court of Appeals noted the requirement that there be an "affirmative act" by the easement holder, rather than the property owner, to show abandonment. For example, despite a significant period of non-use by the easement holder, along with acquiescence in the property owner's non-permitted use of the property, the court found no abandonment since there was a lack of an affirmative action by the easement holder demonstrating his intent to abandon. Id. at ¶¶9-10.

In regard to the affirmative action requirement, <u>Bohn v. Leiber</u>, 2020 WI App 52, 393 Wis.2d 757, 766, 948 N.W.2d 370, is distinguishable from <u>Spencer</u>, <u>supra</u>. In <u>Bohn</u>, the Wisconsin Court of Appeals

determined that the easement holder's comment that "he had 'no intention of ever building a roadway on the easement," by itself, would be insufficient to constitute abandonment." Additionally, the fact that the easement area was never utilized as a roadway, by itself, would also be insufficient to show abandonment. Id. at 766. However, when these examples were coupled with the easement holder's affirmative act of planting numerous trees within the easement area, the court concluded that there was a question of fact as to whether the easement was abandoned.



# WISCONSIN JURY INSTRUCTIONS

# **CIVIL**

# **VOLUME III**

**Wisconsin Civil Jury Instructions Committee** 

• 2022 Supplement (Release No. 53)

#### **WIS JI-CIVIL**

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

## **VOLUME III**

## **CONTRACTS** (Continued)

#### **Insurance**

3100	Insurance Contract: Misrepresentation or Breach of Affirmative Warranty by the Insured (1998)
3105	Insurance Contract: Failure of Condition or Breach of Promissory Warranty (1994)
3110	Insurance Contract: Definition of "Resident" or "Member of a Household" (2022)
3112	Owner's Permission for Use of Automobile (1993)
3115	Failure of Insured to Cooperate (2016)
3116	Failure to Cooperate: Materiality (2016)
3117	Failure to Give Notice to Insurer (1994)
3118	Failure to Give Notice to Insurer: Materiality (2002)
	Breach of Warranty
	-
3200	Products Liability: Law Note (2021)
3200 3201	Implied Warranty: Merchantability Defined (2009)
3201 3202	Implied Warranty: Merchantability Defined (2009) Implied Warranty: Fitness for Particular Purpose (1994)
3201 3202 3203	Implied Warranty: Merchantability Defined (2009) Implied Warranty: Fitness for Particular Purpose (1994) Implied Warranty: By Reason of Course of Dealing or Usage of Trade (1994)
3201 3202 3203 3204	Implied Warranty: Merchantability Defined (2009) Implied Warranty: Fitness for Particular Purpose (1994) Implied Warranty: By Reason of Course of Dealing or Usage of Trade (1994) Implied Warranty: Sale of Food (1994)
3201 3202 3203 3204 3205	Implied Warranty: Merchantability Defined (2009) Implied Warranty: Fitness for Particular Purpose (1994) Implied Warranty: By Reason of Course of Dealing or Usage of Trade (1994) Implied Warranty: Sale of Food (1994) Implied Warranty: Exclusion or Modification (2009)
3201 3202 3203 3204	Implied Warranty: Merchantability Defined (2009) Implied Warranty: Fitness for Particular Purpose (1994) Implied Warranty: By Reason of Course of Dealing or Usage of Trade (1994) Implied Warranty: Sale of Food (1994) Implied Warranty: Exclusion or Modification (2009) Implied Warranty: Exclusion by Reason of Course of Dealing or Usage of
3201 3202 3203 3204 3205 3206	Implied Warranty: Merchantability Defined (2009) Implied Warranty: Fitness for Particular Purpose (1994) Implied Warranty: By Reason of Course of Dealing or Usage of Trade (1994) Implied Warranty: Sale of Food (1994) Implied Warranty: Exclusion or Modification (2009) Implied Warranty: Exclusion by Reason of Course of Dealing or Usage of Trade (1994)
3201 3202 3203 3204 3205 3206	<ul> <li>Implied Warranty: Merchantability Defined (2009)</li> <li>Implied Warranty: Fitness for Particular Purpose (1994)</li> <li>Implied Warranty: By Reason of Course of Dealing or Usage of Trade (1994)</li> <li>Implied Warranty: Sale of Food (1994)</li> <li>Implied Warranty: Exclusion or Modification (2009)</li> <li>Implied Warranty: Exclusion by Reason of Course of Dealing or Usage of Trade (1994)</li> <li>Implied Warranty: Use of Product after the Defect Known (2009)</li> </ul>
3201 3202 3203 3204 3205 3206 3207 3208	Implied Warranty: Merchantability Defined (2009) Implied Warranty: Fitness for Particular Purpose (1994) Implied Warranty: By Reason of Course of Dealing or Usage of Trade (1994) Implied Warranty: Sale of Food (1994) Implied Warranty: Exclusion or Modification (2009) Implied Warranty: Exclusion by Reason of Course of Dealing or Usage of Trade (1994) Implied Warranty: Use of Product after the Defect Known (2009) Implied Warranty: Failure to Examine Product (2009)
3201 3202 3203 3204 3205 3206 3207 3208 3209	Implied Warranty: Hitness for Particular Purpose (1994) Implied Warranty: By Reason of Course of Dealing or Usage of Trade (1994) Implied Warranty: Sale of Food (1994) Implied Warranty: Exclusion or Modification (2009) Implied Warranty: Exclusion by Reason of Course of Dealing or Usage of Trade (1994) Implied Warranty: Use of Product after the Defect Known (2009) Implied Warranty: Failure to Examine Product (2009) Implied Warranty: Susceptibility or Allergy of User (2009)
3201 3202 3203 3204 3205 3206 3207 3208	Implied Warranty: Merchantability Defined (2009) Implied Warranty: Fitness for Particular Purpose (1994) Implied Warranty: By Reason of Course of Dealing or Usage of Trade (1994) Implied Warranty: Sale of Food (1994) Implied Warranty: Exclusion or Modification (2009) Implied Warranty: Exclusion by Reason of Course of Dealing or Usage of Trade (1994) Implied Warranty: Use of Product after the Defect Known (2009) Implied Warranty: Failure to Examine Product (2009)

CONTENTS	WIS JI-CIVIL	CONTENTS
----------	--------------	----------

3211	Implied Warranty: Notice of Breach (1993)
3220	Express Warranty: General (1994)
3222	Express Warranty: No Duty of Inspection (1994)
3225	Express Warranty: Statement of Opinion (1994)
3230	Express Warranty under the Uniform Commercial Code (1994)
	<b>Duties of Manufacturers and Sellers</b>
3240	Negligence: Duty of Manufacturer (2007)
3242	Negligence: Duty of Manufacturer (Supplier) to Warn (2020)
3244	Negligence: Duty of Manufacturer (Seller) to Give Adequate Instructions as to Use of a Complicated Machine (Product) (1994)
3246	Negligence: Duty of Manufacturer (Seller) Who Undertakes to Give Instruction as to the Use of a Machine (Product) (1994)
3248	Negligence: Duty of Restaurant Operator in Sale of Food Containing Harmful Natural Ingredients (1994)
3250	Negligence: Duty of Seller: Installing (Servicing) Product (1994)
3254	Duty of Buyer or Consumer: Contributory Negligence (2015)
3260	Strict Liability: Duty of Manufacturer to Ultimate User (For Actions
	Commenced Before February 1, 2011) (2014)
3260.1	Product Liability: Wis. Stat. § 895.047 (For Actions Commenced after January 31, 2011) (2014)
3262	Strict Liability: Duty of Manufacturer (Supplier) to Warn (For Actions
	Commenced Before February 1, 2011) (2014)
3264	Strict Liability: Definition of Business (1994)
3268	Strict Liability: Contributory Negligence (2015)
3290	Strict Products Liability: Special Verdict (For Actions Commenced Before
	February 1, 2011) (2014)
3290.1	Product Liability: Wis. Stat. § 895.047: Verdict (For Actions Commenced after January 31, 2011) (2014)
3294	Risk Contribution: Negligence: Verdict (For Actions Commenced Before February 1, 2011) (2014)
3295	Risk Contribution: Negligence Claim (For Actions Commenced Before February 1, 2011) (2014)
3296	Risk Contribution: Negligence: Verdict (Wis. Stat. § 895.046) (For Actions Commenced after January 31, 2011) (2014)

# **Lemon Law**

3300 Lemon Law Claim: Special Verdict (2016)

CONTENTS	WIS JI-CIVIL	CONTENTS
----------	--------------	----------

3301 3302	Lemon Law Claim: Nonconformity (2001) Lemon Law Claim: Four Attempts to Repair: Same Nonconformity (1999)
3303	Lemon Law Claim: Pour Attempts to Repair. Same Noncomormity (1999)  Lemon Law Claim: Out of Service Warranty Nonconformity (Warranty on or after March 1, 2014) (2016)
3304	Lemon Law Claim: Failure to Repair (Relating to Special Verdict Question 6) (2006)
3310	Magnuson–Moss Claim (2020)
	Damages
3700	Damages: Building Contracts: Measure of Damages (2012)
3710	Consequential Damages for Breach of Contract (2018)
3720	Damages: Incidental (1994)
3725	Damages: Future Profits (2008)
3735	Damages: Loss of Expectation (1994)
3740	Damages: Termination of Real Estate Listing Contract (Exclusive) by Seller; Broker's Recovery (1994)
3750	Damages: Breach of Contract by Purchaser (1994)
3755	Damages: Breach of Contract by Seller (1994)
3760	Damages: Attorney Fees (1994)
	AGENCY; EMPLOYMENT; BUSINESS ORGANIZATION
4000	Agency: Definition (2019)
4001	General Agent: Definition (1994)
4002	Special Agent: Definition (1994)
4005	Agency: Apparent Authority (1994)
4010	Agency: Implied Authority (1994)
4015	Agency: Ratification (1994)
4020	Agent's Duties Owed to Principal (1994)
4025	Agency: Without Compensation (2005)
4027	Agency: Termination: General (1994)
4028	Agency: Termination: Notice to Third Parties (1994)
4030	Servant: Definition (2015)
4035	Servant: Scope of Employment (2020)
4040	Servant: Scope of Employment; Going to and from Place of Employment
1015	(2014)
4045	Servant: Scope of Employment While Traveling (2020)
4050	Servant: Master's Ratification of Wrongful Acts Done Outside Scope of
	Employment (1994)

CONTENTS	WIS JI-CIVIL	CONTENTS
CONTENTS	WIS JI-CIVIL	CONTEN

4055 4060 4080	Servant: Vicarious Liability of Employer (2005) Independent Contractor: Definition (2005) Partnership (2009)
.000	PERSONS
5001	Paternity: Child of Unmarried Woman (2021)
7030	Child in Need of Protection or Services [Withdrawn 2014]
7039	Involuntary Termination of Parental Rights: Child in Need of Protection or Services: Preliminary Instruction [Withdrawn 2014]
7040	Involuntary Termination of Parental Rights: Continuing Need of Protection or Services [Withdrawn 2014]
7042	Involuntary Termination of Parental Rights: Abandonment under Wis. Stat. § 48.415(1)(a) 2 or 3 [Withdrawn 2014]
7050	Involuntary Commitment: Mentally Ill (2022)
7050A	7050A Involuntary Commitment: Mentally III: Recommitment Alleging Wis. Stat. § 51.20(1)(am)
7054	Petition for Guardianship of the Person: Incompetency; Wis. Stat. § 54.10(3)(a)2 (2019)
7055	Petition for Guardianship of the Estate: Incompetency; Wis. Stat. § 54.10(3)(a)3 (2009)
7056	Petition for Guardianship of the Estate: Spendthrift; Wis. Stat. § 54.10(2) (2009)
7060	Petition for Guardianship of Incompetent Person and Application for Protective Placement; Wis. Stat. § 54.10 and 55.08(1) (2019)
7061	Petition for Guardianship of Incompetent Person and Application for Protective Services; Wis. Stat. § 54.10 and 55.08(2) (2014)
7070	Involuntary Commitment: Habitual Lack of Self-Control as to the Use of Alcohol Beverages (2003)

## **PROPERTY**

## General

8012	Trespasser: Definition (2013)
8015	Consent of Possessor to Another's Being on Premises (2013)
8017	Duty of Hotelkeeper to Furnish Reasonably Safe Premises and Furniture for
	Guests (Renumbered JI-Civil 8051) (1994)
8020	Duty of Owner or Possessor of Real Property to Nontrespasser User (2020)
8025	Trespass: Owner's Duty to Trespasser; Duty to Child Trespasser (Attractive
	Nuisance) (2022)

CONTENTS	WIS JI-CIVIL	CONTENTS
----------	--------------	----------

8026	Trespass: Special Verdict (2016)			
8027	Trespass: Child Trespasser (Attractive Nuisance): Special Verdict (2013)			
8030	Duty of Owner of a Building Abutting on a Public Highway (2006)			
8035	Highway or Sidewalk Defect or Insufficiency (2021)			
8040	Duty of Owner of Place of Amusement: Common Law (1994)			
8045	Duty of a Proprietor of a Place of Business to Protect a Patron from Injury Caused by Act of Third Person (2012)			
8050	Duty of Hotel Innkeeper: Providing Security (1994)			
8051	Duty of Hotelkeeper to Furnish Reasonably Safe Premises and Furniture for Guests (2020)			
8060	Adverse Possession Not Founded on Written Instrument (Wis. Stat. § 893.25) (2022)			
	<b>Eminent Domain</b>			
8100	Eminent Domain: Fair Market Value (Total Taking) (2022)			
8101	Eminent Domain: Fair Market Value (Partial Taking) (2012)			
8102	Eminent Domain: Severance Damages (2008)			
8103	Eminent Domain: Severance Damages: Cost-To-Cure (2007)			
8104	Eminent Domain: Unity of Use - Two or More Parcels (2007)			
8105	Eminent Domain: Lands Containing Marketable Materials (2008)			
8107	Eminent Domain: Severance Damages; Unity of Use (Renumbered JI-Civil			
	8104) (2008)			
8110	Eminent Domain: Change in Grade (2022)			
8111	Eminent Domain: Access Rights (2020)			
8112	Eminent Domain: Air Rights (2007)			
8115	Eminent Domain: Special Benefits (2008)			
8120	Eminent Domain: Comparable Sales Approach (2022)			
8125	Eminent Domain: Inconvenience to Landowner [Withdrawn 2008]			
8130	Eminent Domain: Income Approach (2008)			
8135	Eminent Domain: Cost Approach (2008)			
8140	Eminent Domain: Legal Nonconforming Use, Lot or Structure (Definitions)			
	(2007)			

8145 Eminent Domain: Assemblage (2007)

Table of Cases Cited (2021)

**Index** (2021)

# 3110 INSURANCE CONTRACT: DEFINITION OF "RESIDENT" OR "MEMBER OF A HOUSEHOLD"

Question No. \_\_\_ asks was \_\_\_\_ a resident of \_\_\_\_ 's household at the time of the (accident) (injury).

A resident of a household is one, who, in a manner consistent with the closeness of a family or household, lives under the same roof.

However, a person may be a resident of more than one household for insurance purposes. Residents of a household are not required to live under the same roof to be considered part of the same household for insurance purposes provided they have the intent to return to live under the same roof.

Factors you may consider in determining residency include:

- The subjective or declared intent to return, if any, and actions evidencing this intent;
- Whether the parties live in a close, intimate, and informal relationship;
- Whether the intended duration of the relationship is likely to be substantial;
- Whether it is reasonable to conclude that the parties would consider the relationship when contracting for insurance;
- The age of the respective parties;
- Whether a separate residence is established;
- The self-sufficiency of the person;

- The frequency and duration of stays in the residence;
- Whether personal possessions remain in the home;
- Whether a person is driving or has the opportunity to drive cars interchangeably rather than by merely causal use; and,
- Whether the residence continues to be the mailing address of the parties.

A determination of residency is based upon the facts of each individual case. Consider
all of the relevant facts and circumstances in determining whether was a resident of
's household at the time of the (accident) (injury). No single factor is controlling, but
all of the elements must combine to a greater or lesser degree to establish the relationship.
The burden of proof on the issue of whether was a resident of 's household
is upon (plaintiff).
If, after review of all the facts and circumstances in this case you find that (plaintiff)
was a resident of's household at the time of the (accident) (injury), you should
answer question on the Special Verdict "yes." If not, you should answer that
question "no."

#### **COMMENT**

This instruction and comment were approved in 2002 and revised in 2012. The comment was also updated in 2003. This revision was approved by the Committee in October 2021; it added to the comment.

<u>Muskevitch-Otto v. Otto</u>, 2001 WI App 242, 248 Wis.2d 1, 635 N.W.2d 611 (Ct. App. 2001); <u>Seichter v. McDonald</u>, 228 Wis.2d 838, 845, 599 N.W.2d 71, 74 (Ct. App. 1999); <u>Ross v. Martini</u>, 204 Wis.2d 354, 555 N.W.2d 381, (Ct. App. 1996); <u>Londre v. Continental Western Ins. Co.</u>, 117 Wis.2d 54, 58, 343 N.W.2d

128 (Ct. App. 1983); Belling v. Harn, 65 Wis.2d 108, 112-114 (1974); Pamperin v. Milwaukee Mutual Ins., 55 Wis.2d 27, 35-37, 197 N.W.2d 783 (1972); Doern v. Crawford, 30 Wis.2d 206, 140 N.W.2d 193 (1966); National Farmers Union Property & Casualty v. Maca, 26 Wis.2d 399, 407-408 (1965).

**Resident; Member**. Although not explicitly stated, the terms "resident" or "member" of a household appear to be equivalent. The Supreme Court has used them interchangeably. <u>Belling</u>, pp. 109, 111; <u>Pamperin</u>, pp. 33-34.

The term "resident or member of the same household" as used in policies of automobile liability insurance is not ambiguous. It should be given its plain and common meaning regardless of whether it is used to define exclusion or inclusion from coverage or whether the question is one of creating or terminating the relationship. <u>Pamperin</u>, p. 37.

**Factors**. No single factor is the sole or controlling test of whether a person is a resident of a household. <u>Londre</u>, p. 54. The issue of residency for insurance purposes "is fact specific to each case." <u>Seichter</u>, p. 845. The <u>Seichter</u> court approved use of considerations from a Minnesota case, <u>Schoer v. West Bend Mutual Ins. Co.</u>, 473 N.W.2d 73, 76 (Minn. App. 1991) which had been cited with approval in <u>Ross v. Martini</u>, <u>supra</u>. The list of factors in paragraph 4 is not exhaustive.

Unmarried persons can be residents of the same household, but whether they are depends on the facts in each case. Quinlan v. Coombs, 105 Wis.2d 330, 333, 314 N.W.2d 125, (Ct. App. 1981).

**Residence Distinguished from Domicile.** "It might be said that 'domicile' includes residence, but 'residence' does not necessarily include domicile. Domicile is generally regarded as the place where a man has his fixed and permanent home or residence to which he intends to return whenever he is absent therefrom." Estate of Daniels, 53 Wis.2d 611, 614-5 (1971).

The length of time necessary to establish residency for insurance purposes is sufficient if "the intended duration is likely to be substantial." <u>Pamperin</u>, p. 37 "[W]hile the intended duration does not require the permanency generally associated with the establishment of a legal domicile, something more is required than a mere temporary sojourn." <u>Pamperin</u>, p. 35.

Thus, a person may have only one domicile but may have more than one household for insurance purposes. <u>Londre</u>, p. 58.

**Children**. A child placed in a family-operated foster home pursuant to a court dispositional order under sec. 48.34 Stats. is considered a resident of that household for insurance purposes. <u>A.G. v. Travelers Ins. Co.</u>, 112 Wis.2d 18, 24 (Ct. App. 1983).

The intent of minor children of divorced parents is discussed in <u>Ross v. Martini</u>, <u>supra</u>, pp. 358-9. Where the child is of tender years, the finder of fact would look to the intent of the child's parent or custodian. <u>Muskevitch-Otto v. Otto</u>, par. 9 p. 8. Generally, the issue of residence for minor children of divorced parents is "inexorably linked" to custody provided in the divorce decree. <u>Ross</u>, p. 359. It is possible in joint custody situations for children to be members of both parents' households for insurance purposes. <u>Londre</u>, <u>supra</u>, p. 59.

**Divorce**. As a matter of public policy, removal from a household following commencement of divorce proceedings and during the pendency of the action is not a factor to be given weight in determining residency in a family household. Language to the contrary in the <u>Doern</u> case is withdrawn. <u>Belling v. Harn</u>, 65 Wis.2d 108, 115-116, 221 N.W.2d 888 (1974). However, this modification of <u>Doern</u> appears to be limited to divorce proceedings. <u>Seichter</u>, p. 843, fn. 1.

**Legal separation.** Wisconsin law plainly distinguishes between a divorce and a legal separation. Pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 767.001(1f), "divorce" is defined as "the dissolution of the marriage relationship." In contrast, a judgment of legal separation does not terminate a marriage. As the Wisconsin Supreme Court has noted, "there are ... rights and obligations remaining in the marriage after a legal separation." <u>Kemper Independence Insurance Company v. Islami, 2021 WI 53, ¶18, 397 Wis.2d 394, 959 N.W.2d 912, citing Herbst v. Hansen, 46 Wis. 2d 697, 706, 176N.W.2d 380 (1970). A legal separation does not alter the status of two individuals as spouses under the law, and therefore a named insured's spouse remains covered under a policy. <u>Kemper, supra,</u> at ¶18. The fact that a named insured and their spouse may commence living separate and apart while legal separation is pending "is not a factor to be given weight in determining whether or not such spouses are members of the same household." <u>Belling, supra,</u> at 118.</u>

Intent. While <u>Pamperin</u>, pp. 35, 37, <u>Seichter</u>, pp. 843-844, and other cases hold that no one element is controlling on the question of household membership, and an individual's subjective or declared intent, while a fact to be considered, is also not controlling, the Court of Appeals in <u>Muskevitsch-Otto v. Otto supra</u>, approved an instruction which made intent "the key element." The instruction provided that "In deciding whether a person is a resident of a particular household, the key element is the intent of that person to be a resident of the household in question and to live under the same roof . . . ." (emphasis supplied). In harmonizing these decisions, the Committee believes that because of the fact-driven nature of these cases, intent might assume more importance in a particular situation. However, none of the <u>Pamperin</u> elements (including intent) predominates as a matter of law. Until further guidance on this issue is received from the appellate courts, the Committee believes the more prudent course is to follow <u>Pamperin</u> and <u>Seichter</u>.

"In Your Care" Policy Language. For cases involving policy language dealing with the term "in your care," see also, <u>Cierzan v. Kriegal</u>, 2002 WI App 317, 259 Wis.2d 264, 655 N.W.2d 217. In this decision, the court of appeals listed the relevant considerations in determining whether a person is in the care of the insured.

#### 7050 INVOLUNTARY COMMITMENT: MENTALLY ILL

(Insert Wis JI Civil 100, Opening.)

A petition has been filed seeking the involuntary [(initial commitment) (recommitment)] of (respondent). The petition alleges that (respondent) is mentally ill; that (his) (her) mental illness is subject to treatment; and that (he) (she) is dangerous.

The fact that a petition has been filed is not evidence that (<u>respondent</u>) is mentally ill, dangerous, or a proper subject for treatment. Our law presumes that a person is not mentally ill until you are convinced that the person is mentally ill. If you find that (<u>respondent</u>) is mentally ill based on the evidence, that fact does not mean that you must find that (<u>respondent</u>) is also dangerous. The burden of proving each of the allegations in the petition is on (<u>petitioner</u>).

This is a civil, not a criminal, case. [The fact that the district attorney is present does not mean that (<u>respondent</u>) is accused of a crime. The district attorney and \_\_\_\_\_\_, the other attorney, are required to be here by the Wisconsin statutes.] While (<u>respondent</u>) is not on trial to be punished for any offense, nevertheless, this trial and your verdict could result in a loss of (<u>respondent</u>)'s personal liberty. Therefore, you should approach this task with a sense of serious duty.

Wis JI Civil 110, Arguments of Counsel

Wis JI Civil 115, Objections of Counsel

Wis JI Civil 120, Judge's Demeanor

Wis JI Civil 130, Stricken Testimony

Wis JI Civil 215, Credibility of Witnesses; Weight of Evidence

Wis JI Civil 260, Expert Testimony: General

Wis JI Civil 265, Expert Testimony: Hypothetical Question

Wis JI-Civil 205, Middle Burden of Proof

Wis JI Civil 145, Special Verdict Questions: Interrelationship

At the end of the trial, I will give you a special verdict consisting of three questions.

Question 1 asks: Is (<u>respondent</u>) mentally ill?

The term "mentally ill" means a substantial disorder of thought, mood, perception, orientation, or memory which grossly impairs the judgment, behavior, capacity to recognize reality or ability to meet the ordinary demands of life.

Question 2 asks: Is (<u>respondent</u>) a proper subject for treatment?

A person who is mentally ill is a proper subject for treatment if (his) (her) mental illness is treatable. In determining if (respondent)'s mental illness is treatable, you should consider whether the administration of any, or a combination of, techniques may control, improve, or cure the substantial disordering of the person's thought, mood, perception, orientation, or memory.

Question 3 asks: Is (<u>respondent</u>) dangerous to [(himself) (herself)] or to others?

[NOTE: MORE THAN ONE STANDARD FOR DANGEROUSNESS MAY

# APPLY. SELECT THE STANDARD(S) ALLEGED AND SUPPORTED BY SUFFICIENT EVIDENCE AS PUT FORTH BY THE PETITIONER

[Under Standard A, a person is dangerous to (himself) (herself) if (he)(she) evidences a substantial probability of physical harm to (himself) (herself) as manifested by evidence of recent threats of or attempts at suicide or serious bodily harm.] [or]

[Under Standard B, a person is dangerous to others if (he) (she) evidences a substantial probability of physical harm to other individuals as manifested by evidence of recent homicidal or other violent behavior, or by evidence that others are placed in reasonable fear of violent behavior and serious physical harm to them, as evidenced by a recent overt act, attempt, or threat to do serious physical harm.] [or]

[Under Standard C, a person is dangerous to (himself) (herself) or others if (he) (she) evidences such impaired judgment, manifested by evidence of a pattern of recent acts or omissions, that there is substantial probability of physical impairment or injury to (himself) (herself) or other individuals. The probability of physical impairment or injury is not substantial (if reasonable provision for (respondent)'s protection is available in the community and there is a reasonable probability that (respondent) will avail (himself) (herself) of these services) (if (respondent) may be provided protective placement or protective services under chp. 55) (or) (where the subject is a minor: if (respondent) is appropriate for services or placement under § 48.13(4) or (11) or §

938.13(4)) (where the subject is a minor: (Respondent)'s status as a minor does not automatically establish a substantial probability of physical impairment or injury). Food, shelter, or other care provided to an individual who is substantially incapable of obtaining the care for (himself) (herself), by a person other than a treatment facility, does not constitute reasonable provision for the individual's protection available in the community.] [or]

[Under Standard D, a person is dangerous to (himself) (herself) if (he) (she) evidences behavior manifested by recent acts or omissions that, due to mental illness, (he) (she) is unable to satisfy basic needs for nourishment, medical care, shelter, or safety without prompt and adequate treatment so that a substantial probability exists that death, serious physical injury, serious physical debilitation, or serious physical disease will imminently ensue unless (respondent) receives prompt and adequate treatment for this mental illness. No substantial probability of harm exists (if reasonable provision for (respondent)'s treatment and protection is available in the community and there is a reasonable probability that (respondent) will avail (himself) (herself) of these services), (if (respondent) may be provided protective placement or protective services under chp. 55) (or) (where the subject is a minor; if (respondent) is appropriate for services or placement under § 48.13(4) or (11) or § 938.13(4).) (Respondent)'s status as a minor does not automatically establish a substantial probability of death, serious physical injury, serious physical debilitation or serious

disease. Food, shelter, or other care provided to an individual who is substantially incapable of obtaining the care for himself or herself, by any person other than a treatment facility, does not constitute reasonable provision for the individual's treatment or protection available in the community.] [or]

[Under Standard E, a person is dangerous to (himself) (herself) if (he) (she) has recently had explained to (him) (her) the advantages and disadvantages of and alternatives to accepting a particular medication or treatment and; (1) Due to mental illness, (respondent) is (incapable of expressing an understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of accepting medication or treatment and the alternatives) (substantially incapable of applying an understanding of the advantages, disadvantages, and alternatives of (his) (her) mental illness to make an informed choice as to whether to accept or refuse medication or treatment); and (2) There is a substantial probability, as demonstrated by both (respondent)'s treatment history and (his) (her) recent acts or omissions, that (he) (she) needs care or treatment to prevent further disability or deterioration, and further, there exists a substantial probability that, if left untreated, (he) (she) will lack the services necessary for (his) (her) health or safety, and will suffer severe mental, emotional, or physical harm that will result in (respondent)'s loss of ability to function independently in the community or loss of cognitive or volitional control over (his) (her) thoughts or actions; and (3) There is no reasonable probability that (respondent) will avail (himself) (herself) of services in the

community for care or treatment necessary to prevent (him) (her) from suffering severe mental, emotional, or physical harm.]

Do not concern yourselves with the length of custody or nature of any treatment that I might order as a result of your answers to the questions of the Special Verdict.

[Note: Give Wis JI Civil 180, Five Sixths Verdict and Wis JI Civil 190, Closing.]

#### SUGGESTED VERDICT

SUGGESTE	AD VERDICI	
Question 1:	Is ( <u>respondent</u> ) mentally ill?	
		Answer:
		Yes or No
Question 2:	If you answered question 1 "yes," then answer this que	estion:
Is (responde	ent) a proper subject for treatment?	
		Answer:
		Yes or No
Question 3:	If you answered questions 1 and 2 "yes," then answer	this question:
Is (responde	ent) dangerous to [(himself) (herself)] or to others?	
		Answer:
		Yes or No
Question 3(a	): If you answered question 3 "yes," then answer this qu	uestion: Under which

standard(s) has it been proven by clear and convincing evidence that (respondent) is

dangerous? [For initial commitment hearings and recommitment hearings not alleging 51.20(1)(am), SELECT THE STANDARD(S) ALLEGED AND SUPPORTED BY SUFFICIENT EVIDENCE AS PUT FORTH BY THE PETITIONER and include:]

Standard A	Answer:	Yes or No
Standard B	Answer:	Yes or No
Standard C	Answer:	Yes or No
Standard D	Answer:	Yes or No
Standard E	Answer:	Yes or No

[Note: For a trial involving several of the statutory definitions of "dangerous," see the comment below on the "Dangerousness Standard" for advice on subdividing verdict question 3(a).]

#### **COMMENT**

The instruction was revised in 1981, 1989, 1998, 2002, 2006, 2014, and 2018. The comment was updated in 2011, 2012, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021.

While this verdict and jury instruction are designed for an alleged mentally ill case, they can, by substitution of the disability terms, be converted to a verdict and jury instruction for an alleged drug dependent case or developmentally disabled case.

**Proper Subject for Treatment**. The court of appeals approved the language of the instruction dealing with the determination of whether the individual is a proper subject for treatment in verdict question three. In Matter of Mental Condition of C.J., 120 Wis.2d 355, 354 N.W.2d 219 (Ct. App. 1984). A person with Alzheimer's disease is not a proper subject for treatment under Chapter 51. Fond du Lac County v. Helen E.F., 2012 WI 50, 340 Wis.2d 500, 814 N.W.2d 179. See also Waukesha County v. J.W.J., 2017 WI 57, 375 Wis.2d 542, 895 N.W.2d 783

In <u>Fond du Lac County v. Helen E.F.</u>, the supreme court said the court of appeals in <u>C.J.</u>, <u>supra</u>, provided a "useful and well-constructed fact-based test for determining whether a subject individual is capable of rehabilitation, and therefore treatable under Wis. Stat. § 51.01(17)." The supreme court said the following test from <u>C.J.</u> accurately reflects the interests embodied in chs. 51 and 55.

If treatment will "maximize[e] the [] individual functioning and maintenance" of the subject, but not "help [] in controlling or improving their disorder []," then the subject individual does not have rehabilitative potential, and is not a proper subject for treatment. However, if treatment will "go beyond controlling . . . activity" and will "go to controlling [the] disorder and its symptoms," then the subject individual has rehabilitative potential, and is a proper subject for treatment. Fond du Lac County v. Helen E.F., supra, at ¶36.

**Mental Illness**. The definition of "mental illness" does not include alcoholism. Wis. Stat. § 51.20(13)(b).

Alzheimer's disease does not fall within the definition of a mental illness as it is a "degenerative brain disorder." An individual with Alzheimer's disease is not a proper subject for treatment. Ch. 51 provides for active treatment for those who are proper subjects for treatment, while Ch. 55 provides for residential care and custody of those persons with mental disabilities, such as Alzheimer's, that are likely to be permanent. Fond du Lac County v. Helen E.F., 2012 WI 50, 340 Wis.2d 500, 814 N.W.2d 179.

Dangerousness Standard. The issue of dangerousness is an element in all commitment proceedings, except proceedings under Wis. Stat. 51.20(1)(ar). The Committee believes the specification by the petitioner of the applicable standard(s) at issue as well as a finding by the factfinder as to which dangerousness standard(s) were proven by clear and convincing evidence is mandatory. See <u>Langlade County v. D.J.W.</u>, 2020 WI 41, 391 Wis.2d 231, 942 N.W.2d 277. While <u>D.J.W.</u> involved a recommitment hearing, the Committee believes and recommends that, based on language in <u>D.J.W.</u>, that specific findings regarding which standard(s) of dangerousness is alleged and which standard(s) of dangerousness have been proven must also occur at initial commitment hearings. See ¶42-44. In addition to these considerations, specificity is also important in cases in which dangerousness is alleged under sec. 51.20(1)(a)2.e. ("Standard E"). That is because a person committed based on this standard may only be treated on an inpatient basis for up to 30 days. See Wis. Stat. § 51.20(13)(g)2d.b. Thus, knowing which standard forms the basis for a dangerousness finding will also affect disposition in the event both Standard E and another standard are alleged.

Threats. In Outagamie County v. Michael H., supra, the court concluded that in evaluating dangerousness, "an articulated plan is not a necessary component of a suicide threat." See ¶6. The court concluded that it did not need to adopt a precise definition for "threat" for purposes of Wis. Stat. § 51.20.

Acceptance of Medication and Treatment. Medication is a "service" within the meaning of the community services exclusion of the Standard E (Wis. Stat. 51.20(1)(a)2.e.). In re Kelly M., 2011 WI App 69, 333 Wis.2d 719, 798 N.W.2d 697. Individuals who are under a Ch. 55 protective placement or who are a proper subject for a Ch. 55 protective placement come within the Ch. 55 exclusion within Standard E and Wis. Stats. § 55.14 should be utilized for the petition for the involuntary administration of medication. Commitment is available under Standard E for individuals who have dual diagnoses; i.e. a diagnosis of mental illness and also a diagnosis of drug dependency or developmental disability. In re Kelly M., supra.

**Right to Remain Silent.** Under Wis. Stat § 51.20(5), the subject individual has the right to remain silent at the commitment hearing. If requested by the individual, the trial court should instruct the jury on the individual's failure to testify. See Wis JI-Criminal 315.

**Cooperation with Doctors.** If there is evidence that the patient did not properly cooperate with the doctors, then this instruction should be included following the instruction on expert testimony:

There is testimony in this case that (respondent) was unresponsive to the doctors. You are advised that he/she has the constitutional right to remain unresponsive and to say nothing. He/She was so informed by the court and by the officials at the hospital. He/She also had then the right to refuse treatment. In answering question 1, you may consider his/her silent behavior only if you are convinced that his/her silence was related to his/her mental condition and was not an exercise of his/her constitutional right to remain silent.

**Temporary Protective Placement**. If the jury returns a verdict finding that the individual is mentally ill and dangerous but not a "proper subject for treatment," the trial judge may consider ordering temporary protective placement for the individual pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 51.67 which states:

**51.67** Alternate procedure; protective services. (intro.) If, after a hearing under § 51.13(4) or 51.20, the court finds that commitment under this chapter is not warranted and that the subject individual is a fit subject for guardianship and protective placement or services, the court may, without further notice, appoint a temporary guardian for the subject individual and order temporary protective placement or services under ch. 55 for a period not to exceed 30 days. Temporary protective placement for an individual in a center for the developmentally disabled is subject to § 51.06(3). Any interested party may then file a petition for permanent guardianship or protective placement or services, including medication, under ch. 55. If the individual is in a treatment facility, the individual may remain in the facility during the period of temporary protective placement if no other appropriate facility is available. The court may order psychotropic medication as a temporary protective service under this section if it finds that there is probable cause to believe the individual is not competent to refuse psychotropic medication and that the medication ordered will have therapeutic value and will not unreasonably impair the ability of the individual to prepare for an participate in subsequent legal proceedings. An individual is not competent to refuse psychotropic medication if, because of serious and persistent mental illness, and after the advantages of and alternatives to accepting the particular psychotropic medication have been explained to the individual ....

**Definition of a Drug.** In a case involving drug-dependency and the definition of the term "drug," see Wis. Stat. § 450.01(10) and § 961.01(11). See also an unpublished decision (one-judge) which discusses the court's jury instruction allowing the jury to consider multiple definitions of the term "drug." <u>Marathon County v. Zachary W.</u>, 2015 WI App 13, 359 Wis.2d 676, 859 N.W.2d 629.

**Prisoner**. When Wis. Stat. § 51.20(1)(ar) is pled, it governs the involuntary commitment of inmates of the Wisconsin state prison system. If a commitment or recommitment proceeding concerns a prisoner pursuant to § 51.20(1)(ar), the following elements must be proven: "a county must show that (1) the individual is an inmate of the Wisconsin state prison system; (2) the inmate is mentally ill; (3) the inmate is a proper subject for treatment and is in need of treatment; (4) appropriate less restrictive forms of treatment were attempted with the inmate, and they were unsuccessful; (5) the inmate was fully informed about his treatment needs, the mental health services available, and his rights; and (6) the inmate had an opportunity to discuss his treatment needs, the services available, and his rights with a psychologist or a licensed physician." For the involuntary commitment of a mentally ill prisoner, see Winnebago County v.

<u>Christopher S.</u>, 2016 WI 1, ¶27, 366 Wis.2d 1, 878 N.W.2d 109. While a finding of dangerousness is not required for commitment, it is required for an involuntary medication order in a Wis. Stat. sec. 51.20(1)(ar) proceeding. See <u>Winnebago County v. Christopher S. (III)</u>, 2020 WI 33, 391 Wis.2d 35, 940 N.W.2d 875.

**Psychotropic Medication Order**. Where a psychotropic medication order is sought related to a commitment proceeding, a court, not a jury, makes the determination. Wis. Stat. § 51.61(1)(g)3.

7050A INVOLUNTARY COMMITMENT: MENTALLY ILL: RECOMMITMENT ALLEGING Wis. Stat. § 51.20(1)(am)

(Insert Wis JI Civil 100, Opening.)

A petition has been filed seeking the involuntary recommitment of (<u>respondent</u>). The petition alleges that (<u>respondent</u>) is mentally ill; that (his) (her) mental illness is subject to treatment; and that (he) (she) is dangerous.

The fact that a petition has been filed is not evidence that (<u>respondent</u>) is mentally ill, dangerous, or a proper subject for treatment. Our law presumes that a person is not mentally ill until you are convinced that the person is mentally ill. If you find that (<u>respondent</u>) is mentally ill based on the evidence, that fact does not mean that you must find that (<u>respondent</u>) is also dangerous. The burden of proving each of the allegations in the petition is on (petitioner).

This is a civil, not a criminal, case. [The fact that the district attorney is present does not mean that (<u>respondent</u>) is accused of a crime. The district attorney and \_\_\_\_\_\_, the other attorney, are required to be here by the Wisconsin statutes.] While (<u>respondent</u>) is not on trial to be punished for any offense, nevertheless, this trial and your verdict could result in a loss of (<u>respondent</u>)'s personal liberty. Therefore, you should approach this task with a sense of serious duty.

Wis JI Civil 110, Arguments of Counsel

Wis JI Civil 115, Objections of Counsel

Wis JI Civil 120, Judge's Demeanor

Wis JI Civil 130, Stricken Testimony

Wis JI Civil 215, Credibility of Witnesses; Weight of Evidence

Wis JI Civil 260, Expert Testimony: General

Wis JI Civil 265, Expert Testimony: Hypothetical Question.

Wis JI-Civil 205, Middle Burden of Proof

Wis JI Civil 145, Special Verdict Questions: Interrelationship

At the end of the trial, I will give you a special verdict consisting of three questions.

Question 1 asks: Is (respondent) mentally ill?

The term "mentally ill" means a substantial disorder of thought, mood, perception, orientation, or memory which grossly impairs the judgment, behavior, capacity to recognize reality or ability to meet the ordinary demands of life.

Question 2 asks: Is (<u>respondent</u>) a proper subject for treatment?

A person who is mentally ill is a proper subject for treatment if (his) (her) mental illness is treatable. In determining if (respondent)'s mental illness is treatable, you should consider whether the administration of any, or a combination of, techniques may control, improve, or cure the substantial disordering of the person's thought, mood, perception, orientation, or memory.

Question 3 asks: Is (<u>respondent</u>) dangerous to [(himself) (herself)] or to others?

This is a recommitment proceeding and therefore there may not be proof of recent

acts or omissions demonstrating that (<u>respondent</u>) is dangerous, however, the law provides that you may find (<u>respondent</u>) to be dangerous to [(himself) (herself)] or to others if there is a substantial likelihood based on (<u>respondent</u>)'s treatment record that (<u>respondent</u>) would be a proper subject for commitment if treatment were withdrawn, meaning that (<u>respondent</u>) would meet one or more of the dangerousness standards, A through E, described below if treatment were withdrawn. If you find that (<u>respondent</u>) is dangerous if treatment were withdrawn, you must state under which standard(s) (A, B, C, D, E) you came to this conclusion.

[NOTE: MORE THAN ONE STANDARD FOR DANGEROUSNESS MAY APPLY. SELECT THE STANDARD(S) ALLEGED AND SUPPORTED BY SUFFICIENT EVIDENCE AS PUT FORTH BY THE PETITIONER]

[Under Standard A, a person is dangerous to (himself) (herself) if (he)(she) evidences a substantial probability of physical harm to (himself) (herself) as manifested by evidence of recent threats of or attempts at suicide or serious bodily harm.] [or]

[Under Standard B, a person is dangerous to others if (he) (she) evidences a substantial probability of physical harm to other individuals as manifested by evidence of recent homicidal or other violent behavior, or by evidence that others are placed in reasonable fear of violent behavior and serious physical harm to them, as evidenced by a recent overt act, attempt, or threat to do serious physical harm.] [or]

[Under Standard C, a person is dangerous to (himself) (herself) or others if (he)

(she) evidences such impaired judgment, manifested by evidence of a pattern of recent acts or omissions, that there is substantial probability of physical impairment or injury to (himself) (herself) or other individuals. The probability of physical impairment or injury is not substantial (if reasonable provision for (respondent)'s protection is available in the community and there is a reasonable probability that (respondent) will avail (himself) (herself) of these services) (if (respondent) may be provided protective placement or protective services under chp. 55) (or) (where the subject is a minor: if (respondent) is appropriate for services or placement under § 48.13(4) or (11) or § 938.13(4)) (where the subject is a minor: (Respondent)'s status as a minor does not automatically establish a substantial probability of physical impairment or injury). Food, shelter, or other care provided to an individual who is substantially incapable of obtaining the care for (himself) (herself), by a person other than a treatment facility, does not constitute reasonable provision for the individual's protection available in the community.] [or]

[Under Standard D, a person is dangerous to (himself) (herself) if (he) (she) evidences behavior manifested by recent acts or omissions that, due to mental illness, (he) (she) is unable to satisfy basic needs for nourishment, medical care, shelter, or safety without prompt and adequate treatment so that a substantial probability exists that death, serious physical injury, serious physical debilitation, or serious physical disease will imminently ensue unless (respondent) receives prompt and adequate

treatment for this mental illness. No substantial probability of harm exists (if reasonable provision for (respondent)'s treatment and protection is available in the community and there is a reasonable probability that (respondent) will avail (himself) (herself) of these services), (if (respondent) may be provided protective placement or protective services under chp. 55) (or) (where the subject is a minor; if (respondent) is appropriate for services or placement under § 48.13(4) or (11) or § 938.13(4).) (Respondent)'s status as a minor does not automatically establish a substantial probability of death, serious physical injury, serious physical debilitation or serious disease. Food, shelter, or other care provided to an individual who is substantially incapable of obtaining the care for himself or herself, by any person other than a treatment facility, does not constitute reasonable provision for the individual's treatment or protection available in the community.] [or]

[Under Standard E, a person is dangerous to (himself) (herself) if (he) (she) has recently had explained to (him) (her) the advantages and disadvantages of and alternatives to accepting a particular medication or treatment and; (1) Due to mental illness, (respondent) is (incapable of expressing an understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of accepting medication or treatment and the alternatives) (substantially incapable of applying an understanding of the advantages, disadvantages, and alternatives of (his) (her) mental illness to make an informed choice as to whether to accept or refuse medication or treatment); and (2) There is a substantial

probability, as demonstrated by both (respondent)'s treatment history and (his) (her)

recent acts or omissions, that (he) (she) needs care or treatment to prevent further

disability or deterioration, and further, there exists a substantial probability that, if left

untreated, (he) (she) will lack the services necessary for (his) (her) health or safety,

and will suffer severe mental, emotional, or physical harm that will result in

(respondent)'s loss of ability to function independently in the community or loss of

cognitive or volitional control over (his) (her) thoughts or actions; and (3) There is no

reasonable probability that (respondent) will avail (himself) (herself) of services in the

community for care or treatment necessary to prevent (him) (her) from suffering severe

mental, emotional, or physical harm.]

Do not concern yourselves with the length of custody or nature of any treatment that I

might order as a result of your answers to the questions of the Special Verdict.

[Note: Give Wis JI Civil 180, Five Sixths Verdict and Wis JI Civil 190, Closing.]

SUGGESTED VERDICT

Question 1: Is (<u>respondent</u>) mentally ill?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

Yes or No

Question 2: If you answered question 1 "yes," then answer this question:

Is (<u>respondent</u>) a proper subject for treatment?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

Yes or No

Question 3: If you answered questions 1 and 2 "yes," then answer this question:

Is (<u>respondent</u>) dangerous to [(himself) (herself)] or to others?

Answer:

Yes or No

Question 3(a): If you answered question 3 "yes," then answer this question: If you find (respondent) dangerous if treatment were withdrawn, under which standard(s) has it been proven by clear and convincing evidence that (respondent) is dangerous if treatment were withdrawn? [SELECT THE STANDARD(S) ALLEGED AND SUPPORTED BY SUFFICIENT EVIDENCE AS PUT FORTH BY THE PETITIONER and include:]

Standard A \_\_\_\_\_\_ Answer: Yes or No
Standard B \_\_\_\_\_\_ Answer: Yes or No
Standard C \_\_\_\_\_ Answer: Yes or No
Standard D \_\_\_\_\_ Answer: Yes or No
Standard E Answer: Yes or No

[Note: For a trial involving several of the statutory definitions of "dangerous," see the comment below on the "Dangerousness Standard in Recommitment Proceedings under

Wis. Stat. 51.20(1)(am)" for advice on subdividing verdict question 3(a).]

### **COMMENT**

This instructions and comment were approved by the Committee in September 2021.

While this verdict and jury instruction are designed for an alleged mentally ill case, they can, by substitution of the disability terms, be converted to a verdict and jury instruction for an alleged drug dependent case or developmentally disabled case.

**Proper Subject for Treatment**. The court of appeals approved the language of the instruction dealing with the determination of whether the individual is a proper subject for treatment in verdict question three. In Matter of Mental Condition of C.J., 120 Wis.2d 355, 354 N.W.2d 219 (Ct. App. 1984). A person with Alzheimer's disease is not a proper subject for treatment under Chapter 51. Fond du Lac County v. Helen E.F., 2012 WI 50, 340 Wis.2d 500, 814 N.W.2d 179. See also Waukesha County v. J.W.J., 2017 WI 57, 375 Wis.2d 542, 895 N.W.2d 783

In <u>Fond du Lac County v. Helen E.F.</u>, the supreme court said the court of appeals in <u>C.J.</u>, <u>supra</u>, provided a "useful and well-constructed fact-based test for determining whether a subject individual is capable of rehabilitation, and therefore treatable under Wis. Stat. § 51.01(17)." The supreme court said the following test from <u>C.J.</u> accurately reflects the interests embodied in chs. 51 and 55.

If treatment will "maximize[e] the [] individual functioning and maintenance" of the subject, but not "help [] in controlling or improving their disorder []," then the subject individual does not have rehabilitative potential, and is not a proper subject for treatment. However, if treatment will "go beyond controlling . . . activity" and will "go to controlling [the] disorder and its symptoms," then the subject individual has rehabilitative potential, and is a proper subject for treatment. Fond du Lac County v. Helen E.F., supra, at ¶36.

**Mental Illness**. The definition of "mental illness" does not include alcoholism. Wis. Stat. § 51.20(13)(b).

Alzheimer's disease does not fall within the definition of a mental illness as it is a "degenerative brain disorder." An individual with Alzheimer's disease is not a proper subject for treatment. Ch. 51 provides for active treatment for those who are proper subjects for treatment, while Ch. 55 provides for residential care and custody of those persons with mental disabilities, such as Alzheimer's, that are likely to be permanent. Fond du Lac County v. Helen E.F., 2012 WI 50, 340 Wis.2d 500, 814 N.W.2d 179.

Dangerousness Standard in Recommitment Proceedings under Wis. Stat. 51.20(1)(am). If the individual has been the subject of inpatient or outpatient treatment for mental illness immediately prior to commencement of the proceeding as a result of a voluntary admission, a commitment or protective placement, or protective services ordered by a court, the requirements of a recent overt act, attempt, or threat to act or a pattern of recent acts, omissions, or behavior may be satisfied by a showing that there is a substantial likelihood, based on the individual's treatment record, that the individual would be a proper subject for commitment if treatment were withdrawn. Wis. Stat. § 51.20(1)(am). If the individual has been

admitted voluntarily to an inpatient treatment facility for not more than 30 days prior to the commencement of these proceedings and remains under voluntary admission at the time of the commencement of these proceedings, the requirements of a specific recent overt act, attempt, or threat to act or pattern of recent acts or omissions may be satisfied by a showing of an act, attempt or threat to act, or a pattern of acts or omissions which took place immediately previous to the voluntary admission. Specific factual findings must be made with reference to the subdivision of 51.20(1)(a)2. on which the recommitment is based. Langlade County v D.J.W., 2020 WI 41, 391 Wis.2d 231, 942 N.W.2d 277. The instructions and verdict must include any of the standard(s) that the evidence supports.

In addition to these considerations, specificity is also important in cases in which dangerousness is alleged under sec. 51.20(1)(a)2.e. ("Standard E"). That is because a person committed based on this standard may only be treated on an inpatient basis for up to 30 days. See Wis. Stat. sec. 51.20(13)(g)2d.b. Thus, knowing which standard forms the basis for a dangerousness finding will also affect disposition in the event both Standard E and another standard are alleged.

**Threats.** In <u>Outagamie County v. Michael H.</u>, <u>supra</u>, the court concluded that in evaluating dangerousness, "an articulated plan is not a necessary component of a suicide threat." Paragraph 6. The court concluded that it did not need to adopt a precise definition for "threat" for purposes of Wis. Stat. § 51.20.

Acceptance of Medication and Treatment. Medication is a "service" within the meaning of the community services exclusion of the Standard E (Wis. Stat. 51.20(1)(a)2.e.). In re Kelly M., 2011 WI App 69, 333 Wis.2d 719, 798 N.W.2d 697. Individuals who are under a Ch. 55 protective placement or who are a proper subject for a Ch. 55 protective placement come within the Ch. 55 exclusion within Standard E and Wis. Stats. § 55.14 should be utilized for the petition for the involuntary administration of medication. Commitment is available under Standard E for individuals who have dual diagnoses; i.e. a diagnosis of mental illness and also a diagnosis of drug dependency or developmental disability. In re Kelly M., supra.

**Right to Remain Silent**. Under Wis. Stat § 51.20(5), the subject individual has the right to remain silent at the commitment hearing. If requested by the individual, the trial court should instruct the jury on the individual's failure to testify. See Wis JI-Criminal 315.

**Cooperation with Doctors.** If there is evidence that the patient did not properly cooperate with the doctors, then this instruction should be included following the instruction on expert testimony:

There is testimony in this case that (respondent) was unresponsive to the doctors. You are advised that he/she has the constitutional right to remain unresponsive and to say nothing. He/She was so informed by the court and by the officials at the hospital. He/She also had then the right to refuse treatment. In answering question 1, you may consider his/her silent behavior only if you are convinced that his/her silence was related to his/her mental condition and was not an exercise of his/her constitutional right to remain silent.

**Temporary Protective Placement**. If the jury returns a verdict finding that the individual is mentally ill and dangerous but not a "proper subject for treatment," the trial judge may consider ordering temporary protective placement for the individual pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 51.67 which states:

51.67 Alternate procedure; protective services. (intro.) If, after a hearing under § 51.13(4) or 51.20, the court finds that commitment under this chapter is not warranted and that the subject individual is a fit subject for guardianship and protective placement or services, the court may, without further notice, appoint a temporary guardian for the subject individual and order temporary protective placement or services under ch. 55 for a period not to exceed 30 days. Temporary protective placement for an individual in a center for the developmentally disabled is subject to § 51.06(3). Any interested party may then file a petition for permanent guardianship or protective placement or services, including medication, under ch. 55. If the individual is in a treatment facility, the individual may remain in the facility during the period of temporary protective placement if no other appropriate facility is available. The court may order psychotropic medication as a temporary protective service under this section if it finds that there is probable cause to believe the individual is not competent to refuse psychotropic medication and that the medication ordered will have therapeutic value and will not unreasonably impair the ability of the individual to prepare for an participate in subsequent legal proceedings. An individual is not competent to refuse psychotropic medication if, because of serious and persistent mental illness, and after the advantages of and alternatives to accepting the particular psychotropic medication have been explained to the individual ....

**Definition of a Drug.** In a case involving drug-dependency and the definition of the term "drug," see Wis. Stat. § 450.01(10) and § 961.01(11). See also an unpublished decision (one-judge) which discusses the court's jury instruction allowing the jury to consider multiple definitions of the term "drug." <u>Marathon County v. Zachary W.</u>, 2015 WI App 13, 359 Wis.2d 676, 859 N.W.2d 629.

**Prisoner**. When Wis. Stat. § 51.20(1)(ar) is pled, it governs the involuntary commitment of inmates of the Wisconsin state prison system. If a recommitment proceeding concerns a prisoner pursuant to § 51.20(1)(ar), the following elements must be proven: "a county must show that (1) the individual is an inmate of the Wisconsin state prison system; (2) the inmate is mentally ill; (3) the inmate is a proper subject for treatment and is in need of treatment; (4) appropriate less restrictive forms of treatment were attempted with the inmate, and they were unsuccessful; (5) the inmate was fully informed about his treatment needs, the mental health services available, and his rights; and (6) the inmate had an opportunity to discuss his treatment needs, the services available, and his rights with a psychologist or a licensed physician." For the involuntary commitment of a mentally ill prisoner, see <a href="Winnebago County v. Christopher S.">Winnebago County v. Christopher S.</a>, 2016 WI 1, ¶27, 366 Wis.2d 1, 878 N.W.2d 109. While a finding of dangerousness is not required for commitment, it is required for an involuntary medication order in a Wis. Stat. sec. 51.20(1)(ar) proceeding. See <a href="Winnebago County v. Christopher S.">Winnebago County v. Christopher S.</a> (III), 2020 WI 33, 391 Wis.2d 35, 940 N.W.2d 875.

**Psychotropic Medication Order**. Where a psychotropic medication order is sought related to a commitment proceeding, a court, not a jury, makes the determination. Wis. Stat. § 51.61(1)(g)3.

# 8025 TRESPASS: OWNER'S DUTY TO TRESPASSER; DUTY TO CHILD TRESPASSER (ATTRACTIVE NUISANCE)

### **TRESPASSER: DEFINITION**

A person who enters or remains upon property in possession of another without express or implied consent is a trespasser.<sup>1</sup>

Consent to be on the premises of another may be express or implied. There is an express consent when the possessor<sup>2</sup> expressly invites or authorizes another person to be on his or her premises. There is an implied consent when the possessor, by his or her conduct or his or her words, or both, by implication consents to such other person's being on the premises.

In determining whether an implied consent exists, you should look at all of the circumstances then existing, including the acquiescence of the possessor, if any, in the previous use of the premises by others (including the plaintiff); the customary use, if any, of the premises by others (including the plaintiff); the apparent holding out of the premises, if any, to a particular use by the public; and the general arrangement or design of the premises. If, under all the existing circumstances, a reasonable person would conclude that the possessor of the premises impliedly consented that the plaintiff be on the premises, then there was consent.

Question	asks: At the time a	nd place in question,	was (plaintiff) a tres	spasser?
If by your ans	wer to Question	you have found th	at the plaintiff,	, was

a trespasser, it will then be for you to determine whether the defendant, \_\_\_\_\_\_, as the (owner) (occupant possessor) of the premises, complied with those rules of law relating to the duties owed by an owner-occupant to a trespasser.

A trespasser enters upon premises of another at his or her peril. The (owner) (occupant-possessor) is under no duty to anticipate a trespasser's entry or to provide for a trespasser's safety. An (owner) (occupant possessor) may engage in any lawful work conducted in a customary manner, upon his or her premises without incurring liability to a trespasser. This is so even though some danger to trespassers reasonably may be anticipated due to the nature of the work being performed or the manner in which it is being conducted. The (owner's) (occupant-possessor's) only duty to a trespasser is to refrain from acts which willfully, wantonly, or recklessly cause injury or death to trespassers. If (owner) (occupant-possessor) becomes aware, or in the exercise of ordinary care should have become aware, of the presence of trespassers upon his or her premises, (he) (she) may not affirmatively act or set any force in motion likely to cause injury or death to trespassers.

Willful actions are deliberate acts with intent to accomplish a result. Wanton or reckless actions are those so unreasonable and dangerous that the actor knows or should know that it is highly probable harm to another will result.<sup>3</sup>

Question asks:

At or immediately before the (injury to) (death of) (<u>plaintiff</u>), were the actions of (<u>defendant</u>) willful, wanton, or reckless?

If you determined that the actions of (<u>defendant</u>) were willful, wanton, or reckless, then you must determine if the actions were a cause of (<u>plaintiff</u>)'s (injury)(death);

Question asks:

Was the action of (<u>defendant</u>) a cause of (injury)(death) to (<u>plaintiff</u>)?

(**NOTE:** If the plaintiff is a child and his or her claim is based on "attractive nuisance," the following instruction should be given. For a suggested verdict, see Wis JI-Civil 8027.)

## CHILD TRESPASSER

When a child trespasses upon the premises of another, the owner-occupant owes no duty of care to a child injured or killed unless all of the following apply:

- a) The possessor of real property maintained, or allowed to exist, an artificial condition on the property that was inherently dangerous to children.
- b) The possessor of real property knew or should have known that children trespassed on the property.
- c) The possessor of real property knew or should have known that the artificial condition he or she maintained or allowed to exist was inherently dangerous to children and involved an unreasonable risk of serious bodily harm or death to children.
- d) The injured or killed child, because of his or her youth or tender age, did not discover the condition or realize the risk involved in entering onto the property or in playing in close proximity to the inherently dangerous artificial condition.

e) The possessor of real property could have reasonably provided safeguards that would have obviated the inherent danger without interfering with the purpose for which the artificial condition was maintained or allowed to exist.

An artificial condition, as used in this instruction, includes a machine or device as well as a land condition artificially created. The duty of the possessor is to exercise ordinary care to eliminate dangers or otherwise protect children. Ordinary care is that degree of care which the great mass of mankind ordinarily exercises under the same or similar circumstances. The duty placed upon the possessor is to take such steps as a reasonable person would take under the circumstances. The duty of the possessor does not apply to children who know, or should know, of the danger involved in the condition.

In determining whether the (artificial condition), maintained on the land known to be subject to trespass by children, involves an unreasonable risk to them, you should consider and compare the recognizable risk to the children with the utility to the possessor of maintaining the condition. In this regard, you should consider whether safeguards could reasonably be provided which would obviate the danger without materially interfering with the purpose for the artificial condition. You must further decide if the (artificial condition) was a cause of the (injury to) (death of) (child).

### **NOTES**

1. Wis. Stat. § 895.529(1)(b). This instruction was revised in accordance with 2011 Act 93.

- 2. Wis. Stat. § 895.529(1)(a). "Possessor of real property" means an owner, lessee, tenant, or other lawful occupant of real property.
- 3. This exception does not apply if the possessor used reasonable and necessary force for the purpose of self-defense or the defense of others under Wis. Stat. § 939.48 or used reasonable and necessary force for the protection of property under § 939.49

#### **COMMENT**

The committee revised the instruction and comment in 2012. The comment was revised in 2016. This revision was approved by the Committee in September 2021; it added to the notes and comment.

Wis. Stat. § 895.529. See Wis. Stat. § 895.529(4) which states: "This section does not create or increase any liability on the part of a possessor of real property for circumstances not specified under this section and does not affect any immunity from or defenses to liability available to a possessor of real property under common law or another statute."

This instruction incorporates the former Wis JI-Civil 8012: Trespasser: Definition and Wis JI-Civil 8015: Trespass: Consent of Possessor to Another's Being on Premises. The instruction also covers a claim based on attractive nuisance which formerly had been addressed in Wis JI-Civil 1011.

**Special Verdicts**. For special verdicts on the duty of a possessor of property, see Wis JI-Civil 8026 and 8027.

It is the opinion of the committee that there is no comparative negligence comparison involving an owner's duty to a child trespasser (attractive nuisance). It is our opinion that Wis. Stat. § 895.529(3)(b) is designed to limit the liability of a landowner and that the statute does not provide for a comparison of negligence.

**Burden of Proof**. The committee believes the burden of proof as to the first verdict question (i.e. was the plaintiff a trespasser?) is on the defendant to show the plaintiff was a trespasser. The middle burden of proof applies to the question: "At or immediately before the injuries to plaintiff, were the actions of defendant willful, wanton, or reckless"?

Attractive Nuisance. See Wis. Stat. § 895.529(3)(b); Christians v. Homestake Enterprises, Ltd., 101 Wis.2d 25, 303 N.W.2d 608 (1981); Restatement, Second, Torts § 339. For a suggested verdict, see Wis JI-Civil 8027.

**Duty to Non-Trespassers.** In <u>Antoniewicz v. Reszczynski</u>, 70 Wis.2d 836, fn. 4, 236 N.W.2d 1 (1975), the court abolished the distinction between the duty owed to licensees and invitees by possessors of land. The decision created one common and equal duty that a possessor of land owes to all persons on his or her lands (excepting trespassers) and that is the duty to exercise ordinary care. See Wis JI-Civil 8020.

**Duty of care owed to trespassers.** Wis. Stat. § 895.529(2) states that "Except as provided in sub. (3), a possessor of real property owes no duty of care to a trespasser." As noted in Note 2, <u>supra</u>, § 895.529(1)(a) defines a "possessor of real property" as "an owner, lessee, tenant, or other lawful occupant of real property." However, there is no statutory definition provided for the phrase "other lawful occupant of real property."

In <u>Stroede v. Society Insurance</u>, 2021 WI 43, 397 Wis.2d 17, 959 N.W.2d 305, the Wisconsin Supreme Court provided an interpretation of this phrase, and determined that such a person "must have some degree of possession or control over the property and the ability to give and withdraw consent to enter or remain on the property." <u>Id</u>. at ¶19.

# 8060 ADVERSE POSSESSION NOT FOUNDED ON WRITTEN INSTRUMENT (WIS. STAT. § 893.25)

(Name of adverse possessor) claims ownership of real estate based on adverse possession. To claim ownership of real estate based on adverse possession, a person, together with his or her predecessors in interest, must have had uninterrupted adverse possession of the real estate for at least 20 years. Real estate is adversely possessed when the person claiming adverse possession (together with (his) (her) predecessors in interest) has had actual continued occupation of the real estate, under a claim of title, exclusive of any other right and the real estate claimed and occupied is either protected by a substantial enclosure or is usually cultivated or improved.

[In determining whether real estate is adversely possessed, you must look at the physical character of the possession. The physical possession must be open, notorious, exclusive, continuous, and hostile for at least 20 years.]

[The adverse possession must be sufficiently open and obvious to have apprised (<u>title holder</u>) of both the fact of the possession and the intent to exclude others from possession. Exclusive possession does not mean absolutely exclusive but rather the kind of possession that would characterize an owner's use.]

[Note: The following paragraph should be given where the use claimed to be continuous is seasonal in nature: Where the adverse possession is seasonal in character, the requirement of continuity of possession is satisfied by the use of the real estate

according to the existing seasonal uses, needs, requirements, and limitations, taking into consideration the location and the adaptability of the real estate for the seasonal use.]

["Hostile" does not mean a deliberate, willful, or unfriendly intent. If the characteristics of open, notorious, exclusive, and continuous possession are satisfied, the law presumes the element of hostile intent. "Hostile" means that the person in actual possession of the land claims exclusive right to it.]

[Land is "actually occupied" when it is used in a way it is ordinarily capable of being used and in such a manner as an owner would use it. Actual occupation is not limited to structural encroachment, although that it is a common physical characteristic of possession.]

The requirement of "substantial enclosure" must alert a reasonable person of a dispute over the land. "Usually cultivated or improved" means the one in possession has put the land to the same kind of use that a title holder might generally put the land.

(<u>Title holder</u>) is presumed to be in possession of the land claimed by (<u>adverse possessor</u>). Therefore, the burden is on (<u>adverse possessor</u>) to establish (his) (her) claim. Finally, (<u>adverse possessor</u>) has the burden of proof to clearly define the area of land claimed to be adversely possessed. While absolute precision or utilization of a surveyor is not required to establish lines of occupancy, the evidence must provide a reasonably accurate basis upon which to determine the boundary of the land adversely possessed.

[Burden of Proof, Wis JI-Civil 200]

### **COMMENT**

This instruction and comment were approved in 1996. The comment was updated in 2011, 2015, 2016, and 2018. The instruction was revised in 2002 to conform the language regarding the burden of proof to the Committee's 2002 revisions to Wis. JI-Civil 200 and 205, the instructions on the civil burdens of proof. See Wis. JI-Civil 200, Comment. This revision was approved by the Committee in October 2021; it added to the comment.

**Elements**. To constitute adverse possession, "the use of the land must be open, notorious, visible, exclusive, hostile and continuous, such as would apprise a reasonably diligent landowner and the public that the possessor claims the land as his own." Pierz v. Gorski, 88 Wis.2d 131, 137, 276 N.W.2d 352 (Ct. App. 1979) (citations omitted); see also Steuck Living Trust v. Easley, 2010 WI App 74, 325 Wis.2d 455, 785 N.W.2d 631; Wilcox v. Estate of Hines, 2014 WI 60, 355 Wis.2d 1, 849 N.W.2d 280. "Hostile" does not mean a deliberate and unfriendly animus; rather, the law presumes the element of hostile intent if the other requirements of open, notorious, continuous, and exclusive use are satisfied. Burkhardt v. Smith, 17 Wis.2d 132, 139, 115 N.W.2d 540 (1962). Kruckenberg v. Krukar, 2017 WI App 70, 378 Wis.2d 314, 903 N.W.2d 164. "Both the fact of possession and its real adverse character" must be sufficiently open and obvious to "apprize the true owner in the exercise of reasonable diligence of the fact and of an intention to usurp the possession of that which in law is his own." Allie v. Russo, 88 Wis.2d 334, 343-44, 276 N.W.2d 730 (1979) (citations omitted). The size and nature of the disputed area are relevant in deciding if the use is sufficient to apprise the true owner of an adverse claim. See Pierz, 88 Wis.2d at 139.

In 2017, the Wisconsin Legislative Council published an information memorandum, IM-2017-04, which provides background information on the law of adverse possession and provides an overview of relevant court decision and statutes.

**Tacking**. The Judicial Council Committee's note following Wis. Stat. § 893.25 indicates that the phrase "in connection with his or her predecessors in interest" expresses the doctrine of "tacking" together periods of possession by adverse possessors in privity with each other.

**Presumption of Hostile Possession**. In Wilcox v. Estate of Hines, 2014 WI 60, 355 Wis.2d 1, 849 N.W.2d 280, the Wisconsin Supreme Court held that evidence regarding a possessor's subjective intent to claim title may be relevant in an adverse possession claim to rebut the presumption of hostility that arises when all other elements of adverse possession are satisfied. The court said the circuit court properly considered the predecessors in interest subjective intent and concluded that the adverse possession claimants failed to establish adverse possession for the requisite statutory period. The question presented in this case was whether the plaintiffs could establish that they adversely possessed the disputed property when their predecessors in interest expressly disclaimed ownership of it and sought permission to use the property from an entity that they mistakenly believed was its true owner.

**Burden of Proof**. This instruction is similar to the one used by the trial court in <u>Kruse v. Horlamus Indus.</u>, 130 Wis.2d 357, 387 N.W.2d 64 (1986). It also conforms with the supreme court's clarification in <u>Kruse</u> as to the burden of proof to be used in adverse possession cases. The court held that the civil burden, not the middle burden, of proof applies in adverse possession cases. Some older cases used the term "clear and positive" evidence regarding evidence of possession. The court stated at page 362:

The confusion surrounding the phrase "clear and positive," derives from the word, "clear," which frequently appears in the middle burden of proof. Because of the confusion which this portion of the instruction may cause, we direct that the words, "must be clear and positive and," be omitted from the instruction. The amended instruction will therefore read, "The evidence of possession must be strictly construed against the claimant." The instruction as so modified comports with the presumption of § 893.30 Stats. that favors the holder of the legal title.

**Titleholder**. As suggested in a footnote in <u>Kruse</u> (p. 361), this instruction uses the term "title holder" as opposed to the term "true owner" to avoid possible confusion.

**Seasonal Use**. In both <u>Laabs v. Bolger</u>, 25 Wis.2d 17, 23, 130 N.W.2d 270 (1964) [involving a deer-hunting shack] and <u>Kraus v. Mueller</u>, 12 Wis.2d 430, 440, 107 N.W.2d 467 (1960) [involving a summer-cottage property], the court cites the A.L.R. annotation, "Adverse Possession: Sufficiency, as regards continuity, of seasonal possession other than for agricultural or logging purposes," 24 A.L.R. 2d 632, 633, for the rule that seasonal use can satisfy the continuity requirement under certain circumstances, with the annotation stating:

The requirement of continuity of possession as one of the essential elements of adverse possession is satisfied, as regards activities which are seasonal in character (other than those relating to agriculture and logging), by the use of land commensurate with and appropriate to existing seasonal uses, needs, requirements, and limitations, having regard for the location and adaptability of the land to such uses.

**Defining the Area Possessed**. The requirement that the adverse possessor provide a reasonably accurate basis upon which a legal description of the occupied area can be based is stated in <u>Droege v. Daymaker Cranberries, Inc.</u>, 88 Wis.2d 140, 146; 276 N.W.2d 356 (Ct. App. 1979). The trial court must be provided with a reasonably accurate basis to determine the boundary. <u>Otto v. Cornell</u>, 119 Wis.2d 4, 11, 349 N.W.2d 703 (1984).

The court of appeals in Klinefelter v. Ditch, 161 Wis.2d 28, 37, 467 N.W.2d 192 (Ct. App. 1991) notes:

§ 893.25 Stats. makes no distinction between "wild lands" and any others. Whether land is wild or not, a substantial enclosure plus "actual continued occupation" under a claim of right results in adverse possession if maintained for twenty years.

**Permission**. Hostile intent does not exist if the use is pursuant to the titleholder's permission. Northwoods Dev. Corp. v. Klement, 139 Wis.2d 695, 129 N.W.2d 121 (1964). See also Wilcox v. Estate of Hines, 2014 WI 60, 355 Wis.2d 1, 849 N.W.2d 280.

**Substantial Enclosure**. See <u>Steuck Living Trust v. Easley</u>, 2010 WI App 74, 325 Wis.2d 455, 785 N.W.2d 631; <u>Illinois Steel Co. v. Bilot</u>, 109 Wis. 418, 444, 84 N.W.2d 855 (1901); <u>Kruckenberg v. Krukar</u>, 2017 WI App 70, 378 Wis.2d 314, 903 N.W.2d 164.

**Acquiescence**. The adverse possessor may contend that, by tolerating his or her use, the titleholder was acquiescing in the use rather than permitting it, and argue that use by acquiescence is adverse. <u>Allie v.</u>

Russo, 88 Wis.2d 334, 343, 276 N.W.2d 730 (1979). However, for the doctrine of acquiescence to apply, the adverse possessor's use of the disputed property must be exclusive. See <u>Allie v. Russo</u>, <u>supra</u>, at pp. 345-47, and cases cited therein.

The doctrine of acquiescence is a "supplement" to the older rule of adverse possession which held that adverse intent was the first prerequisite of adverse possession. Chandelle Enters., LLC v. XLNT Dairy Farm, Inc., 2005 WI App 110, 282 Wis.2d 806, 699 N.W.2d 241. Northrop v. Opperman, 2010 WI App 80, 325 Wis.2d 445, 784 N.W.2d 736; Steuck Living Trust v. Easley, 2010 WI App 74, 325 Wis.2d 455, 785 N.W.2d 631. Courts have developed the doctrine of acquiescence, which substitutes "mutual acceptance" for adverse or hostile intent. Buza v. Wojtalewicz, 48 Wis.2d 557, 562-63, 180 N.W.2d 556 (1970). See also Shrestha, Jessica, "Hey! That's My Land," Wisconsin Lawyer, Vol. 83, No. 3, March 2010 and Vol. 88, No. 7, June 2015.

All-or-nothing vs. portions of land theories. The way that a claimant pursues a theory of adverse possession can limit their ability to argue that the finder of fact should be offered an opportunity to find that portions of the land have been adversely possessed rather than an all-or-nothing choice. See Pierz v. Gorski, 88 Wis.2d 131, 134, 276 N.W.2d 352 (Ct. App. 1979) (allowing adverse possession "[o]nly to the extent" actual occupancy, along with other requirements, are proven); and Droege v. Daymaker Cranberries, Inc., 88 Wis.2d 140, 147, 276 N.W.2d 356 (Ct. App. 1979) (When "evidence was presented as to the extent of occupancy of only a portion of the land, only that portion may be awarded."). Per these two decisions, a rule that appears to emerge is that adverse possession claimants certainly can, and must generally be allowed to, pursue theories of adverse possession to portions within claims on larger parcels of property.

### 8100 EMINENT DOMAIN: FAIR MARKET VALUE (TOTAL TAKING)

The sole question in the Special Verdict asks, "What was the fair market value of the property on (date of evaluation)?"

In answering this question, consider only the price for which the property would have sold on (date of evaluation) by a seller then willing, but not forced, to sell, to a buyer who was then willing and able, but not forced, to buy. Fair market value is not what the property would sell for at a forced sale or at a sale made under unusual or extraordinary circumstances, or what might be paid by a particular buyer who might be willing to pay an excessive price for his or her special purpose. In determining fair market value, you should not consider sentimental value to the seller or his or her unwillingness to sell the property.

You should consider the use to which the property was put by the owner or any other use to which it was reasonably adaptable. You may base your determination on the most advantageous use or highest and best use shown to exist, either on (date of evaluation) or in the reasonably foreseeable near future after (date of evaluation). The terms "most advantageous use" and "highest and best use" have the same meaning. The highest and best use, or the most advantageous use, of the property, is the use to which the property could legally, physically, and economically be put on (date of evaluation) or in the reasonably foreseeable near future after (date of evaluation). If you consider future uses, they must be so reasonably probable as to affect fair market value on (date of evaluation).

They must not be merely possible uses based upon speculation, theory, or conjecture. You should consider every element that establishes the fair market value of the property.

### SPECIAL VERDICT

What was the fair market value of the property on (date of evaluation)?

### **COMMENT**

This instruction and comment were approved in 2006. The comment was revised in 2009, 2010, 2011, 2014, 2015, and 2020. The 2020 revision updated case law citations. This revision was approved by the Committee in January 2022; it added to the comment.

Wis. Stat. § 32.09(5).

Fair Market Value. The definition of "fair market value" is taken from Arents v. ANR Pipeline Company, 2005 WI App. 61, 281 Wis. 2d 173, 189, 696 N.W. 2d 194 (Ct. App. 2005). The principle that the trier of fact is to consider every element which would be considered by the buyer and the seller in the marketplace in setting the price for the subject property on the date of taking is found in Ken-Crete Products Company v. State Highway Commission, 24 Wis.2d 355, 359-360, 129 N.W.2d 130 (1964), Herro v. Department of Natural Resources, 67 Wis.2d 407, 420, 227 N.W.2d 456 (1974) and Clarmar Realty Company, Inc. v. Redevelopment Authority of the City of Milwaukee, 129 Wis. 2d 81, 91, 383 N.W.2d 890 (1986). See also 260 North 12th Street, LLC v. State of Wisconsin Dep't of Transportation, 2011 WI 103, 336 Wis.2d 150, 805 N.W.2d 381.

**Date of Evaluation**. Under Wis. Stat. § 32.09(1), the value of the subject property in eminent domain valuation litigation is to be determined as of the date of evaluation. Schey Enterprises, Inc. v. State, 52 Wis.2d 361, 190 N.W.2d 149 (1971). For a taking under Wis. Stat. § 32.05, the date of evaluation is the date the award is recorded in the register of deeds office, which is also the date of taking. For a taking under Wis. Stat. § 32.06, the date of evaluation is the date of filing the lis pendens.

Unit Rule. In a total taking, fair market value must be determined using the "unit rule." <u>Green Bay Broadcasting v. Redevelopment Authority</u>, 116 Wis.2d 1, 342 N.W.2d 27 (1983); see also <u>Hoekstra v. Guardian Pipeline</u>, 2006 WI App 245, 298 Wis.2d 165, 726 N.W.2d 648; <u>The Lamar Co. v. Country Side</u> Restaurant, 2012 WI 46, 340 Wis.2d 335, 814 N.W.2d 159.

The Wisconsin Supreme Court discussed the "unit rule" in <u>City of Milwaukee Post No. 2874 VFW v.</u> <u>Redevelopment Authority</u>, 2009 WI 84, 319 Wis.2d 553, 768 N.W.2d 749. The issue in the case was

expressed as follows: "If the VFW, which holds a long-term favorable lease, receives no compensation for its leasehold interest under the unit rule, has the VFW's right to just compensation under Article I, Section 13 of the Wisconsin Constitution been violated? In other words, the court is asked to determine whether the application of the unit rule in the present case violates the just compensation clause when the fair market value of the property is zero, rendering the VFW entitled to \$0 for the loss of its property interest as a lessee."

The court concluded that using the unit rule in the case to value the whole property to determine the amount of compensation due to the VFW does not violate the just compensation clause. The court said that the VFW receives just compensation when it receives no compensation for its leasehold interest in a property that has no value.

The VFW court explained the unit rule as follows:

... under the unit rule there is no separate valuation of improvements or natural attributes of the land, and the manner in which the land is owned or the number of owners does not affect the value of the property.[21] When property that is held in partial estates by multiple owners is condemned, the condemnor provides compensation by paying the value of an undivided interest in the property rather than by paying the value of each owner's partial interest.[22] Simply stated, the unit rule determines the fair market value as if only one person owned the property. When the value of the property is determined, the condemnor makes a single payment for the property taken and the payment is then apportioned among the various owners.[23]

That property is valued as an integrated and comprehensive unit does not mean that the individual components of value may not be examined or considered in arriving at an overall fair market value.[24] "The unit rule requires only that the various components be valued as contributing parts of an organic whole."[25]

In Wisconsin jurisprudence, "acceptance [of the unit rule] is beyond question." [26] Indeed the unit rule is accepted in the majority of American jurisdictions. [27] The unit rule is a carefully guarded rule and only in rare and exceptional situations are departures permitted. [28]

**Jurisdictional Offer**. For a taking under Wis. Stat. § 32.05, a jurisdictional offer does not have to equal the appraisal on which the offer is based. Otterstatter v. City of Watertown, 378 Wis.2d 697, ¶27, 904 N.W.2d 396 (Ct. App. 2017). Instead, the words "based upon" provided in § 32.05 (2)(b) and (3)(e) mean that "the appraisal must be a supporting part or fundamental ingredient of the jurisdictional offer." Id. at ¶24. See also, Christus Lutheran Church of Appleton v. Wisconsin Dept. of Transportation, 2021 WI 30, ¶30, 396 Wis.2d 302, 956 N.W.2d 837.

Likewise, the fact that a jurisdictional offer increases based on the re-evaluation of items "considered but not fully addressed in the initial appraisal" does not mean that the offer is not "based upon" the appraisal. Christus, supra, at ¶33. The statutory process provided in § 32.05 does not require that a condemnor stay with its initial offer based on its appraisal, "but rather it is required to negotiate to see if that number was too low." Otterstatter, supra, ¶28. There is no statutory prohibition against offering more than the appraised amount in the jurisdictional offer.

Environmental Contamination and Remediation Costs. In 260 North 12th Street, LLC v. State of

Wisconsin Dept. of Transportation, 2011 WI 103, 336 Wis.2d 150, 805 N.W.2d 381, the Wisconsin Supreme Court held that a property's environmental contamination and the costs to remediate it are relevant to the property's fair market value if they would influence a prudent purchaser who is willing and able, but not obliged, to buy the property. 2011 WI 103, ¶7, 47, and 48. In this case, the trial judge instructed the jury according to JI-Civil 8100. See 260 North 12th Street, supra, ¶65-67.

Damages for the Taking of an Easement or a Loss of Direct Access. See <u>118th Street Kenosha</u>, <u>LLC v. Wisconsin Dept. of Transportation</u>, 2014 WI 125, 359 Wis.2d 30, 856 N.W.2d 486.

### 8110 EMINENT DOMAIN: CHANGE IN GRADE\*

You have heard testimony about a change in grade on the property.

A change in grade may affect the fair market value of the remaining property. If the completed public project changes the grade of the remaining property, you are to consider the change in grade when you determine the fair market value of the remaining property immediately after (date of evaluation) as if the public project was completed by (date of evaluation).

### **COMMENT**

This instruction and comment were approved in 2006. The instruction was revised in 2008. This revision was approved in October 2021; it added to the comment.

\*This instruction is to be used only in partial taking cases. Read in conjunction with Wis. JI-Civil 8102. See also Wis. Stat. § 32.09 (6)(f).

There can also be a change in grade under Wis. Stat. § 32.18 where no property has been taken. A modification of this instruction should be used in such cases.

**Definition of "property."** Wis. Stat. Sec. 32.01(2) provides a definition for the term "property" as it is used in matters concerning eminent domain. While the legislature did not define the term "lands" in this definition, the Wisconsin Supreme Court determined that § 32.01(2) indicates that "lands" constitutes some smaller subset of "property," ... and that per § 32.01(2), "'property' includes 'estates in lands, fixtures[,] and personal property directly connected with lands." <u>United America, LLC v. Wis. Dept. of Transportation</u>, 2021 WI 44, ¶12, 397 Wis.2d 42, 959 N.W.2d 317.

Compensation for damages under § 32.18. Wis. Stat. Sec. 32.18 applies only when a change in grade is not accompanied by the "constitutional taking" of land, and recovery is limited to "damages to the lands." <u>United America</u>, supra, at ¶3. In <u>United America</u>, the Wisconsin Supreme Court concluded that based on its interpretation of the definition of "property," the phrase "damages to the lands' is a narrower category of injuries than 'damages to property." <u>Id.</u>, at ¶13. Therefore, under § 32.18, compensation for the diminution in property value is barred. <u>Id</u>., at ¶21. See Wis. Stat. Sec. 32.01(6)(f) for grade changes involving a taking of land.

### 8120 EMINENT DOMAIN: COMPARABLE SALES APPROACH\*

You have heard testimony about other sales [and contracts] to assist you in determining the fair market value of the property on (date of evaluation) [and/or the fair market value of the remaining property immediately after (date of evaluation), as if the public project had been completed by (date of evaluation)].

In determining fair market value, you must consider the price and other terms and circumstances of any good faith sale of [or contract for the sale of] comparable property. A sale [or contract] is comparable if it was made within a reasonable time before or after (date of evaluation) and if that property is sufficiently similar with respect to location, situation, usability, improvements, and other characteristics to warrant a reasonable belief that it is comparable to the property [or remaining property] being valued.

You are to consider all the elements of similarity and dissimilarity in deciding whether the other sales [or contracts] assist you in determining the fair market value of the property on (date of evaluation) [and/or the fair market value of the remaining property immediately after (date of evaluation) as if the public project had been completed by (date of evaluation)].

### **COMMENT**

This instruction and comment were approved in 2006. It was revised in 2008 and 2021. The 2021 revision reflects statutory amendments pursuant to 2017 Wisconsin Act 243 [effective date: April 5, 2018].

\*The bracketed language is to be used in partial taking cases.

Wis. Stat. § 32.09 (1m)(a) provides:

As a basis for determining value, a commission in condemnation or a court shall consider the price and other terms and circumstances of any good faith sale or contract to sell and purchase comparable property. A sale or contract is comparable within the meaning of this paragraph if it was made within a reasonable time before or after the date of evaluation and the property is sufficiently similar in the relevant market, with respect to situation, usability, improvements, and other characteristics, to warrant a reasonable belief that it is comparable to the property being valued.

See <u>Calaway v. Brown County</u>, 202 Wis. 2d 736, 553 N.W.2d 809 (Ct. App. 1996)(citing <u>Kamrowski v. State of Wis.</u>, 37 Wis.3d 195, 201-02, 155 N.W.2d 125, 129 (1967)); <u>Rademann v. State Dept. of Transportation.</u>, 252 Wis. 2d 191, 642 N.W.2d 600 (Ct. App. 2002); <u>Alsum v. Wisconsin Dept. of Transportation</u>, 276 Wis. 2d 654, 689 N.W.2d 68 (Ct. App. 2004); <u>Justmann v. Portage County</u>, 278 Wis. 2d 487, 692 N.W.2d 273 (Ct. App. 2004) and <u>Rosen v. Milwaukee</u>, 72 Wis. 2d 653, 242 N.W.2d 681, (1976).

Income Approach to Valuation. The trial judge must decide if evidence on the income approach is admissible. See <a href="Hoekstra">Hoekstra</a> v. Guardian Pipeline, 2006 WI App 245, 298 Wis.2d 165, 726 N.W.2d 648; <a href="Alsum v. Wisconsin Dept. of Transportation">Alsum v. Wisconsin Dept. of Transportation</a>, 276 Wis.2d 654, 689 N.W.2d 68 (Ct. App. 2004); <a href="Matients and Truckstops">National Auto Truckstops</a>, Inc. v. State, Dept. of Transportation, 263 Wis. 2d 649, 665 N.W. 2d 198 (2003); <a href="Wisconsin Dept. of Transportation">Wisconsin Dept. of Transportation</a>, supra; <a href="Rademann v. State Dept. of Transportation">Rademann v. State Dept. of Transportation</a>, 252 Wis. 2d 191, 642 N.W.2d 600 (Ct. App. 2002).

See also, the comment to Wis JI-Civil 8130.

### **WIS JI-CIVIL**

### TABLE OF CASES CITED

118<sup>th</sup> Street Kenosha, LLC v. Wisconsin Dept. of Transportation, 8100, 8111 260 North 12<sup>th</sup> Street, LLC v. State of Wisconsin Dept. of Transportation, 8100, 8101 1325 N. Van Buren, LLC v. T-3 Grp., Ltd., 2400

#### Α

A. E. Inv. Corp. v. Link Builders, Inc., 1005, 1022.4, 8020

A.G. v. Travelers Ins. Co., 3110

Abbott v. Truck Ins. Exch. Co., 1000, 1280

ABC Outdoor Advertising, Inc. v. Dolhun's Marine, Inc., 3030

Abdella v. Catlin, 2800

Ackley v. Farmers Mut. Auto Ins. Co., 1105A

Acme Equip. Corp. v. Montgomery Coop. Creamery Ass'n, 3220, 3230

Adams v. Maxcy, 2200

Affett v. Milwaukee & Suburban Transport. Corp., 1796

Affiliated F. M. Ins. Co. v. Constitution Reinsurance Corp., 3051

Afflerbaugh v. Geo. Grede & Bro., 1025.7

Ahola v. Sincock, 1023, 1145

Aicher v. Wis. Patients Comp. Fund, 1023, 1870, 1895, 1897

Aikens v. Wisconsin, 2820

Albert v. Waelti, 1023.14

Alden v. Matz, 1133, 1132

Allen v. Bonnar, 1760

Allen v. Chicago N.W. Ry., 1803, 8100

Allen v. Ross, 3117

Allen v. Wisconsin Public Service Corp., 950

Allen & O'Hara v. Barrett Wreckers, Inc., 2820

Allie v. Russo, 8060

Allis-Chalmers Mfg. Co. v. Eagle Motor Lines, 1026.5

Alpirn v. Williams Steel & Supply Co., 3056

Alsteen v. Gehl, 1511, 2725

Alsum v. WISDOT, 8102, 8103, 8120, 8130, 8135

Alt v. American Family Mut. Ins. Co., 2760

Alvarado v. Sersch, 1005

Alwin v. State Farm Fire and Casualty Co., 1390

American Family Mut. Ins. Co. v. Dobrzynski, 215

American Family Mut. Ins. Co. v. Golke, 400

American Family Mut. Ins. Co. v. Osusky, 3112

American Family Mut. Ins. Co. v. Shannon, 152

American Fidelity & Casualty Co. v. Travelers Indem. Co., 1350

American Ins. Co. v. Rural Mut. Casualty Ins. Co, 3117

American Nat'l Red Cross v. Banks, 1025.5

American States S. Co. v. Milwaukee N. R. Co., 8100, 8120

American Steam Laundry Co. v. Riverside Printing Co., 3725

American Tobacco Co. v. United States, 2802, 2804

Andersen v. Andersen, 260

Anderson v. Alfa-Laval Agri, Inc., 3240

Anderson v. Anderson, 4080

Anderson v. Continental Ins. Co., 1707, 2725, 2761, 3044

Anderson v. Eggert, 260

Anderson v. Seelow, 100

Anderson v. Stricker, 1144, 1210

Anderson v. Tri-State Home Improvement Co., 2400, 2405, 2405.5

Anderson v. Yellow Cab Co., 1025

Andraski v. Gormley, 1125

Anello v. Savignac, 2000

Ansani v. Cascade Mountain, Inc., 1393

Ansul v. Employers Ins. Co. of Wausau, 3116

Antoniewicz v. Reszczynski, 1901, 8012, 8015, 8020, 8025

Antwaun A. v. Heritage Mut. Ins. Co., 1005, 1009

Apex Hosiery Co. v. Leader, 2800

Appleton Chinese Food v. Murken Ins., 1023.6

Appleton Elec. Co. v. Rogers, 3063

Appleton State Bank v. Lee, 3048, 3076

Arbet v. Gussarson, 1500

Arents v. ANR Pipeline Company, 8100, 8101, 8102, 8103

Arjay Investment Co. v. Kohlmetz, 3028

Arledge v. Scherer Freight Lines, 1026

Armstrong v. Milwaukee Ins. Co., 1390, 1391

Arndt Brothers Minkery v. Medford Fur Foods, 3200

Arnold v. National Bank of Waupaca, 2400

Arnold v. Shawano County Agricultural Soc'y, 1815

Arsand v. City of Franklin, 1600, 4000, 4030, 4060

Ashley v. American Auto Ins. Co., 1090, 1758, 1760

Atlee v. Bartholomew, 3020

Attoe v. State Farm Mut. Auto Ins. Co., 3057

Augsburger v. Homestead Mutual Ins. Co., 1390, 1391

Augustine v. Anti-Defamation League B'nai B'rith, 2780, 2800

Ault v. International Harvester Co., 358

Auric v. Continental Cas. Co., 1023.5

Austin v. Ford Motor Co., 1277

Autumn Grove Joint Venture v. Rachlin, 3044

Ayala v. Farmers Mut. Auto Ins. Co., 1500

#### R

Bach v. Liberty Mut. Fire Ins. Co., 1610, 1760

Bachand v. Connecticut Gen. Life Ins. Co., 2520

Bachman v. Salzer, 2401

Bade v. Badger Mut. Ins. Co., 3057, 3074

Badger Cab Co. v. Soule, 2620

Badger Furniture Co. v. Industrial Comm'n, 4030, 4060

Bagnowski v. Preway, Inc., 1022.4

Baier v. Farmers Mut. Auto Ins. Co., 1157

Baierl v. Hinshaw, 1001

Bailey v. Bach, 100, 1285

Bailey v. Hagen, 1310

Bailey v. Hovde, 205, 3040

Baird v. Cornelius, 1046

Baker v. Herman Mut. Ins. Co., 1075

Baker v. Northwestern Nat'l Casualty, 2760, 2770, 3725

Balas v. St. Sebastian's Congregation, 1900.4

Baldewein Co. v. Tri-Clover, Inc., 2769

Ballard v. Lumbermen's Mut. Casualty Co., 410, 1760, 1815

Bank of Calif., v. Hoffmann, 4020

Bank of Sheboygan v. Fessler, 3040

Bank of Sun Prairie v. Esser, 2401, 3068

Bank of Sun Prairie v. Opstein, 3057

Bankert v. Threshermen's Mut. Ins. Co., 1013, 1014

Bannach v. State Farm Mut. Auto Ins. Co., 1350

Barker Barrel Co. v. Fisher, 1310

Barlow v. DeVilbiss Co., 3200

Barnard v. Cohen, 2520

Barnes v. Lozoff, 1022.4, 1812

Barney v. Mickelson, 1023

Barr v. Granahan, 3020

Barragar v. Industrial Comm'n, 1605, 4045

Barry v. Employers Mut. Casualty Co., 1022.6, 1900.4

Bartelt v. Smith, 4080

Barth v. Downey Co., 1022.2

Barthel v. Wisconsin Elec. Power Co., 1901

Basche v. Vanden Heuvel, 1725

Battice v. Michaelis, 1191

Bay View Packing Co. v. Taff, 2511

Beacon Fed. Sav. & Loan Ass'n v. Panoramic Enter., Inc., 3020

Becker v. Barnes, 315

Beer v. Strauf, 1105

Beers v. Bayliner Marine Corp., 400

Behringer v. State Farm Mut. Auto Ins. Co., 1735

Bekkedal v. City of Viroqua, 1

Bell v. County of Milwaukee, 1838

Bell v. Duesing, 1012, 1582

Belling v. Harn, 3110

Bellrichard v. Chicago & N. W. Ry., 1336, 1405, 1408, 1409

Below v. Norton, 2400, 2418, 2419

Bembister v. Aero Auto Parts, 1336

Benke v. Mukwonago Mut. Ins. Co., 2761

Benkoski v. Flood, 2418, 2720

Bensend v. Harper, 180

Bentley v. Foyas, 2401, 2402

Bentzler v. Braun, 1114, 1277, 1300

Bergevin v. Chippewa Falls, 1900.4

Berner Cheese Corp, v. Krug, 1707.1

Bernhagen v. Marathon Fin. Corp., 4028

Betchkal v. Willis, 1005, 1009, 1350

Betehia v. Cape Cod Corp., 3200, 3204, 3248 Beul v. ASSE International, Inc., 2005.5

Bey v. Transport Indem. Co., 1065

Beyak v. North Central Food Systems, Inc., 8045

Bielski v. Schulze, 1006, 1383

Biersach v. Wolf River Paper & Fiber Co., 1580, 1585, 1590

Bigelow v. West Wis. Ry. Co., 8102, 8103, 8105

Binsfeld v. Curran, 1045

Bird v. Kleiner, 2400

Bishop-Babcock Co. v. Keeley, 3034

Black v. General Elec. Co., 260

Blahnik v. Dax, 100

Blair v. Staats, 1582

Blaisdell v. Allstate Ins. Co., 1766

Blankavag v. Badger Box & Lumber Co., 405

Blever v. Gross, 1758

Bloom v. Krueger, 4040

Bloomer v. Bloomer, 1796

BMW of North Am., Inc., v. Gore, 1707.1, 1707.2

Bockemuhl v. Jordan, 4020

Bode v. Buchman, 410

Boelter v. Ross Lumber Co., 1705

Bohn v. Leiber, 3079

Bohn Mfg. Co. v. Reif, 3034

Bohnsack v. Huson-Ziegler Co., Inc., 1605

Boles v. Milwaukee County, 1880

Bolick v. Gallagher, 1722A

Booth v. Frankenstein, 410, 1135, 1140

Borello v. United States Oil Co., 950

Borg v. Downing, 3220

Boschek v. Great Lakes Mut. Ins. Co., 3116

Bourassa v. Gateway Erectors, Inc., 1051, 1767, 1768, 1796

Bourestom v. Bourestom, 1112

Bovi v. Mellor, 1144

Bowen v. American Family Ins. Co., 1897

Bowen v. Industrial Comm'n, 410

Bowen v. Lumbermens Mut. Casualty Co., 1510, 1511, 1770, 1855

Bowers v. Treuthardt, 1065, 1325, 1610

Boynton Cab Co. v. ILHR Dep't, 1025

Bradford v. Milwaukee & Suburban Transp. Corp., 1025

Bradley v. Harper, 1025.5

Brain v. Mann, 1760

Brandenburg v. Briarwood Forestry Services, LLC, 1022.6

Bratt v. Peterson, 3074

Braun v. Wisconsin Elec. Power Co., 8102, 8103, 8105

Brekken v. Knopf, 2005.5

Brest v. Maenat Realty, 3040

Brethorst v. Allstate, 2761

Breunig v. American Family Ins. Co., 1021, 1021.2

Brew City Redevelopment Group v. The Ferchill Group, 2808, 2820

Brice v. Milwaukee Auto Ins. Co., 1010, 1582

Bridgeport Mortgage & Realty Corp. v. Whitlock, 3045

Bridgkort Racquet Club v. University Bank, 1796

Briese v. Maechtle, 1010

Briggs v. Miller, 3010, 3020

Bright v. City of Superior, 4015

Bristol v. Eckhardt, 2605

Britz v. American Ins. Co., 3117

Broadbent v. Hegge, 3057

Brockmeyer v. Dun & Bradstreet, 2750

Brodis v. Hayes, 1022.6, 4060

Brons v. Bischoff, 1900.4

Brooks v. Hayes, 1022.6, 4060

Brown v. Dibbell, 1023.4

Brown v. Maxey, 1707, 1707.1, 3051

Brown v. Milwaukee Terminal Ry. Co., 1920, 1922, 1928

Brown v. Muskego Norway School Dist. Group Health Plan, 4035, 4045

Brown v. Oneida Knitting Mills, Inc., 3082

Brown v. Travelers Indem. Co., 1055, 1501

Brown v. Wisconsin Natural Gas Co., 1002, 1003

Browne v. State, 2115

Brownsell v. Klawitter, 2600, 2620

Brueggeman v. Continental Casualty Co., 1910

Brunette v. Slezewski, 1806

Brunke v. Popp, 1006

Bruner v. Heritage Co., 2200, 2800

Brunner v. Van Hoof, 1145

Brusa v. Mercy Health Sys., Inc., 1023

Bruss v. Milwaukee Sporting Goods Co., 3250

Bruttig v. Olsen, 1013, 1014

Bryan v. Noble, 3072

Buchberger v. Mosser, 3115

Buchholz v. Rosenberg, 3700

Buckett v. Jante, 3028

Buckman v. E. H. Schaefer & Assoc., Inc., 3086

Buckner v. General Casualty Co., 3115

Bump v. Voights, 1885

Bunbury v. Krauss, 3074

Bunkfeldt v. Country Mut. Ins. Co., 1140

Burant v. Ortloff, 1045

Burch v. American Family Mut. Ins. Co., 1021

Burg v. Cincinnati Cas. Ins. Co., 1120

Burke v. Milwaukee & Suburban Transp. Co., 1005, 1009

Burke v. Tesmer, 1165

Burkhalter v. Hartford Accident & Indem. Ins. Co., 1155, 1157

Burkhardt v. Smith, 8060

Burkman v. New Lisbon, 3079

Burnside v. Evangelical Deaconess Hosp., 1024

Bursack v. Davis, 2100

Burton v. Sherwin-Williams Co., 3295

Burzlaff v. Thoroughbred Motorsports, Inc., 3303

Bushweiler v. Polk County Bank, 1025.5, 1025.7

Buss v. Clements, 3117, 3118

Butler v. Industrial Comm'n, 4045

Butts v. Ward, 1320

Butzow v. Wausau Memorial Hosp., 1710, 1722A, 1723

Buxbaum v. G. H. P. Cigar Co., 3725

Buza v. Wojtalewicz, 8060

Bychinski v. Sentry Ins., 1796, 1797

Byerly v. Thorpe, 1052

Byrnes v. Metz, 1731

 $\mathbf{C}$ 

Calaway v. Brown County, 8101, 8120

Calero v. Del Chemical, 2500, 2501, 2511, 2513, 2520, 2552

Calhoun v. Lasinski, 1000

Calhoun v. Western Casualty & Sur. Co., 3117

California Wine Ass'n v. Wisconsin Liquor Co. of Oshkosh, 3024, 3049, 3083, 3084

Callan v. Peters Constr. Co., 1056, 1901, 1904

Callies v. Reliance Laundry Co., 1835

Calumet Cheese Co. v. Chas. Pfizer & Co., 3200

Cameron v. Union Auto Ins. Co., 1895

Camp v. Anderson, 1511

Campbell v. Spaeth, 1032

Campenni v. Walrath, 1390

Camper Corral v. Alderman, 1023.6

Canifax v. Hercules Powder Co., 3200

Converters Equip. Corp. v. Condes Corp., 2500

Capello v. Janeczko, 410, 1052, 1054

Capital Sand & Gravel Co. v. Waffen Schmidt, 305

Capital Investments, Inc. v. Whitehall Packing Co. Inc., 3049, 3051

Carazalla v. State, 8110, 8125

Carl v. Spickler Ent. Ltd, 3302

Carlson v. Drews of Hales Corners, Inc., 1760, 1902

Carlson & Erickson v. Lampert Yards, 205

Carr v. Amusement, Inc., 410, 1900.4

Carson v. Beloit, 1023, 1385

Carson v. Pape, 2115

Cary v. Klabunde, 1315

Casper v. American International South Ins. Co., 1005

Cass v. Haskins, 3016

Cedarburg Light & Water Comm'n v. Allis-Chalmers, 3240

Central Corp. v. Research Products Corp., 2769

Champion Companies v. Stafford Development, 3700

Chandelle Enters., LLC v. XLNT Dairy Farm, Inc., 8060

Chapleau v. Manhattan Oil Co., 1804, 1805

Chapman v. Zakzaska, 2400

Chapnitsky v. McClone, 1506

Charolais Breeding Ranches, Ltd. v. FPC Securities Corp., 2780

Chart v. General Motors Corp., 325, 358

Chernetski v. American Family Mutual Insurance Co., 1153, 1555, 1157, 1558, 1159, 1160, 1165, 1170, 1175, 1180,

1185, 1190, 1190.5, 1191, 1193.5, 1195, 1205, 1210, 1220, 1225, 1230, 1235, 1240, 1245, 1250, 1255, 1260, 1270

Chicago & N.W. R. Co. v. James, 4015

Chicago & N.W. Ry. v. Railroad Comm'n of Wisconsin, 1412

Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pac. R.R. Co. v. Chicago & N.W. Transp. Co., 3070

Chille v. Howell, 1153

Chmill v. Friendly Ford-Mercury, 3301, 3302

Christ v. Exxon Mobil Corp., 950

Christians v. Homestake Enter., Ltd., 1011, 8025, 8027

Christianson v. Downs, 1023

Christus Lutheran Church of Appleton v. Wisconsin Dept. of Transportation, 8100

Chrysler Corp. v. Lakeshore Commercial Fin. Corp., 2780

Chudnow Constr. Corp. v. Commercial Discount Corp., 3020

Cierzan v. Kriegal, 3110

Cincoski v. Rogers, 1870

Cirillo v. Milwaukee, 1381

City of Franklin v. Badger Ford Truck Sales, 3290

City of Hartford v. Godfrey, 1220, 1225

City of Milwaukee v. Allied Smelt Corp., 410

City of Milwaukee v. NL Industries, Inc., 1920, 2800

City of Milwaukee v. Roadster LLC, 8104

City of Milwaukee Post No. 2874 VFW v. Redevelopment Authority, 8100

City of Stoughton v. Thomasson Lumber Co., 400

Clark v. Corby, 1901

Clark v. Leisure Vehicles, Inc., 1500

Clarmar Realty Company, Inc. v. Redevelopment Authority of the City of Milwaukee, 8100, 8101, 8145

Claypool v. Levin, 950

Cluskey v. Thranow, 2401

Coakley v. Prentiss-Wabers Stove Co., 3254

Cobb v. Simon, 2100

Cochran v. Allyn, 1600

Coenen v. Van Handel, 215, 1280

Cogger v. Trudell, 1861

Cohan v. Associated Fur Farms, Inc., 3200

Cohen v. Lachenmaier, 3020

Cole v. Schaub, 1756

Coleman v. Garrison, 1742

Colla v. Mandella, 1145

Collier v. State, 215

Collins v. Eli Lilly Co., 1707, 3295

Collova v. Mutual Serv. Casualty Ins. Co., 1730

Colton v. Foulkes, 1022.4

Commerce Ins. Co. v. Merrill Gas Co., 1002, 1145

Commonwealth Tel. Co. v. Paley, 4005

Concrete Equip. Co. v. Smith Contract Co., Inc., 3207

Coney v. Milwaukee & Suburban Transp. Corp., 410

Congreve v. Smith, 1920

Connar v. West Shore Equip. of Milwaukee, Inc., 1900.2

Conrad Milwaukee Corp. v. Wasilewski, 3012, 3042

Conrardy v. Sheboygan County, 315

Consolidated Papers, Inc. v. ILHR Dep't, 305

Continental Ore Co. v. Union Carbide & Carbon Corp., 2806

Convenience Store Leasing and Management v. Annapurna Marketing, 3070

Cook v. McCabe, 3062

Cook v. Wisconsin Tel. Co., 1096

Cooper v. Chicago & N.W. Ry., 230

Copperweld Corp. v. Independence Tube Corp., 2808

Corbitt v. Stonemetz, 3054

Cords v. Anderson, 1007.5, 1796, 1797

Corning v. Dec Aviation Corp., 325

Correa v. Woodman's Food Market, 1900.4

Coryell v. Conn, 1767, 1768

Costa v. Neimon, 2406

Costas v. City of Fond du Lac, 1920, 1928, 1930, 1932

Couillard v. Van Ess, 1911, 8020

Cramer v. Theda Clark Memorial Hosp., 1385

Crane v. Sears Roebuck & Co., 3200, 3262

Cranston v. Bluhm, 2800

Crest Chevrolet-Oldsmobile Cadillac, Inc. v. Willemsen, 1383, 1731, 8045

Criswell v. Seaman Body Corp., 1051, 1911

Cronin v. Cronin, 1870

Cross v. Leuenberger, 1910

Crotteau v. Karlgaard, 1708, 2006

Crowder v. Milwaukee & Suburban Transp. Corp., 155

Crown v. General Motors Corp., 3200

Crown Life Ins. Co. v. LaBonte, 3044

Cruis Along Boats, Inc., v. Standard Steel Prods. Mfg. Co., 1804

Crye v. Mueller, 1090

Cudd v. Crownhart, 2780

Culton v. Van Beek, 1080

Culver v. Webb, 1285

Cunnien v. Superior Iron Works Co., 1055

Curtis Land & Loan Co. v. Interior Land Co., 3014

Cutler Cranberry Co. v. Oakdale Elec. Coop., 1806

Czapinski v. St. Francis Hosp., 1897

Czarnetzky v. Booth, 1080

D

D.L. v. Huebner, 358, 410, 1019

D.L. Anderson's Lakeside Leisure Co., Inc. v. Anderson, 2790, 2791

Dabareiner v. Weisflog, 1797

Dahl v. Ellis, 1260

Dahlberg v. Jones, 1385, 1385.5

Dakter v. Cavallino, 1005

Dalton v. Meister, 1707, 2500, 2516, 2520, 2800

Darst v. Fort Dodge D.M. & S.R.R., 3074

Dauplaise v. Yellow Taxicab Co., 1025

Davis v. Allstate Ins. Co., 1075, 2761

Davis v. Feinstein, 1050

Davis v. Nuzum, 2400

Dawson v. Jost, 410

DeBaker v. Austin, 1354

DeBruine v. Voskuil, 1023

DeChant v. Monarch Life Ins. Co., 410, 2761

Degenhardt v. Heller, 2004

Dehnart v. Waukesha Brewing Co., 3710, 3735

De Keuster v. Green Bay & W. R.R., 215

Dekeyser v. Milwaukee Automobile Ins. Co., 1030

Delaney v. Supreme Inv. Co., 8030

Delap v. Institute of Am., Inc., 3048

Delmore v. American Family Mut. Ins. Co., 1046, 1047, 1047.1

Delong v. Sagstetter, 1350

Delvaux v. Vanden Langenberg, 100, 1580, 8045

Denil v. Coppersmith, 1391

Denil v. Integrity Mut. Ins., 1815

Denny v. Mertz, 2500, 2501, 2505, 2505A, 2509, 2516, 2520

Denzer v. Rouse, 1023.5

DeRuyter v. Wisconsin Elec. Power Co., 1605, 4035

DeSombre v. Bickel, 3052, 3700

Desotelle v. Continental Casualty Co., 4035

DeThorne v. Bakken, 1023.5, 1023.5A

Devine v. McGowan, 1403

Dick v. Heisler, 190

Dickman v. Schaeffer, 1766

Dickson v. Pritchard, 3725

Diemel v. Weirich, 1767, 1768

Diener v. Heritage Mut. Ins. Co., 1114

Dieter v. Chrysler Corp., 3301

Dietz v. Hardware Dealers Mut. Fire Ins. Co., 3115, 3116

Digicorp, Inc. v. Ameritech Corp., 2400

DiMiceli v. Klieger, 2500, 2505

Dippel v. Sciano, 1924, 1930, 3200, 3260, 3260.1, 3268

Docter v. Furch, 3044

Dodge v. Dobson, 410

Doern v. Crawford, 3110

Dombeck v. Chicago, M. St. P. & P. Ry., 1405, 1407, 1408, 1409

Dombrowski v. Albrent Freight & Storage Corp., 1500

Dombrowski v. Tomasino, 1

Donlea v. Carpenter, 1350, 1795

Donovan v. Barkhausen Oil Co., 2200, 2200.1, 2200.2

Doolittle v. Western States Mut. Ins. Co., 1750.2

Douglas v. Dewey, 1900.4

Doyle v. Engelke, 1383

Doyle v. Teasdale, 3072

Drake v. Farmers Mut. Auto Ins. Co., 1157

Draper v. Baker, 1707

Draper v. United States, 2115

Dreazy v. North Shore Publishing Co., 3022

Droege v. Daymaker Cranberries, Inc., 8060

Duffy Law Office v. Tank Transport, 1023.5, 1023.5A, 1023.8

Dumas v. Koebel, 2550, 2725, 2780

Dumer v. St. Michael's Hosp., 1385

Duncan v. Steeper, 2900

Dunn v. Pertzsch Const., Inc., 3074 Durand West, Inc. v. Milwaukee W. Bank, 3020 Dutcher v. Phoenix Ins. Co., 1047.1 Dwyer v. Jackson Co., 8051

Dykstra v. Arthur G. McKee & Co., 1900.4, 1904

E

E. L. Chester Co. v. Wisconsin Power & Light Co., 1003

Eastern States Retail Lumber Dealers' Ass'n v. United States, 2800

Eckel v. Richter, 4035

Eckstein v. Northwestern Mut. Life Ins. Co., 3074

Edeler v. O'Brien, 1105A

Eden v. LaCrosse Lutheran Hosp., 1385

Edlebeck v. Hooten, 1610

Edward E. Gillen Co. v. John H. Parker Co., 3060

Egan v. Travelers Ins. Co., 1715

Ehlers v. Colonial Penn. Ins. Co., 3117

Eide v. Skerbeck, 8040

Einhorn v. Culea, 1005

Eleason v. Western Casualty & Sur. Co., 1021.2

Ellsworth v. Schelbrock, 202, 1723, 1756

Elmer v. Chicago & N.W. Ry., 2600

Elmergreen v. Kern, 3020

Emerson v. Riverview Rink & Ballroom, 8040, 8045

Employers Ins. Co. v. Pelczynski, 3112

Employers Mut. Ins. Co. v. Industrial Comm'n, 4030

Enea v. Pfister, 1600

Engel v. Dunn County, 1804, 3700

Engsberg v. Hein, 1144

Engstrum v. Sentinel Co., 1095

Erickson v. Prudential Ins. Co., 1014, 1014.5

Ernst v. Greenwald, 350

Ertl v. Ertl, 2900

Esch v. Chicago M. & St. P. R. Co., 8100

Estate of Ansell, 3024

Estate of Briese, 3020

Estate of Cavanaugh v. Andrade, 1031

Estate of Chayka, 3044

Estate of Daniels, 3110

Estate of Gooding, 8100

Estate of Hatten, 3020

Estate of Holt v. State Farm, 1861

Estate of Lade, 1812

Estate of Lube, 3012

Estate of Miller v. Storey, 2420

Estate of Nale, 1812

Estate of Neumann, 400, 405

Estate of St. Germain, 3024

Estate of Schoenkerman, 3020

Estate of Starer, 1610

Estate of Steffes, 1812

Estate of Stromstead, 1825

Estate of Voss, 1812

Estate of Zellmer, 3061

Estate of Zhu v. Hodgson, 1153, 1555, 1157, 1558, 1159, 1160, 1165, 1170, 1175, 1180, 1185, 1190, 1190.5, 1191,

1193.5, 1195, 1205, 1210, 1220, 1225, 1230, 1235, 1240, 1245, 1250, 1255, 1260, 1270

Everlite Mfg. Co. v. Grand Valley Machine & Tool Co., 3030

Ewen v. Chicago & N.W. Ry., 1012, 1861 Ewers v. Eisenzopf, 3202, 3220, 3225, 3230

Ewing v. Goode, 1023

F

Fabick, Inc. v. JFTCO, Inc., 2790

Fahrenberg v. Tengel, 415, 1707, 2520

Fairbanks v. Witter, 1708 Farley v. Salow, 3049

Farm Credit Bank of St. Paul v. F&A Dairy, 2200

Farmers Mut. Auto Ins. Co. v. Gast, 1500

Farrell v. John Deere Co., 1723

Faultersack v. Clintonville Sales Corp., 4020

Fawcett v. Gallery, 1605, 4045

Featherly v. Continental Ins. Co., 410, 1760, 1762

Federal Pants, Inc. v. Stocking, 2780

Fee v. Heritage Mut. Ins. Co., 1825

Fehrman v. Smirl, 415, 1024

Fenelon v. Butts, 1708

Ferdon v. Wisc. Patients Compensation Fund, 1023, 1870, 1895, 1897

Ferraro v. Koelsch, 2750

Ferris v. Location 3 Corp., 2400

Field v. Vinograd, 1230, 1582

Fieldhouse Landscape v. Gentile, 1812

Fields v. Creek, 1501

Fifer v. Dix, 1390

Filipiak v. Plombon, 1910

Finch v. Southside Lincoln-Mercury, Inc., 2780

Finke v. Hess, 1023

Finken v. Milwaukee County, 1025

Fire Ins. Exchange v. Cincinnati Ins. Co., 1390

Firemen's Fund Ins. Co. v. Schreiber, 1025.7, 4035

First Credit Corp. v. Behrend, 2401

First Nat'l Bank v. Hackett, 2400

First Nat'l Bank of Oshkosh v. Scieszinski, 2401, 2402

First Trust Co. v. Holden, 3020

First Wisconsin Land Corp. v. Bechtel Corp., 1806

First Wisconsin Nat'l Bank v. Oby, 3020

First Wisconsin Nat'l Bank of Milwaukee v. Wichman, 2790

First Wisconsin Trust Co. v. L. Wiemann Co., 3095

Fischer v. Cleveland Punch and Shear Work Co., 1760

Fischer v. Fischer, 60, 61, 1825

Fischer v. Ganju, 1023

Fisher v. Lutz, 4015

Fisher v. Simon, 1022.4

Fitzgerald v. Badger State Mut. Casualty Co., 1900.4

Fitzgerald v. Meissner & Hicks, Inc., 1815

Fiumefreddo v. Mclean, 1024

Fleming v. Thresherman's Mut. Ins. Co., 1383, 1580, 8045

Fletcher v. Ingram, 1025.5

Flies v. Fox Bros. Buick Co., 3200, 3240

Flynn v. Audra's Corp., 8045

Foellmi v. Smith, 1052, 1140, 3074

Foerster, Inc. v. Atlas Metal Parts Co., 2769

Foley v. City of West Allis, 1277, 1278, 1722A

Fond du Lac County v. Helen E.F., 7050, 7050A, 7060, 7061

Fondell v. Lucky Stores, Inc., 1001, 1900.4, 1904

Foote v. Douglas County, 3116

Ford, Bacon & Davis, 1580

Ford Motor Co. v. Lyons, 2808

Forrer v. Sears Roebuck & Co., 3084

Fortier v. Flambeau Plastics Co., 1924, 1930

Foseid v. State Bank of Cross Plains, 2780, 3044

Foss v. Madison Twentieth Century Theaters, 2401

Foster v. Fidelity & Casualty Co. of N. Y., 3117

Fouse v. Persons, 1710, 1756

Fox v. Boldt, 3202

Francois v. Mokrohisky, 1023

Frank v. Metropolitan Life Ins. Co., 3018

Frankland v. Peterson, 1144, 1210

Franz v. Brennan, 1707

Fredrickson v. Kabat, 2007

Freeman v. Dells Paper & Pulp Co., 4005

Freeman v. Morris, 3022

Freuen v. Brenner, 1750.2

Frey v. Dick, 1035

Fricano v. Bank of America, 2418

Frinzi v. Hanson, 2500

Frion v. Coren, 1910

Frion v. Craig, 115

Froh v. Milwaukee Medical Clinic, S.C., 1023, 1385

Fuchs v. Kupper, 1707

Fuchsgruber v. Custom Accessories, 3290

Fultz v. Lange, 1605, 4045

Fun-N-Fish, Inc. v. Parker, 3058

#### G

Gabriel v. Gabriel, 3074

Gage v. Seal, 1105A

Gall v. Gall, 3054

Gallagher v. Chicago & N.W. Ry., 1405

Galst v. American Ladder Co., 3242

Gamble-Skogmos v. Chicago & N.W. Transp. Co., 1410

Garceau v. Bunnel, 1105A, 1730

Garcia v. Samson's, Inc., 4015

Garfoot v. Fireman's Fund Ins. Co., 400

Garlick v. Morley, 4005, 4015

Garner v. Charles A. Krause Milling Co., 3220

Garrett v. City of New Berlin, 1510 1511

Garrison v. State of Louisiana, 2511

Gaspord v. Hecht, 1090

Gauerke v. Rozga, 2400, 2402

Gauthier v. Carbonneau, 1580, 1585, 1590

Gay v. Milwaukee Elec. Ry. & Light Co., 1145

Geis v. Hirth, 1030, 1105A

Geise v. Montgomery Ward, Inc., 180, 191, 1600, 1837

Geldnich v. Burg, 4035, 4040

Gelhaar v. State, 420

Gename v. Benson, 1812

Gendanke v. Wisconsin Evaporated Milk Co., 3076

General Elec. Co. v. N.K. Ovalle, Inc., 3074

Georgeson v. Nielsen, 4000, 4027

Georgia Casualty Co. v. American Milling Co., 1145

Gerbing v. McDonald, 1756

Gerlat v. Christianson, 1013

Gerovac v. Hribar Trucking, Inc., 3024

Gerrard Realty Corp. v. American States Ins. Co., 3117

Gertz v. Robert Welch, Inc., 2500, 2505, 2509, 2516, 2520

Gervais v. Kostin, 1600

Gessler v. Erwin Co., 3060, 3078

Gewanski v. Ellsworth, 4035

Gibson v. American Cyanamid, 3295

Gibson v. Overnite Transportation Company, 2507

Gibson v. Streeter, 1090

Gilberg v. Tisdale, 1056

Gill v. Benjamin, 3066

Gilman v. Brown, 1806

Gladfeldter v. Doemel, 1707

Glamann v. St. Paul Fire & Marine Ins., 1023.5

Gleason v. Gillihan, 1055, 1060, 1191

Godfrey Co. v. Crawford, 3058

Godoy v. E.I. du Pont De Nemours et al, 3260.1

Goebel v. General Bldg. Serv. Co., 1145

Goehmann v. National Biscuit Co., 1075

Goetz v. State Farm Mut. Auto Ins. Co., 3012

Goldberg v. Berkowitz, 1010

Goldenberg v. Daane, 1140

Goller v. White, 2900

Gonzalez v. City of Franklin, 1010, 1582, 1795

Gordon v. Milwaukee County, 1023

Gosse v. Navistar Int'l Transp. Corp., 3300

Gouger v. Hardtke, 2001

Gould v. American Family Mut. Ins. Co., 1021

Graass v. Westerlin & Campbell Co., 3244

Graf v. Neith Co-op. Dairy Products Association, 3028

Grana v. Summerford, 1141, 1350, 1354, 1355, 1580, 1585, 1590

Grand Trunk W. R.R. v. Lahiff, 3072

Granger v. Chicago M. & St. P. Ry., 3072

Gray v. Wisconsin Tel. Co., 1395

Greco v. Bueciconi Eng'r Co., 3200

Green Bay Broadcasting v. Redevelopment Authority, 8100, 8101

Green Bay-Wausau Lines, Inc. v. Mangel, 1355

Green Spring Farms v. Spring Green Farms, 1

Green v. Kaemph, 3062

Green v. Rosenow, 1756

Green v. Smith & Nephew AHP, Inc., 3200, 3260, 3260.1

Greene v. Farmers Mut. Auto Ins. Co., 1285

Greenlee v. Rainbow Auction/Realty Co., 3028

Greenville Coop. Gas Co. v. Lodesky, 1350

Greiten v. LaDow, 3240, 3260

Gremban v. Burke, 1010

Griebler v. Doughboy Recreational, Inc., 8020

Grimes v. Snell, 1840

Gritzner v. Michael R., 1005, 1013, 1397

Grognet v. Fox Valley Trucking Serv., 425

Grossenbach v. Devonshire Realty, 8012

Grosso v. Wittemann, 1380, 1381

Grube v. Daun, 1005, 1009, 2403

Gruen Indus., Inc. v. Biller, 3074 Gruenberg v. Aetna Ins. Co., 2761

Grunwald v. Halron, 1001

Grutzner v. Kruse, 1070

Grygiel v. Monches Fish & Game Club, Inc., 1810

Guardianship and Protective Placement of Shaw, 7060

Guardianship of Meyer, 1021

Guderyon v. Wisconsin Tel. Co., 1115, 1310

Guentner v. Gnagi, 1812

Guerra v. Manchester Terminal Corp., 2150

Guillaume v. Wisconsin-Minnesota Light & Power Co., 230

Gumz v. Northern States Power Company, 950

Gunderson v. Struebing, 2100

Gundlach v. Chicago & N. W. Ry., 1338

Gunning v. King, 1265

Gustavson v. O'Brien, 1023.5

Gutzman v. Clancy, 2006

Guzman v. St. Francis Hospital, Inc., 1707.1, 1897

Gyldenvand v. Schroeder, 2400, 2405, 2405.5, 2406

#### Н

H.A. Friend & Co. v. Professional Stationery, Inc., 2200

Haag v. General Accident Fire & Life Assurance Corp., 1035

Habrich v. Industrial Comm'n, 4060

Habrouck v. Armour & Co., 1500, 3242

Haentz v. Toehr, 2402

Hafemann v. Milwaukee Auto Ins. Co., 1055

Hajec v. Novitzke, 2600

Hale v. Stoughton Hosp. Ass'n, Inc., 2780

Hales v. City of Wauwatosa, 1049

Hamed v. Milwaukee County, 1025

Hamilton v. Reinemann, 1140

Hamus v. Weber, 1048

Hanes v. Hermsen, 1045, 1096

Hannebaum v. DiRenzo & Bomier, 1900.4

Hannemann v. Boyson, 1023.8

Hannon v. Kelly, 3042

Hansberry v. Dunn, 1012

Hansche v. A. J. Conroy Co., Inc., 4005

Hansen v. Crown Controls Corp., 1723

Hansen v. Industrial Comm'n, 4045

Hansen v. New Holland North America, Inc., 1723

Hansen v. Texas Roadhouse, Inc., 1383

Hanson v. Binder, 1582

Hanson v. Matas, 1050

Hanson v. Valdivia, 1861

Hanz Trucking, Inc. v. Harris Bros. Co., 3057

Hardware Dealers Mut. Fire Ins. Co. v. Home Mut. Ins. Co., 1191

Hardware Mut. Casualty Co. v. Harry Crow & Son, Inc., 1105A, 1735

Hardy v. Hoefferle, 1277

Hareng v. Blanke, 50, 195

Hargrove v. Peterson, 1730, 1750.2, 1767, 1795

Harrigan v. Gilchrist, 1

Harris v. Kelley, 1880

Harris v. Richland Motors, Inc., 4030, 4060

Hartman v. Buerger, 2500

Hartzheim v. Smith, 1045, 1080

Harvey v. Wheeler Transfer and Storage Co., 1803

Harvot v. Solo Cup, 1

Harweger v. Wilcox, 2400

Hastings Realty Corp. v. Texas Co., 8111

Hatch v. Smail, 1501

Hauer v. Union State Bank of Wautoma, 3044

Hausman v. St. Croix Care Center, 2750

Havens v. Havens, 1140

Hawarden v. The Youghiogheny & Lehigh Coal Co., 2820

Hayton v. Appleton Machine Co., 4080

Heath v. Madsen, 1010

Heck & Paetow Claim Service, Inc. v. Heck, 4080

Heckel v. Standard Gateway Theater, 1900.4

Hegarty v. Beauchaine, 1023

Heikkila v. Standard Oil Co., 1080

Heilgeist v. Chasser, 2600

Heims v. Hanke, 1722A, 4025, 4030

Heldt v. Nicholson Mfg. Co., 1900.2

Helleckson v. Loiselle, 1750.2

Hellenbrand v. Bowar, 3200, 3230

Hellenbrand v. Hilliard, 1804

Helmbrecht v. St. Paul Ins. Co., 1023.5

Henricksen v. Mc Carroll, 1025.6

Henrikson v. Strapon, 1707.1

Henry v. United States, 2115

Henschel v. Rural Mut. Casualty Ins. Co., 1065

Henthorn v. M.G.C. Corp., 1125, 1145

Herbst v. Hansen, 3110

Herbst v. Wuennenberg, 2100

Heritage Farms, Inc. v. Markel Ins. Co., 1757

Herman v. Milwaukee Children's Hosp., 1796, 1797, 1837, 1845, 1880

Hernandez v. United States, 2802

Herro v. Department of Natural Resources, 8100, 8101

Herro v. Northwestern Malleable Iron Co., 1861

Herro v. Steidl, 1870

Herzberg v. Ford Motor Co., 3260

Hess Bros., Inc. v. Great N. Pail Co., 3063, 3064, 3065

Hess v. Holt Lumber Co., 3014

Hett v. Ploetz, 2500

Heuer v. Wiese, 2200

Heuser v. Community Insurance Corp., 1380

Hibner v. Lindauer, 1112

Hickman v. Wellauer, 1804

Hicks v. Nunnery, 1023.5

Hietpas v. State, 8115

Hildebrand v. Carroll, 1025.7

Hilker v. Western Automobile Ins. Co., 2760

Hillman v. Columbia County, 2550

Hillstead v. Smith, 1114

Hilmes v. Stroebel, 2007

Hinrichs v. Dow Chemical Co., 2400

Hintz v. Mielke, 1255

Hipke v. Industrial Comm'n, 1900.4

Hocking v. City of Dodgeville, 1900.4

Hodgson v. Wisconsin Gas & Light Co., 1051

Hoeft v. Friedel, 1075, 1600

Hoekstra v. Guardian Pipeline, 8100, 8101, 8102, 8120, 8135

Hoff v. Wedin, 1010

Hofflander v. St. Catherine's Hospital, 1007, 1021, 1385.5, 1902

Hoffman v. Danielson, 3076

Hoffman v. Dixon, 3220

Hoffman v. Halden, 2800

Hoffman v. North Milwaukee, 1049

Hoffman v. Pfingsten, 3022

Hoffman v. Red Owl Stores, Inc., 3020, 3074

Holbach v. Classified Ins. Corp., 1277

Holschbach v. Washington Park Manor, 8030

Holton v. Burton, 1023

Holytz v. Milwaukee, 2900, 8035

Holzem v. Mueller, 1045

Home Fire & Marine Ins. Co. v. Farmers Mut. Auto Ins. Co., 1155, 1157

Home Protective Services, Inc. v. ADT Security Services, Inc., 2769

Home Sav. Bank v. Gertenbach, 3020, 4015

Hommel v. Badger State Inv. Co., 1902

Hornback v. Archdiocese of Milwaukee, 1005

Horst v. Deere & Company, 3260, 3260.1

Hortman v. Becker Constr. Co., Inc., 1900.4, 1901, 1904

Household Fin. Corp. v. Christian, 2401, 2402

Hoven v. Kelble, 1023, 1024

Howard v. State Farm Mut. Auto Liab. Co., 1730

Howe v. Corry, 1076

Hrubes v. Faber, 1023

Huchting v. Engel, 1010

Huck v. Chicago, St. Paul M. & O. Ry., 1026.5, 3051

Huebner v. State, 2115

Hunt v. Clarendon Nat'l Ins. Service, Inc., 1025

Hunter v. Sirianni Candy Co., 1210

Husting v. Dietzen, 180

Hutching v. Engel, 2000

Hyer v. Janesville, 230

Hyland v. GCA Tractor & Equip. Co., 3200, 3205

Hynek v. Kewaunee, G.B. & W. Ry., 1405

I

Ianni v. Grain Dealers Mut. Ins. Co., 1750.1, 1760, 1762

Ide v. Wamser, 1090, 1506

Idzik v. Reddick, 4005

Illinois Cent. R.R. Co. v. Blaha, 3117

Illinois Steel Co. v. Bilot, 8060

Imark Industries, Inc. v. Arthur Young & Co., 1383, 1580, 8045

Imnus v. Wisconsin Pub. Ser. Corp., 1900.4

Ingram v. Rankin, 2201

In Matter of Mental Condition of C.J., 7050, 7050A

In Interest of C.E.W., 180, 191

In Re Commitment of Dennis H., 7050

In Re Estate of Schaefer, 4080

In re Kelly M., 7050, 7050A

In Re Paternity of M.J.B., 5001

In Re Paternity of Taylor, R.T., 5001

In Re Paternity of J.M.K., 5001

In re Estate of Sheppard, 3070

Insurance Co. of North Am. v. Cease Electric Inc., 400, 2400

Insurance Co. of North Am. v. Krieck Furriers, Inc., 1025.7

Irby v. State, 420

Irish v. Dean, 3049

Isgro v. Plankington Packing Co., 1265

Ivancevic v. Reagan, 3072

J

J. H. Clark Co. v. Rice, 2401, 2402

J. F. McNamara Corp. v. Industrial Comm'n, 4035

J.W. Cartage Co. v. Laufenberg, 1354, 1355

Jackson v. Robert L. Reisinger & Co., 180

Jacob v. West Bend Mut. Ins. Co., 1022.6, 3700, 4060

Jacobs v. Major, 1810

Jacobson v. Greyhound Corp., 1114

Jacobson v. Milwaukee, 305

Jacque v. Steenberg Homes, Inc., 1707.1, 1810

Jadofski v. Town Kemper Ins. Co., 2762

Jaeger v. Stratton, 1023

Jagmin v. Simonds Abrasive Co., 400, 1145

Jama v. Gonzalez, 1023.5

Jandre v. Wisconsin Injured Patients and Families Compensation Fund, 1023.1

Jandrt v. Milwaukee Auto Ins. Co., 205, 3072

Janke Const. Co., Inc. v. Balcan Materials Co., 3074

Jankee v. Clark County, 1007, 1021, 1385.5

Jeffers v. Nysse, 1707

Jenkinson v. New York Casualty Co., 3115

Jennings v. Lyons, 3062, 3066, 3067

Jensen v. Jensen, 1032

Jessup v. LaPin, 3090

Jewell v. Schmidt, 1825

John Doe 1 v. Archdiocese of Milwaukee, 2401

Johnson v. Agoncillo, 1023

Johnson v. Calado, 2605

Johnson v. Cintas Corp. No. 2., 115, 1007, 1014

Johnson v. Fireman's Fund Indem. Co., 1155

Johnson v. Heintz, 50, 1710, 1722A, 1723

Johnson v. Holmen Canning Co., 4035

Johnson v. McDermott, 1113

Johnson v. Misericordia Community Hosp., 1384, 1760

Johnson v. Pearson Agri-Systems, Inc., 1796

Johnson v. Prideaux, 1140

Johnson v. Ray, 205, 1506, 1700, 2008, 2155

Johnson v. St. Paul & W. Coal Co., 1835, 1845

Jolin v. Oster, 1

Jonas v. State, 8104, 8107

Jones v. Alfred H. Mayer Co., 2150

Jones v. Fisher, 1707

Jones v. Jenkins, 3051

Jones v. Pittsburgh Plate Glass Co., 3222

Jones v. State, 63

Joplin v. John Hancock Mut. Life Ins. Co., 3057

Jorgenson v. Northern State Power Co., 1395

Jungbluth v. Hometown, Inc., 2771

Justmann v. Portage County, 8102, 8103, 8120

K

K & S Tool & Die Corp. v. Perfection Mach. Sales, Inc., 2418

Kablitz v. Hoeft, 1715, 1720

Kaesler, Adm'r v. Milwaukee Elec. Ry. & Light Co., 1880

Kaiser v. Board of Police & Fire Commissioners of Wauwatosa, 2750

Kalkopf v. Donald Sales & Mfg. Co., 1019, 3260

Kamp v. Curtis, 4035

Kamrowski v. State of Wis., 8120

Kansas City Star Co. v. ILHR Dep't, 3045

Karls v. Drake, 2401, 2402

Karsteadt v. Phillip Gross H. & S. Co., 3200, 3246

Kathan v. Comstock, 3220

Kaufman v. Postle, 1143

Kaufman v. State Street Ltd. Partnership, 1900.4

Keegan v. Chicago, M., St. P. & P. R.R., 1336, 1403, 1405

Kehl v. Economy Fire & Casualty Co., 1707.1

Kehm Corp. v. United States, 3060

Keith v. Worcester & D. V. St. R.R., 1050

Keithley v. Keithley, 1885

Kelley v. Ellis, 3022

Kelley v. Hartford Casualty Ins. Co., 1024

Kelley v. State, 195

Kellogg v. Chicago & N.W. Ry., 1030

Kelly v. Berg, 1007.5, 1105A

Kemper Independence Insurance Company v. Islami, 3110

Kempf v. Boehring, 1014

Kempfer v. Automated Finishing, Inc., 2750

Kempfer v. Bois, 1140

Ken-Crete Prod. Co. v. State Highway Comm'n, 8100, 8101, 8103

Kennedy-Ingalls Corp. v. Meissner, 3200, 3211, 3225, 3230

Kenwood Equip., Inc. v. Aetna Ins. Co., 110

Kerkman v. Hintz, 1023, 1023.8, 1023.9

Kerl v. Rasmussen, 4025, 4030, 4040, 4055, 4060

Kernz v. J.L. French Corp., 3010

Kerwin v. Chippewa Shoe Mfg. Co., 1500

Kettner v. Wausau Ins. Co., 4060

Kiefer v. Fred Howe Motors, Inc., 2000

Killeen v. Parent, 2401, 2402

Kim v. American Family Mut. Ins. Co., 1800

Kimble v. Land Concepts, Inc., 1707.1

Kincaide v. Hardware Mut. Casualty Co., 1144

Kincannon v. National Indem. Co., 1705, 1797

Kink v. Combs, 410

Kinsman v. Panek, 1310

Kirby v. Corning, 4027

Klassa v. Milwaukee Gas Light Co., 1511

Kleckner v. Great Am. Indem. Co., 325

Kleeman v. Chicago & N.W.R. Co., 4035

Kleinke v. Farmers Coop. Supply & Shipping, 1510

Kleist v. Cohodas, 1315

Kleven v. Cities Serv. Oil Co., 3086

Kline v. Johanneson, 1120

Klinefelter v. Ditch, 8060

Klingbeil v. Saucerman, 1023.5

Klink v. Cappelli, 1762

Klipstein v. Raschein, 205

Kluck v. State, 2115

Klug v. Flambeau Plastics Corp., 3049

Klug v. Sheriffs, 3026

Knapke v. Grain Dealers Mut. Ins. Co., 1904, 3057

Kneeland-McClurg Lumber Co. v. Industrial Comm'n, 4060

Knief v. Sargent, 1023

Knoke v. City of Monroe, 8035

Knowles v. Stargel, 1265

Knutson v. Fenelon, 1840

Koback v. Crook, 1009

Kochanski v. Speedway Superamerica, 410, 1900.4

Koehler v. Thiensville State Bank, 1145

Koehler v. Waukesha Milk Co., 1855

Koele v. Radue, 1760

Koepsell's Olde Popcorn Wagons, Inc. v. Koepsell's Festival Popcorn Wagons, Ltd., 2790

Koetting v. Conroy, 1391

Koffman v. Leichtfuss, 1756

Kohler v. Dumke, 1582

Kohloff v. State, 63

Kohls v. Glassman, 3118

Kojis v. Doctors Hosp., 2900

Kolbeck v. Rural Mut. Ins. Co., 1806, 3117

Kolpin v. Pioneer Power & Light, 950, 1019

Koltka v. PPG Indus., Inc., 1870

Korenak v. Curative Workshop Adult Rehabilitation Center, 1900.4

Korth v. American Family Ins. Co., 1837

Kosnar v. J. C. Penney Co., 1900.4

Kottka v. PPG Indus., Inc., 1815

Kowalczuk v. Rotter, 8045

Kowalke v. Farmers Mut. Auto Ins. Co., 180, 1032, 1052, 1140, 1705, 1760, 1767, 1768

Kowalke v. Milwaukee Elec. Ry. & Light Co., 3072

Kozlowski v. John E. Smith's Sons Co., 3262

Kraft v. Charles, 1285

Kraft v. Steinhafel, 1023.5, 4035

Kraft v. Wodill, 2401

Krainz v. Strle, 1114

Kramer v. Alpine Valley Resort, Inc., 3074

Kramer v. Chicago, M., St. P. & P. Ry., 1501, 1796

Kramer v. Hayward, 3024

Kramschuster v. Shawn E., 1014

Kranzush v. Badger State Mut. Casualty Co., 2760, 2761

Kraskey v. Johnson, 1070, 1155, 1157

Kraus v. Mueller, 8060

Kraus v. Wisconsin Life Ins. Co., 3061

Krause v. Milwaukee Mut. Ins. Co., 230, 1105A

Krause v. V. F. W. Post 6498, 1900.4, 1904, 3290

Krause v. Western Casualty & Sur. Co., 4040

Krebsbach v. Miller, 3112

Kremer v. Rule, 1805

Kreyer v. Driscoll, 3052

Krieg v. Dayton-Hudson Corp., 2600, 2605

Krolikowski v. Chicago & N.W. Transp. Co., 1403

Kruck v. Wilbur Lumber Co., 1840

Kruckenberg v. Krukar, 8060

Krudwig v. Kaepke, 2007

Krueger v. AllEnergy Hixton, LLC, 1920

Krueger v. Steffen, 1800, 1801, 1805, 3725

Krueger v. Tappan, 358

Krueger v. Winters, 180

Kruse v. Horlamus Indus., 200, 205, 1008, 8060

Kryzko v. Gaudynski, 4025 Kuehn v. Kuehn, 200, 205

Kuehnemann v. Boyd, 1023

Kuennemann v. Boyd, 1023

Kuentzel v. State Farm Mut. Auto Ins. Co., 1105A

Kuhlman, Inc. v. G. Heileman Brewing Co., Inc., 1730, 1731, 1806

Kujawski v. Arbor View Health Care Center, 1023.7, 1385

Kukuska v. Home Mut. Hail-Tornado Ins. Co., 3016

Kurz v. Chicago, M. St. P. & P. Ry., 1408, 1410, 1413

Kurz v. Collins, 3115, 3116

Kutsugeras v. Avco Corp., 1723

Kuzel v. State Farm Mut. Ins. Co., 1610

I

L.L.N. v. Clauder, 1383

L. L. Richards Mach. Co. v. McNamara Motor Express, 1026.5, 1804

La Fave v. Lemke, 1120

La Fleur v. Mosher, 1511

Laabs v. Bolger, 8060

LaChance v. Thermogas Co. of Lena, 1760

LaCombe v. Aurora Medical Group, Inc., 1023

LaCrosse Plow Co. v. Brooks, 3202

LaCrosse Plow Co. v. Helgeson, 3202

Ladd v. Uecker, 2500

Ladewig v. Tremmel, 1390, 1397

Laehn Coal and Wood Co. v. Koehler, 2401, 2402

Lagerstrom v. Myrtle Werth Hospital - Mayo Health System, 1757, 1850

Lake to Lake Dairy Coop. v. Andrews, 1070

Lambert v. Hein, 2400

Lambert v. Wrensch, 1815, 1816

Lambrecht v. Estate of Kaczmarczyk, 1021.2, 1145

Lamming v. Galusha, 1920

Lampertius v. Chmielewski, 1075

Landess v. Borden, Inc., 3074

Landrey v. United Serv. Auto Ass'n, 1035

Langhoff v. Milwaukee & Pr. du Ch. R. Co., 1030

Langlade County v. D.J.W, 7050, 7050A

Larry v. Commercial Union Ins. Co., 1381

Larsen v. Wisconsin Power & Light Co., 1003

Larson v. Superior Auto Parts, 3018

Lathan v. Journal Co., 2500, 2505

Laughland v. Beckett, 2500

Laurent v. Plain, 1600

Lauson v. Fond du Lac, 1310, 1315, 1320

Lautenschlager v. Hamburg, 1715

Lawlis v. Thompson, 3028

Lawrence v. E. W. Wylie Co., 1090

Lawrence v. Jewell Cos., Inc., 2500

Layton School of Art & Design v. WERC, 205

Le Mere v. Le Mere, 1075

Le Sage v. Le Sage, 1600

Lecander v. Billmeyer, 1024

Lechner v. Ebenreiter, 4015, 4050, 2600, 2605

Leckwe v. Ritter, 1096

Leckwee v. Gibson, 1055, 1065, 1070, 1105A, 1141, 1153, 1175

Lee v. Bielefeld, 2400

Lee v. Lord, 4050

Lee v. Milwaukee Gas Light Co., 8030

Lee v. National League Baseball Club, 8045

Legue v. City of Racine, 1031

Leibl v. St. Mary's Hosp. of Mil., 1766

Leipske v. Guenther, 1391, 8112

Leitinger v. DBart, Inc., 1756

Leitner v. Milwaukee County, 1900.4, 1904

Lemacher v. Circle Constr. Co., 1022.2

LeMay v. Oconto, 1049

Lembke v. Farmers Mut. Auto Ins. Co., 1285

Leonard v. Employers Mut. Liab. Ins. Co., 1155, 1157

Lestina v. West Bend Mut. Ins. Co., 2020

Leuchtenberg v. Hoeschler, 3014

Levin v. Perkins, 3020

Lewandowski v. Continental Casualty Co., 195, 1023.5

Lewandowski v. Preferred Risk Mut. Ins. Co., 261

Lewis v. Coursolle Broadcasting, 2511

Lewis v. Leiterman, 1075, 1325, 1610

Lewis v. Physicians Ins. Co., 1023, 4030

Libowitz v. Lake Nursing Home, Inc., 3086

Liebe v. City Fin. Corp., 2780

Lieberman v. Weil, 3083

Lievrouw v. Roth, 180, 1105A, 1707.1, 1710

Ligman v. Bitker, 1337

Liles v. Employers Mut. Ins. of Wausau, 1055

Lincoln v. Claflin, 2802

Lind v. Lund, 1070

Linden v. Cascade Stone Co., 2400

Linden v. City Car Co., 4035

Linden v. Miller, 1000

Lindloff v. Ross, 1023

Lippert v. Chicago & N. W. Ry. Co., 8104, 8107

Lisowski v. Milwaukee Auto Mut. Ins. Co., 1045, 1050

Listman Mill $\operatorname{Co.}$ v. William Listman Milling  $\operatorname{Co.},2790$ 

Little v. Maxam, Inc., 3260

Lloyd v. S. S. Kresge Co., 1901

Lobermeier v. General Tel. Co. of Wis., 410, 1730

Loeb v. Board of Regents, 8100, 8140

Londre v. Continental Western Ins. Co., 3110

Lorbecki v. King, 180

Loser v. Libal, 1730

Lovesee v. Allied Dev. Corp., 1580, 1585, 1590

Lubner v. Peerless Ins. Co., 410

Luby v. Bennett, 2605

Lueck v. Heisler, 2100

Luessen v. Oshkosh Elec. Light & Power Co., 1890

Lukens Iron & Steel Co. v. Hartmann-Greiling Co., 3058

Lumbermen's Mut. Cas. Co. v. S. Morgan Smith Co., 3200

Lund v. Keller, 2200

Lundin v. Shimanski, 1707

Lundquist v. Western Casualty & Sur. Co., 410, 1065, 1090

Luther Hosp. v. Garborg, 1825

Lutz v. Shelby Mut. Ins. Co., 1105A, 1750.2, 1767, 1768

#### M

M & I Marshall & Ilsley Bank v. Pump, 2770

M. Capp Mfg. Co. v. Moland, 1026.5

MS Real Estate Holdings, LLC v. Fox Family Trust, 3049

Maben v. Rankin, 1742

Macherey v. Home Ins. Co., 205

Machesky v. Milwaukee, 3012

Maci v. State Farm Fire & Casualty Co., 8020

Mack v. Decker, 1045

Mack Trucks, Inc. v. Sunde, 3200

Mackensie v. Miller Brewing Co., 2401

Mackenzie Fandrey v. American Family Mut. Ins. Co., 1500

MacLeish v. Boardman Clark LLP, 1023.5

Madison Metropolitan Sewerage Dist. v. Committee, 1922

Madison Trust Co. v. Helleckson, 2401, 2402

Madison v. Geier, 205, 1107

Madix v. Hockgreve Brewing Co., 4060

Maeder v. Univ. of Wisconsin-Madison, 2750

Magin v. Bemis, 1070

Maichle v. Jonovic, 2006

Mair v. Trollhaugen Ski Resort, 1900.4

Maitland v. Twin City Aviation Corp., 8112

Majestic Realty Corp. v. Brant, 1022.6, 8030

Majorowicz v. Allied Mut. Ins. Co., 2760

Malco v. Midwest Aluminum Sales, 1707

Maleki v. Fine-Lando Clinic, 2800, 2820

Malik v. American Family Ins. Co., 1391

Maloney v. Wisconsin Power, Light & Heat Co., 1796, 1861

Malzewski v. Rapkin, 2400, 2401, 2402

Management Computer Serv. v. Hawkins, Ash, Baptie, 3010, 3051

Mandell v. Bryam, 4050

Maniaci v. Marquette Univ., 2100, 2600, 2605, 2620

Mann v. Reliable Transit Co., 1320

Manning v. Galland-Henning Pneumatic Malting Drum Mfg. Co., 3046

Manzanares v. Safeway Stores, Inc., 2150

Marathon County v. Zachary W., 7050, 7050A

Mark McNally v. Capital Cartage, Inc., 3086

Market Street Assoc. Ltd. Ptrshp. v. Frey, 3044

Marlatt v. Western Union Tel. Co., 4050

Marmolejo v. DILHR, 4035, 4045

Marquez v. Mercedes-Benz USA, 3300

Marsh Wood Prod. Co. v. Babcock & Wilcox Co., 3200, 3240

Marshfield Clinic v. Discher, 1825

Martell v. National Guardian Life Ins. Co., 3040

Martens v. Reilly, 2800

Martin v. Outboard Marine Corp., 2500, 2501, 2516

Maskrey v. Volkswagenwerk Aktiengesellschaft, 1723, 1760, 1797

Maslow Cooperage Corp. v. Weeks Pickle Co., 202, 1705, 3700

Mastercraft Paper Co. v. Consolidated Freightways, 1026.5

Matson v. Dane County, 1012

Matter of Commitment of C.S., 7050

Matter of Marks v. Gray, 4045

Matteson v. Rice, 2400, 3220

Matthews v. Schuh, 1190.5

Matuschka v. Murphy, 1023

Maurin v. Hall, 1023, 1870, 1895, 1897

May v. Skelly Oil Co., 1580, 1900.4

Mayo v. Wisconsin Injured Patients and Families Compensation Fund, 1023, 1870, 1895, 1897

MBS-Certified Public Accountants, LLC v. Wisconsin Bell, Inc., 2418

McAleavy v. Lowe, 3200

McAllister v. Kimberly-Clark Co., 1707

McCaffery v. Minneapolis, St. P. & S.S.M. Ry., 1796

McCarthy v. Thompson, 325 McCartie v. Muth, 1766

McCarty v. Weber, 215

McCluskey v. Steinhorst, 2005, 2008

McConaghy v. McMullen, 2006

McConville v. State Farm Mut. Auto Ins. Co., 1047, 1047.1 1500, 1591, 1592

McCrossen v. Nekoosa Edwards Paper Co., 1051.2, 1105A, 1705, 1885, 1890, 1892

McDonnell v. Hestnes, 3115, 3116

McEvoy v. Group Health Cooperative, 2761

McGaw v. Wassman, 265

McGee v. Kuchenbaker, 1285

McGowan v. Story, 100

McGuiggan v. Hiller Bros., 1580, 1585, 1590

McKone v. Metropolitan Life Ins. Co., 4020

McLaughlin v. Chicago, M. St. P. & P. Ry., 1410

McLean v. McLean, 3020

McLuckie v. Chicago, M. St. P. & P. Ry., 1408

McMahon v. St. Croix Falls Sch. Dist., 1385.5

McManus v. Donlin, 1023

McNally v. Goodenough, 1900.4, 1901

McNamara v. Village of Clintonville, 1720

McNeil v. Jacobson, 1005, 1009

Mead v. Ringling, 1812

Medford Lumber Co. v. Industrial Comm'n, 4060

Medley v. Trenton Inv. Co., 1022.6, 4010

Meeme Mut. Home Protective Fire Ins. Co. v. Lorfeld, 3072

Megal v. Green Bay Area Visitor & Convention Bureau, et al., 1900.4

Meier v. Meurer, 2500

Meihost v. Meihost, 1381

Meke v. Nicol, 1707

Memphis v. Greene, 2150

Mendelson v. Blatz Brewing Co., 2780, 3068

Menge v. State Farm Mut. Automobile Ins. Co., 1105A

Menominee River Boom Co. v. Augustus Spies Lumber & Cedar Co., 3020

Meracle v. Children's Serv. Soc., 1705

Merco Distrib. Corp. v. Commercial Police Alarm Co., Inc., 1500

Merco Distrib. Corp. v. O & R Engines, Inc., 110

Merkle v. Behl, 1505

Merkley v. Schramm, 1050

Merriman v. Cash-Way, Inc., 1900.4

Mertens v. Lake Shore Yellow Cab & Transfer Co., 1070

Meshane v. Second Street Co., 1707

Metcalf v. Consolidated Badger Coop., 1582

Methodist Manor Health Center, Inc. v. Py, 2200

Metropolitan Sav. & Loan Ass'n v. Zuelke's, Inc., 2200, 2201

Metropolitan Ventures v. GEA Assoc., 3044

Metz v. Medford Fur Foods, 3200, 3260

Metz v. Rath, 1105A

Metzinger v. Perry, 1708

Meurer v. ITT Gen. Controls, 145

Meyer v. Ewald, 2600, 2605, 2610, 2611

Meyer v. Laser Vision Inst., LLC, 3028

Meyer v. Norgaard, 1023.6

Meyer v. Val-Lo-Will Farms, 1051.2

Meyers v. Matthews, 1600, 4001, 4030

Meyers v. Wells, 3030

Mezera v. Pahmeier, 1354

Michaels v. Green Giant Co., 1760

Mid-Continent Refrigerator Co. v. Straka, 1707

Midwestern Helicopter v. Coolbaugh, 2200, 2201

Mikaelian v. Woyak, 1047

Milaeger Well Drilling Co. v. Muskego Rendering Co., 3058

Milbauer v. Transport Employes' Mut. Benefit Soc'y, 260, 265

Miller & Rose v. Rich, 4060

Miller v. Conn, 3074

Miller v. Epstein, 4035

Miller v. Joannes, 1

Miller v. Keller, 1010

Miller v. Kim, 1023

Miller v. Neale, 1806

Miller v. Paine Lumber Co., 1900.2

Miller v. Tainter, 1880

Miller v. Wadkins, 2900

Miller v. Wal-Mart Stores, Inc., 1383

Millonig v. Bakken, 215, 1000, 1112, 1145, 1285

Milwaukee & Suburban Transp. Corp. v. Milwaukee County, 106

Milwaukee & Suburban Transp. Corp. v. Royal Transit Co., 1112

Milwaukee Boiler Co. v. Duncan, 3202

Milwaukee Constructors II v. Milwaukee Metro Sewerage District, 400

Milwaukee County v. Schmidt, Gardner, and Erickson, 1023.5

Milwaukee Metro. Sewerage Dist. v. City of Milwaukee, 1920, 1922, 1924, 1926, 1928, 1930, 1932

Milwaukee Mirror & Art Glass Works v. Chicago, 1025.7

Milwaukee Rescue Mission, Inc. v. Redevelopment Authority of the City of Milwaukee 8135

Milwaukee Tank Works v. Metals Coating Co., 100

Milwaukee Transport Services, Inc. v. Family Dollar Stores of Wisconsin, Inc. 1605, 4035, 4040

Milwaukee Trust Co. v. Milwaukee, 305

Milwaukee Western Fuel Co. v. Industrial Commission, 4035, 4045

Miranovitz v. Gee, 2401, 2402

Misiewicz v. Waters, 1105A

Mittelstadt v. Hartford Accident & Indem. Co., 1000

Mittleman v. Nash Sales, Inc., 4035

Mixis v. Wisconsin Pub. Serv. Comm'n, 1145

Modern Materials v. Advanced Tooling Spec., 2800

Modl v. National Farmers Union Property & Casualty Co., 1145

Moe v. Benelli U.S.A. Corp., 2769

Mohs v. Quarton, 3700

Mondl v. F.W. Woolworth, 1048, 1902

Monrean v. Eastern Wis. Ry. & Light Co., 1012

Monroe v. Chase, 2605

Monsivais v. Winzenried, 8012

Moore v. Relish, 1025.5

Moore v. State, 415

Moran v. Quality Aluminum Casting Co., 1815, 2900

Morden v. Continental AG, 3240

Morgan v. Pennsylvania Gen. Ins. Co., 1500

Moritz v. Allied Mut. Fire Ins. Co., 1820

Morris F. Fox & Co. v. Lisman, 3014

Morris v. Resnick, 4080

Morris v. Juneau County, 8035

Mortgage Associates v. Monona Shores, 1

Moulton v. Kershaw, 3012

Mowry v. Badger State Mut. Casualty, 2760

Mt. Pleasant v. Hartford Accident & Indemnity, 3118

Mueller v. Bull's Eye Sport Shop, LLC, 400

Mueller v. Harry Kaufmann Motorcars, Inc., 2401, 2418, 3068

Mueller Real Estate Inv. Co. v. Cohen, 1804

Mulder v. Acme-Cleveland Corp., 1383, 1900.2

Mullen v. Larson-Morgan Co., 1900.4

Mullen v. Reinig, 110

Mullen v. Walczak, 1511

Murawski v. Brown, 1402

Murphy v. Nordhagen, 1023.8, 1023.9

Murray v. Holiday Rambler, Inc., 145, 3201, 3205, 3220, 3222

Murray v. Yellow Cab Co., 1000

Muscoda Bridge Co. v. Grant County, 8100

Muskevitch-Otto v. Otto, 3110

Mustas v. Inland Constr. Inc., 315, 1901

Myhre v. Hessey, 2605

#### N

Naden v. Johnson, 3700

Narloch v. State of Wis. Dept of Transp., 8102, 8103

Nashban Barrel & Container Co. v. Parsons Trucking Co., 1730, 1800, 1801 1804

National Auto Truckstops, Inc. v. WISDOT, 8111, 8120, 8130, 8135

National Farmers Union Property & Casualty v. Maca, 3110

Navine v. Peltier, 3034

Neas v. Siemens, 2400, 2401, 2402

Neave v. Arntz, 3220

Nees v. Weaver, 3052

Neff v. Barber, 1

Neitzke v. Kraft-Phenix Dairies, Inc., 1051, 1900.4, 1902

Nelsen v. Farmers Mut. Auto Ins. Co., 3010, 3032, 3050

Nelson v. Boulay Bros. Co., 1803, 3208

Nelson v. Davidson, 1023.6

Nelson v. Hansen, 3290

Nelson v. Pauli, 100

Nelson v. Travelers Ins. Co., 1310

Nesbitt v. Erie Coach Co., 3074

Nessler v. Nowicki, 1155, 1157

Nestle's Food Co. v. Industrial Comm'n, 4030, 4060

Neuman v. Evans, 155

Neumann v. Industrial Sound Engineering, Inc., 2600, 2605, 2610, 2611

New Amsterdam Casualty Co. v. Farmers Mut. Auto Ins. Co., 325

New Dells Lumber Co. v. Chicago St. P. M. & O. R. Co., 8135

New York Times Co. v. Sullivan, 2500, 2511

Nickel v. Hardware Mut. Casualty Co., 1815

Niedbalski v. Cuchna, 1352

Nielsen v. Spencer, 1013

Nimlos v. Bakke, 1756

Nimmer v. Purtell, 125

Noffke v Bakke, 2020

Nolop v. Skemp, 1795

Nolop v. Spettel, 3057

Nommensen v. American Cont. Ins. Co., 200

Nooyen v. Wisconsin Electric Power Company, 1900.4

Nordahl v. Peterson, 1885, 3112

Norfolk & Western Ry. Co. v. Liepelt, 1735

Norfolk Monument Co. v. Woodlawn Memorial Gardens, Inc., 2804

North Highland Inc. v. Jefferson Mach. & Tool Inc., 2800

Northern Crossarm Co., Inc. v. Chemical Specialties, Inc., 3028

Northern Supply Co. v. Vangard, 3207

Northland Ins. Co. v. Avis Rent-a-Car, 1112

Northrop v. Opperman, 8060

Northwest Capital Corp. v. Kimpel, 3070

Northwest Gen. Hosp. v. Yee, 1023

Northwestern Blaugas Co. v. Guild, 3202

Northwoods Dev. Corp. v. Klement, 8060

Norton v. Kearney, 3040

Nothem v. Berenschot, 1140

Novell v. Migliaccio, 2401, 2418

Novick v. Becker, 2605

Novitzke v. State, 265

Nowaczyk v. Marathon County, 8100, 8135

Nowatske v. Osterloh, 1023, 1023.5, 1023.7, 1023.8, 1023.14, 1024, 1384

#### 0

O'Brien v. Chicago & N.W. Ry., 215

O'Connell v. Old Line Life Ins. Co., 1500

O'Shea v. Lavoy, 1032

Odgers v. Minneapolis, St. P. & S. S. M. Ry., 1336

Odya v. Quade, 1140

Oelke v. Earle, 1191

Ogle v. Avina, 1060, 1107, 1153, 1175

Ogodziski v. Gara, 1707

Ohio Elec. Co. v. Wisconsin-Minnesota Light and Power Co., 3202

Ohrmund v. Industrial Comm'n, 4040

Ohrmundt v. Spiegelhoff, 2400, 2402

Oleson v. Fader, 2006.5

Olfe v. Gordon, 1023.5

Ollerman v. O'Rourke Co., Inc., 2405, 2405.5

Ollhoff v. Peck, 1391

Ollman v. Wisconsin Health Care Liab. Ins. Plan, 405

Olsen v. Milwaukee Waste Paper Co., 1080

Olsen v. Moore, 4035

Olson v. Red Cedar Clinic, 2550

Olson v. Siordia, 1585, 1590

Olson v. Whitney Bros. Co., 1900.4

Olson v. Williams, 100

Onderdonk v. Lamb, 2800

Onsrud v. Paulsen, 3020

Orlowski v. State Farm Mut. Auto Ins. Co., 1756, 1757

Ormond v. Wisconsin Power & Light Co., 1025

Osborne v. Montgomery, 1005, 1384, 1500, 1835

Otterstatter v. City of Watertown, 8100

Otto v. Cornell, 1806, 8060

Outagamie County v. Michael H., 7050, 7050A

P

Pachowitz v. LeDoux, 2550

Pacific Mut. Life Ins. Co. v. Haslip, 1707

Padley v. Lodi, 1910

Pagelsdorf v. Safeco Ins. Co. of Am., 8020

Pallange v. Mueller, 3022

Palmer v. Smith, 2006

Palsgraf v. Long Island Railroad Co., 1005

Pamperin v. Milwaukee Mutual Ins., 3110

Panzer v. Hesse, 1260

Papacosta v. Papacosta, 1105A

Papenfus v. Shell Oil Co., 145

Papke v. American Auto Ins. Co., 1870

Pappas v. Jack O. A. Nelson Agency, Inc., 325

Parchia v. Parchia, 1006

Parks v. Wisconsin Cent. R. Co., 8102, 8103, 8105

Parrish v. Phillips, 3117

Patterman v. Patterman, 1390, 1391

Patterson v. Edgerton Sand & Gravel Co., 1051, 1080, 1096

Paul v. Hodd, 1000

Paul v. Skemp, 1023

Paulson v. Madison Newspapers, 1049

Paulson v. Olson Implement Co., Inc., 3211

Pavelski v. Roginski, 3112

Pawlack v. Mayer, 1013

Pawlowski v. American Family Mut. Ins. Co., 1390

Payne v. Milwaukee Sanitarium Found., Inc., 1384, 1385, 1385.5

Payne v. State, 100

Peacock v. Wisconsin Zinc Co., 1806

Pedek v. Wegemann, 1352, 1795

Peeples v. Sargent, 1730, 1815

Pence v. Slate, 1023.5

Pennell v. Am. Family Mut. Ins. Co. 1500

Pennington v. United Mine Workers of Am., 2804

Peot v. Ferraro, 1705, 1707.1, 1870, 1885, 1890, 1895, 1897

Perlick v. Country Mut. Casualty Co., 3057

Perpignani v. Vonasek, 200, 205, 260

Perry Creek C. Corp. v. Hopkins Ag. Chem. Co., 3200

Peter M. Chalik & Assoc. v. Hermes, 3086, 3740

Peters v. Hall, 2600, 2605

Peters v. Holiday Inns, Inc., 8050

Peters v. Zimmerman, 1505, 1720

Petersen v. Pilgrim Village, 3012

Peterson v. Sinclair Refining Co., 1022.6

Peterson v. Volkswagen of America, Inc., 3310

Peterson v. Warren, 3117, 3118

Petkus v. State, 8115

Petoskey v. Schmidt, 1900.4

Pettera v. Collins, 1070

Pettric v. Gridley Dairy Co., 1900.4

Petzel v. Valley Orthopedics Ltd., 1024

Pfeifer v. Standard Gateway Theater, Inc., 230, 1500, 8045

Pfister v. Milwaukee Free Press Co., 4050

Phaneuf v. Industrial Comm'n, 4030, 4060

Phelps v. Physicians Ins. Co. of Wisconsin, Inc., 1023, 1510

Philadelphia Newspapers, Inc. v. Hepps, 2500, 2501, 2505, 2505A

Philip Morris USA v. Williams, 1707.1, 1707.2

Phoenix Ins. Co. v. Wisconsin S. Gas Co., 8051

Physicians Plus v. Midwest Mutual, 1920, 1922, 1924, 1926, 1928, 1930, 1932

Pickett v. Travelers Indem. Co., 1056

Pierce v. American Family Ins. Co., 1897

Pierce v. Colwell, 1023.5

Pierce v. Physicians Ins. Co. of Wis., 1510, 1511

Pierz v. Gorski, 8060

Pizzo v. Wiemann, 3200

Plaintikow v. Wolk, 2401

Plante v. Jacobs, 3052, 3700

Pleasure Time, Inc. v. Kuss, 3700

Pleucner v. Industrial Comm'n, 4060

Plog v. Zolper, 1055, 1060, 1065, 1141, 1153, 1175, 1195, 1325, 1337, 1354

PMT Machinery Sales, Inc. v. Yama Seiki USA, Inc., 2769

Pokrojac v. Wade Motors, Inc., 3205

Polar Mfg. Co. v. Integrity Mut. Ins. Co., 3105

Poling v. Wisconsin Physicians Serv., 2761

Pollock v. Vilter Mfg. Corp., 2600

Polzin v. Helmbrecht, 2500, 2511, 2513, 2520

Poneitowcki v. Harres, 1032

Poole v. State Farm Mut. Auto Ins. Co., 1280

Portee v. Jaffee, 1510

Porter v. Ford Motor Co., 3300

Poston v. Burns, 2551

Potter v. Potter, 1895

Prange v. Rognstad, 1855, 1885

Pressure Cast Prod. Corp. v. Page, 3710

Price v. Ross, 2200, 2200.1

Price v. Shorewood Motors, 4045

Prill v. Hampton, 1051, 1880

Prinsen v. Russos, 3200

Prisuda v. General Casualty Co. of Am., 3112, 4020

Pritchard v. Liggett & Myers Tobacco Co., 3230

Production Credit Ass'n v. Equity Coop. Livestock, 2200

Production Credit Ass'n v. Nowatzski, 2200, 2201

Prunty v. Schwantes, 1890

Przybyla v. Przybyla, 2725

Przybylski v. Von Berg, 4015

Puccio v. Mathewson, 1120

Puhl v. Milwaukee Automobile Ins. Co., 1055, 1090, 1153, 1825

Pumorlo v. Merrill, 405, 1049

Pure Milk Prod. Coop. v. National Farmers' Org., 2780

#### Q

Quady v. Sickl, 1315

Quinlan v. Coombs, 3110

#### R

Raaber v. Brzoskowski, 1225

Rabata v. Dohner, 260, 265

Rabe v. Outagamie County, 1880

Rabideau v. City of Racine, 1510, 2725

Rademann v. State of Wisconsin Dept. of Transp., 8105, 8120, 8135

Radloff v. National Food Stores, Inc., 8045

Radue v. Dill. 2800, 2820

Raim v. Ventura, 1019

Rambow v. Wilkins, 315

Randall v. Minneapolis, St. P. & S.S.M. Ry., 1412

Ranous v. Hughes, 2500, 2507, 2552

Rasmussen v. Garthus, 1010, 1582

Raszeja v. Brozek Heating & Sheet Metal Corp., 1007

Raymaker v. American Family Mut. Ins. Co., 8020

Reber v. Hanson, 1012

Recreatives, Inc. v. Myers, 3201, 3205, 3210

Red Top Farms v. State Dept. of Transp., Div. of Highways, 8115

Reda v. Sincaban, 2400, 2402

Reddington v. Beefeaters Tables, Inc., 1901, 8012

Redepenning v. Dore, 1705, 1758, 1767, 1768, 1796, 1820, 1861, 1880, 1885, 1890, 1892

Reed v. Keith, 2513

Regas v. Helios, 2200

Reicher v. Rex Accessories Co., 230

Reid v. Milwaukee Air Pump Co., 4027

Reiher v. Mandernack, 8040

Reinke v. Chicago, M. St. P. & P. Ry., 1408, 1409

Reinke v. Woltjen, 1760

Reiter v. Dyken, 1580

Renk v. State of Wis., 8102, 8103

Repinski v. Clintonville Sav. & Loan Ass'n, 3710

Reserve Supply Co. v. Viner, 1500

Reshan v. Harvey, 1055

Resseguie v. American Mut. Liab. Ins. Co., 315

Retzlaff v. Soman Home Furnishings, 1500

Reuhl v. Uszler, 1315

Reyes v. Greatway Ins. Co., 1707.1

Reyes v. Lawry, 155, 1591, 1595

Richards v. Badger Mut. Ins. Co., 1740

Richards v. Mendivil, 1024

Rigby v. Herzfeldt-Phillipson Co., 4050

Riley v. Chicago & N.W.Ry., 1402

Rineck v. Johnson, 1870

Rinehart v. Whitehead, 2006, 2007

Ritter v. Farrow, 2790

Robinson v. Briggs Transp. Co., 1115, 1120

Robinson v. City of West Allis, 2008

Robinson v. Kolstad, 1880

Rock County v. Industrial Comm'n, 4040

Rockweit v. Senecal, 8020, 1393

Roeske v. Diefenbach, 410

Roeske v. Schmitt, 1090

Rogers v. Bradford, 3028

Rolph v. EBI Cos., 3240, 3260

Romberg v. Nelson, 1047.1, 1075

Root v. Saul, 2006

Rosche v. Wayne Feed, Continental Grain, 1803, 1806

Rosen v. Milwaukee, 8120

Ross v. Faber, 3222

Ross v. Martini, 3110

Rossow v. Lathrop, 1010

Roth v. City of Glendale, 3051

Rottman v. Endejan, 3048

Rowe v. Compensation Research Bureau, Inc., 3067

RTE Corp. v. Maryland Casualty Co., 3117

Rubin v. Schrank, 2100

Ruby v. Ohio Casualty Ins. Co., 1600

Rud v. McNamara, 2401

Rudy v. Chicago, M. St. P. & P. R.R., 1026.5

Ruka v. Zierer, 1045 Rule v. Jones, 4000

Rumary v. Livestock Mortgage Credit Corp., 230

Runjo v. St. Paul Fire Marine Ins. Co., 1023

Ruppa v. American States, Inc., 1904

Russell Grader Mfg. Co. v. Budden, 3202

Ryan v. Cameron, 1500

Ryan v. Department of Taxation, 4030

Ryan v. Estate of Sheppard, 3070

Ryan v. Zweck-Wollenberg Co., 3240, 3242

Ryder v. State Farm Mut. Auto Ins. Co., 3057

#### S

S. A. Healy v. Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District, 3051

S.C. Johnson & Son, Inc. v. Morris, 400, 425, 1732

Sabinasz v. Milwaukee & Suburban Transp. Corp., 1025, 1030

Salladay v. Town of Dodgeville, 63

Sample v. United States, 4035

Sampson v. Laskin, 1500, 1900.4

Samson v. Riesing, 3201, 3204, 3211

Sandeen v. Willow River Power Co., 1051, 1885

Sander v. Newman, 4080

Sanderfoot v. Sherry Motors, Inc., 3117, 3118

Sandford v. R. L. Coleman Realty Co., 2150

Sands v. Menard, 3028

Saros v. Carlson, 4015

Sasse v. State, 152

Sater v. Cities Serv. Oil Co., 4005

Saveland v. Western Wis. R. Co., 4005

Saxhaug v. Forsyth Leather Co., 1900.4

Saylor v. Marshall and Ilsley Bank, 3082

Scales v. Boynton Cab Co., 1025

Scalzo v. Marsh, 305

Scandrett v. Greenhouse, 2401, 2402

Scarpace v. Sears Roebuck & Co., 2750, 2800

Schaefer v. State Bar of Wis., 2500

Schaefer v. Weber, 3200

Schaller v. Marine Nat'l Bank of Neenah, 3044

Schara v. Thiede, 2200

Schauf v. Badger State Mut. Casualty Co., 3116

Schemenauer v. Travelers Indem. Co., 350, 410

Scherg v. Puetz, 3054

Schey Enterprises, Inc. v. State, 8100, 8101

Schicker v. Leick, 8030

Schier v. Denny, 2605

Schiller v. Keuffel & Esser Co., 1731

Schiro v. Oriental Realty Co., 1920, 1922, 1928, 1930, 1932

Schlewitz v. London & Lancashire Indem. Co., 1095

Schlintz v. Equitable Life Assurance Soc'y, 3061

Schlueter v. Grady, 1070, 1090

Schmidt v. Jansen, 1070

Schmidt v. Northern States Power Co., 950

Schmidtke v. Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Co. of Am., 3072

Schmiedeck v. Gerard, 1055, 1065

Schmit v. Klumpyan, 2620

Schmit v. Sekach, 155, 1105A, 1591, 1595

Schmorrow v. Sentry Ins. Co., 1900.4, 1910

Schnabl v. Ford Motor Co., 1500

Schneck v. Mutual Serv. Co., 3116

Schneider v. Schneider, 3049

Schneider v. State of Wisconsin, 8111

Schoedel v. State Bank of Newburg, 2401, 2402

Schoenauer v. Wendinger, 1158, 1220, 1225, 1255

Schoenberg v. Berger, 325

Schoenfeld v. Journal Co., 2500

Schoer v. West Bend Mutual Ins. Co., 3110

Schroeder v. Kuntz, 1315, 1320

Schrubbe v. Peninsula Veterinary Serv., 1800, 1806

Schubert v. Midwest Broadcasting Co., 3735

Schubring v. Weggen, 1035

Schueler v. City of Madison, 1255

Schuh v. Fox River Tractor Co., 3262

Schultz v. Industrial Coils, Inc., 2750

Schultz v. Miller, 1760

Schulz v. Chicago, M. St. P. & P. Ry., 1407, 1410

Schulz v. General Casualty Co., 1105, 1855

Schulz v. St. Mary's Hosp., 265, 315, 1762

Schulze v. Kleeber, 1383, 2006, 8045

Schuster v. Altenberg, 1023

Schuster v. St. Vincent Hosp., 1384, 1385

Schwalbach v. Antigo Elec. & Gas, Inc., 1803, 3200

Schwartz v. City of Milwaukee, 1815, 8035

Schwartz v. Evangelical Deaconess Soc'y of Wis., 3020

Schwartz v. San Felippo, 1352

Schwartz v. Schneuriger, 1140

Schwartz v. Schwartz, 2605

Schwarz v. Winter, 1354

Schweidler v. Caruso, 1354, 1355, 1610

Schwenn v. Loraine Hotel Co., 1910, 1911

Scipior v. Shea, 180

Scory v. LaFave, 1500

Seaman v. McNamara, 3040

Seavey v. Jones, 4000

Seefeldt v. WISDOT, 8111

Segnitz v. A. Grossenbach Co., 3026

Seichter v. McDonald, 3110

Seidl v. Knop, 4035

Seidling v. Unichem, Inc., 3068

Seif v. Turowski, 1105A

Seifert v. Balink, 260, 1023

Seitz v. Seitz, 1090, 1825

Seitzinger v. Community Health Network, 3051

Seligman v. Hammond, 353, 1135, 1140

Sell v. General Elec. Supply Corp., 3014, 4005

Selleck v. City of Janesville, 1710, 1815

Sellmer Co. v. Industrial Comm'n, 4040

Seltrecht v. Bremer, 1023.5

Selzer v. Brunsell Bros., Ltd. 2400

Sentry Ins. V. Royal Ins. Co. of America, 400

Serkowski v. Wolf, 305

Sevey v. Jones, 1600

Shain v. Racine Raiders Football Club, Inc., 2020

Shannon v. City of Milwaukee, 1383, 4035

Shannon v. Shannon, 8020

Sharp v. Case Corp., 1707.2, 3240, 3260

Sharpe v. Hasey, 1910

Shaw v. Wisconsin Power & Light Co., 1002

Shaw v. Wuttke, 1010

Shawver v. Roberts Corp., 100, 215, 3262

Sherley v. Peehl, 3012

Shetney v. Shetney, 3022

Shevel v. Warter, 4020

Shier v. Freedman, 1023, 1023.7

Shockley v. Prier, 1815, 1837, 1845

Short Way Lines v. Sutton's Adm'r, 1050

Shy v. Industrial Salvage Material Co., 3056, 3076

Siebert v. Morris, 1013

Silberman v. Roethe, 3074

Simmons v. Industrial Comm'n, 4045

Simon v. Van de Hey, 1105

Singleton v. Kubiak & Schmitt, Inc., 1911

Skaar v. Dept of Revenue, 4080

Skebba v. Kasch, 3074

Skindzelewski v. Smith, 1023.5

Slattery v. Lofy, 1060, 1065

Smader v. Columbia Wis. Co., 4015

Smaxwell v. Bayard, 1391, 8020

Smee v. Checker Cab Co., 202, 1705

Smith v. Atco Co., 3200, 3240, 3242

Smith v. Federal Rubber Co., 2600

Smith v. Goshaw, 8020

Smith v. Milwaukee County, 1020

Smith v. Pabst, 1025.6, 1391

Smith v. Poor Hand Maids of Jesus Christ, 1025.7

Smith v. Sneller, 1050

Smuda v. Milwaukee County, 8120

Sniden v. Laabs, 3740

Snider v. Northern States Power Co., 1022.6

Snow v. Koeppl, 2550

Solberg v. Robbins Lumber Co., 215

Soletski v. Krueger International, Inc., 1900.4

Somers v. Germania Nat'l Bank, 3057

Sommerfield v. Flury, 1032

Sparling v. Thomas, 1350

Spencer v. ILHR Dep't, 1710

Spencer v. Kosir, 3079

Spensley Feeds v. Livingston Feed & Lumber, Inc., 1

Spheeris Sporting Goods, Inc. v. Spheeris on Capitol, 2790

Spigelberg v. State of Wisconsin, 8104

Spitler v. Dean, 950

Spleas v. Milwaukee & Suburban Transp. Corp., 1025, 1500

Spoehr v. Mittlestadt, 2500

Sprecher v. Monroe County Fin. Co. v. Thomas, 1731

Sprecher v. Roberts, 4060

Sprecher v. Weston's Bar, Inc., 1806

St. Amant v. Thompson, 2511

St. Clair v. McDonnell, 1113

St. Mary's Hosp. Med. Center v. Brody, 1825

St. Paul Fire & Marine Ins. Co. v. Burchard, 1075

Stack v. Padden, 1825

Stack v. Roth Bros. Co., 3020

Staehler v. Beuthin, 1766

Stahl v. Gotzenberger, 1

Stahler v. Philadelphia & R.R., 1880

Stamnes v. Milwaukee & State Line R. Co., 8105

Staples v. Glienke, 1230, 1260

Starobin v. Northridge Lakes, 2500

State Bank of Viroqua v. Capitol Indem., 3117

State ex rel. Brajdic v. Seber, 200

State ex rel. Park Plaza Shopping Center, Inc. v. O'Malley, 410

State ex rel. Schultz v. Bruendl, 1005, 1009

State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Co. v. Campbell, 1707.1

State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Co. v. Ford Motor Co., 2400

State Farm Fire & Cas. Co. v. Amazon, 3200

State Farm Fire & Cas. Co. v. Hague Quality Water, Int'l, 2400

State of Wisconsin v. Abbott Laboratories, 1

State v. Anderson, 80

State v. Automatic Merchandisers of America, Inc., 2418

State v. Blaisell, 2722

State v. Caibaiosai, 1035

State v. Camara, 2115

State v. Chew, 2006.2

State v. Cooper, 63

State v. Darcy N. K., 57

State v. Eaton, 1510

State v. Genova, 2420

State v. Henley, 3295

State v. Herrington, 2115

State v. Hess, 2722

State v. Holt, 1005, 1009

State v. Hutnik, 415

State v. Joe Must Go Club, 1910, 3264

State v. Keyes, 2722

State v. Lederer, 420

State v. Major, 420

State v. City of Prescott, 2750

State v. Robinson, 405

State v. Schweda, 1, 3028

State v. Sobkowiak, 2722

State v. Smith, 2115

State v. Tarrell, 63

State v. Vogel, 420

State v. Williamson, 405

State v. Wolske, 1035

State v. Wolter, 2722

Statz v. Pohl, 1010, 1013

Steel v. Ritter, 1803, 1804

Steele v. Pacesetter Motor Cars, Inc., 3053

Stefan Auto Body v. State Highway Comm., 8111

Stefanovich v. Iowa Nat'l Mut. Ins. Co., 1900.4, 1904

Steffen v. McNaughton, 4035

Steffes v. Farmers Mut. Auto Ins. Co., 1035

Stehlik v. Rhoads, 1014, 1014.5, 1277, 1278

Steinbarth v. Johannes, 1861

Steinberg v. Jensen, 1500

Steinhorst v. H. C. Prange Co., 1902

Stelloh v. Liban, 2115

Stephenson v. Universal Metrics, Inc., 1397

Steuck Living Trust v. Easley, 8060

Stevens v. Farmers Mut. Auto Ins. Co., 1140

Stevenson v. Barwineck, 2400, 2401, 2402

Stewart v. City of Ripon, 1720

Stilwell v. Kellogg, 1

Stippich v. Morrison, 3116

Stolze v. Manitowoc Terminal Co., 8120

Stoppleworth v. Refuse Hideaway, Inc., 50

Strack v. Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Co., 1900.4

Strahlendorf v. Walgreen Co., 3200, 3242

Strait v. Crary, 1010

Straub v. Schadeberg, 1096

Strauss Bros. Packing Co. v. American Ins. Co., 1806

Strelecki v. Fireman's Ins. Co. of Newark, 1815

Strenke v. Hogner, 1707.1

Strid v. Converse, 2600, 2605, 2620

Strnad v. Cooperative Ins. Mut., 325

Stroede v. Society Insurance, 8025

Strong v. Milwaukee, 2100

Strupp v. Farmers Mut. Automobile Ins. Co., 1600

Stuart v. Weisflog's Showroom Gallery, Inc., 2400, 2720

Stunkel v. Price Elec. Cooperative, 1922, 1928

Struthers Patent Corp. v. Nestle Co., 400

Sufferling v. Heyl & Patterson, 202, 1705

Suhaysik v. Milwaukee Cheese Co., 1051, 1056

Suick v. Krom, 315

Sulkowski v. Schaefer, 1075, 1825, 1840, 1845

Sullivan v. Minneapolis, St. Paul & S.S.M.R. Co., 200

Sumnicht v. Toyota Motor Sales, 1500, 1723, 3260, 3260.1

Sunnyslope Grading, Inc. v. Miller, Bradford & Risberg, Inc., 2400

Super Value Stores, Inc. v. D-Mart Food Stores, Inc., 3044 Surety Savings & Loan Association v. WISDOT, 8111

Surety Savings & Loan Association v. WisDO1, o

Swanson v. Maryland Casualty Co., 1115, 1120

Sweeney v. Matthews, 3200

Sweet v. Chicago & N.W. Ry., 1796

Sweet v. Underwriters Casualty Co., 1032

Swinkles v. Wisconsin Mich. Power Co., 1210

Sykes v. Bensinger Recreation Corp., 1900.4

Symes v. Milwaukee Mutual Ins. Co., 8045

Т

T.A.T. v. R.E.B., 5001

Tackes v. Milwaukee Carpenters Health Fund, 1023.6

Takera v. Ford Motor Co., 3201, 3211

Talley v. Mustafa, 1383

Tallmadge v. Boyle, 1023.5

Tang v. C.A.R.S. Protection Plus, Inc., 3310

Tanner v. Shoupe, 3240

Tatera v. FMC Corp., 1022.2, 3242

Tatur v. Solsrud, 1005, 1009

Taylor v. Bricker, 3022

Taylor v. Western Casualty & Sur. Co., 1580, 1585, 1590

Teas v. Eisenlord, 1030, 1047.1, 1075, 1076

Tegen v. Chapin, 3200

Tempelis v. Aetna Casualty & Surety Co., 3100

Templeton v. Crull, 1391

Tenney v. Cowles, 3220, 3225

Tensfeldt v. Haberman, 1023.5

Terry v. Journal Broadcast Corp.. 1510, 2505, 2725

Tesch v. Industrial Comm'n, 4060

Tesch v. Wisconsin Pub. Serv. Corp., 1113

Tew v. Marg, 3200, 3211

The J. Thompson Mfg. Co. v. Gunderson, 3058

The Lamar Co. v. Country Side Restaurant, 8060

The Milwaukee & Mississippi R.R. Co. v. Elbe, 8115

The Yacht Club at Sister Bay Condominium Ass'n, Inc. v. Village of Sister Bay, 1920

Theama v. City of Kenosha, 1838

Theatre Enterprises, Inc. v. Paramount Film Dist. Corp., 2804

Theisen v. Milwaukee Auto Mut. Ins. Co., 353, 1021.2, 1046, 1047, 1047.1, 1075, 1140, 1500, 1591

Theuerkauf v. Sutton, 1812

Thieme v. Weyker, 1055

Thomas v. Lockwood Oil Co., 4035

Thomas v. Mallett, 3295

Thomas v. Williams, 1707

Thompson v. Beecham, 2605, 2620

Thompson v. Nee, 1113

Thompson v. Village of Hales Corners, 3057

Thoreson v. Milwaukee & Suburban Transp. Corp., 410, 1230, 1840

Thorp v. Mindeman, 3040

Thurn v. LaCrosse Liquor Co., 4030

Thurner Heat Treating Corp. v. Menco, Inc., 3710

Tidmarsh v. Chicago M. & St. P. Ry., 1855

Tietsworth v. Harley-Davidson, Inc., 2401, 2418

Tillman v. Michigan-Wisconsin Pipe Line Co., 8100

Tills v. Elmbrook Memorial Hosp., Inc., 1023.7

Todorovich v. Kinnickinnic Mut. Loan & Bldg. Ass'n, 3010, 3014

Tombal v. Farmers Ins. Exch., 1096, 1105A, 1153

Tomberlin v. Chicago, St. P., M. & O. Ry., 1075

Topham v. Casey, 1760

Topolewski v. Plankinton Packing Co., 4050

Topp v. Continental Ins. Co., 1900.4

Topzant v. Koshe, 2201

Totsky v. Riteway Bus Serv., Inc., 1005, 1009, 1105, 1105A, 1325, 1325A

Tower Special Facilities, Inc. v. Investment Club, Inc., 2605

Town of Fifield v. State Farm Ins. Co., 1803, 1806

Treps v. City of Racine, 8020

Treptau v. Behrens Spa, Inc., 1023

Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church v. Tower Ins. Co., 1707.1

Tri-State Home Improvement Co. v. Mansavage, 3700

Tri-Tech Corp. v. Americomp Serv., 2419, 2420, 2722

Trogun v. Fruchtman, 1023, 1023.7, 1024, 2005

Troppi v. Scarf, 1742

Truelsch v. Miller, 230

Tucker v. Marcus, 1707

Turk v. H. C. Prange Co., 1145, 1501, 3200

Turner v. Industrial Comm'n, 4045

Tuschel v. Haasch, 1350

Tuteur, Adm'r v. Chicago & N. W. Ry., 1880 TXO Prod. Corp. v. Alliance Resources Corp., 1707.1 Tynan v. JBVBB, LLC, 3074

U

Underwood v. Paine Lumber Co., 4050

Underwood v. Strasser, 415

Underwood Veneer Co. v. London Guar. & Accident Co., 3117

United America, LLC v. Wis. Dept. of Transportation, 8110

United Concrete & Construction v. Red-D-Mix Concrete, Inc. 2401, 2403, 2418

United States Fidelity & Guar. Co. v. Milwaukee & Suburban Transp. Corp., 1025

United States Fidelity & Guar. Co. v. Forest County State Bank, 4010

United States v. Bausch & Lomb Optical Co., 2802

United States v. Causby, 8112

United States v. Crescent Amusement Co., 2808

United States v. First Nat'l Bank & Trust Co. of Lexington, 2800

United States v. National City Lines, 2802

United States v. Paramount Pictures, Inc., 2802

United States v. Patten, 2806

United States v. Richards, 1920

United States v. Sanno, 2802

United States v. Standard Oil Co., 2800

United States v. Twentieth Century Fox Film Corp., 2804

United States v. Vasquez, 2115

United States v. Walker, 2115

United States v. Wise, 2802

Utech v. Milwaukee, 8100

#### V

Valiga v. National Food Co., 410, 3202, 3207, 3208

Van Galder v. Snyder, 1225

Van Gheem v. Chicago & N.W. Ry., 1405

Van Lare v. Vogt, Inc., 2400, 2401

Van Matre v. Milwaukee Elec. Ry. & Transp. Co., 1280

Van Riper v. United States, 2802

Van Wie v. Hill, 1157

Vandehey v. City of Appleton, 2405, 2405.5

Vanden Heuvel v. Schultz, 1096

Vandenack v. Crosby, 1075

Vanderbloemen v. Suchosky, 100

Vandermark v. Ford Motor Co., 3200

Vandervort v. Industrial Comm'n, 1910

Venzke v. Magdanz, 3700

Ver Hagen v. Gibbons, 1511

Verbeten v. Huettl, 1132, 1133

Verhelst Constr. Co. v. Galles, 1820

Vetter v. Rein, 1804, 1805

Victorson v. Milwaukee & Suburban Transp. Corp., 200, 410, 1019, 1025, 1760, 1815

Village Food & Liquor v. H&S Petroleum, Inc., 1

Viola v. Wisconsin Electric Power Co., 1900.4

Vivid, Inc. v. Fiedler, 8130

Vodrey Pottery Co. v. H. E. Home Co., 3225

Voell v. Klein, 4005, 4010

Vogel v. Grant-Lafayette Elec. Coop., 1922, 1928

Vogel v. State, 420

Vogel v. Vetting, 1155, 1580, 1585, 1590

Vogelsburg v. Mason, 1902

Vogt v. Chicago, M., St. P. & P. R.R., 180

Voigt v. Voigt, 1140, 1280

Voith v. Buser, 415, 2005.5

Volbrecht v. State Highway Comm'n, 8102, 8105

Volk v. Stowell, 3070

Vonch v. American Standard Ins. Co., 1035

Vosburg v. Putney, 1010, 2005

Vultaggio v. General Motors, 3300, 3304

#### W

W.G. Slugg Seed & Fertilizer v. Paulsen Lumber, 3700

Wadzinski v. Cities Serv. Oil Co, 1025.6

Wagner v. Continental Casualty Co., 1022.2, 1022.6, 4060

Wagner v. Mittendorf, 1725

Wagner v. Wisconsin Municipal Mut. Ins. Co., 8020

Wait v. Pierce, 2900

Waldheim & Co., Inc. v. Mitchell St. Bank, 4015

Waldman v. Young Men's Christian Ass'n, 1910

Walk v. Boudheim, 1052, 1054

Walker v. Baker, 1796

Walker v. Bignell, 1005, 1009

Walker v. Kroger Grocery & Baking Co., 1585, 1590

Walker v. Sacred Heart Hospital, 1024, 1384

Wall v. Town of Highland, 1048

Walsh v. Wild Masonry Co., 1051

Walter v. Four Wheel Drive Auto Co., 4005

Wandry v. Bull's Eye Credit Union, 2750

Wangen v. Ford Motor Co., 200, 205, 1707, 1707.1, 1850, 2500, 2520, 2725

Wanta v. Milwaukee Elec. Ry. & Light Co., 305

Wappler v. Schench, 1076

Waranka v. State Farm Mut. Auto Ins. Co., 1870, 1895, 1897

Warren v. American Family Mut. Ins. Co., 2760

Washburn v. Milwaukee & Lake Winnebago R.R. Co., 8120

Wasikowski v. Chicago & N. W. Ry., 1338

Water Quality Store v. Dynasty Spas, Inc., 2769

Waters v. Markham, 1032

Waters v. Pertzborn, 1707.1

Watland v. Farmers Mut. Auto Ins. Co., 1035

Watts v. Watts, 3028

Waube v. Warrington, 1510, 1511

Waukesha County v. J.W.J., 7050, 7050A

Wauwatosa Realty Co. v. Bishop, 3048

Webb v. Wisconsin S. Gas Co., 1002

Webber v. Wisconsin Power & Light Co., 1803, 1804

Weber v. Hurley, 1022.6, 4060

Weber v. Interstate Light & Power Co., 1002

Weber v. Mayer, 1070

Weber v. White, 1758

Weber v. Young, 2100

Weborg v. Jenny, 260, 1023, 1757

Webster v. Krembs, 1760, 1835

Webster v. Roth, 1403, 1408, 1409

Wedell v. Holy Trinity Catholic Church, 2900

Weggeman v. Seven-Up Bottling Co., 3200

Weigell v. Gregg, 4005

Weihert v. Piccione, 8045

Weil-McLain Co. v. Maryland Casualty Co., 4005

Weil v. Biltmore Grande Realty Corp., 3030

Weinhagen v. Hayes, 4020

Weise v. Polzer, 1500

Weise v. Reisner, 2800

Weiseger v. Wheeler, 4015

Weiss v. Holman, 1395, 8030

Weiss v. United Fire and Casualty Co., 2760, 2761

Welch v. Milwaukee St. P. R.R., 8104

Wells v. Chicago & N.W. Transp. Co., 1411

Wells v. National Indemnity Co., 1762

Wendt v. Manegold Stone Co., 8012

Wendy M. v. Helen E.K., 3074

Wergin v. Voss, 1920

Werlein v. Milwaukee Elec. Ry & Transp. Corp., 1025

Werner Transp. Co. v. Barts, 1300

Werner Transp. Co. v. Zimmerman, 1210

Werner v. Gimbel Bros., 1900.4, 1910

Wertheimer v. Saunders, 1022.6

West v. Day, 1840

Westby v. Madison Newspapers, Inc., 2500

Westcott v. Mikkelson, 1510, 1511

Western Casualty & Sur. Co. v. Dairyland Mut. Ins. Co., 1125

Westfall v. Kottke, 350, 1055, 1070, 1114, 1144, 1355, 1600

Westmas v. Creekside Tree, 4000

Weyauwega v. Industrial Comm'n, 4060

Whipp v. Iverson, 2401, 3068

White Hen Pantry v. Buttke, 2771

White v. Benkowske, 3725

White v. Leeder, 1391

White v. Lunder, 1815, 1820

White v. Minneapolis, St. P. & S. S. M. Ry., 1336

White v. Stelloh, 3220, 3225

White v. The Milwaukee City Ry. Co., 1705

Whitty v. State, 415

Widemshek v. Fale, 2520

Wiener v. J.C. Penney Co., 3295

Wiger v. Carr, 4027

Wilcox v. Estate of Hines, 8060

Will of Bate, 3032

Will of Rice: Cowie v. Strohmeyer, 3057

Williams v. Brown Mfg. Co., 3200

Williams v. Journal Co., 2505

Wills v. Regan, 1385

Wilmet v. Chicago & N.W. Ry., 1411

Wilson v. Koch, 1030, 1191

Wilson v. Young, 1708

Winkelman v. Beloit Memorial Hosp., 2750

Winnebago County v. Christopher S., 7050

Winnebago County v. Christopher S.(III), 7050, 7050A

Winslow v. Brown, 2007

Winston v Minkin, 3086, 3740

Wintersberger v. Pioneer Iron & Metal Co., 1352

Winzer v. Hartmann, 1023

Wirsing v. Krzeminski, 2008, 2155

Wischer v. Mitsubishi Heavy Industries America, Inc., 1707.1

Wisconsin Bell, Inc. v. Labor & Indus. Review Comm'n, 2750

Wisconsin Bridge and Iron Co. v. Industrial Comm'n, 1900.4

Wisconsin Elec. Power Co. v. Zallea Bros., Inc., 3202, 3262

Wisconsin Loan & Fin. v. Goodnough, 1010, 2000

Wisconsin Natural Gas Co. v. Employers Mut. Liab. Ins. Co., 1021.2

Wisconsin Natural Gas Co. v. Ford, Bacon & Davis Constr., 1580

Wisnicky v. Fox Hills Inn & Country Club, 8020

Wm. Beaudoin & Sons, Inc. v. Milwaukee County, 3070

Wodill v. Sullivan, 1113

Wojahn v. National Union Bank of Oshkosh, 3026

Wojciechowski v. Baron, 1260

Wojciuk v. United States Rubber Co., 3200, 3211, 3240

Wolnak v. Cardiovascular & Thoracic Surgeons of Central Wisconsin, S.C., 2780

Woodcock v. Home Mut. Casualty Co., 1125

Wood v. Heyer, 3200

Woodward v. City of Boscobel, 1720

Wosinski v. Advance Cast Stone Co., 1511, 1707.1, 1855, 3074, 3710

Wozny v. Basack, 3086

Wright v. Hasley, 2725

Wright v. Mercy Hosp., 1021, 1880

Wunderlich v. Palatine Fire Ins. Co., 100

Wurdemann v. Barnes, 1023

Wurtzler v. Miller, 3290

Wussow v. Commercial Mechanisms, Inc., 2520

#### Y

Yanta v. Montgomery Ward & Co., Inc., 2750

Yao v. Chapman, 1025.7

Yaun v. Allis-Chalmers Mfg. Co., 3200, 3254

Yelk v. Seefeldt, 2600, 2605

Young v. Anaconda Am. Brass Co., 1051.2

Young v. Professionals Ins. Co., 1023

#### 7

Zabel v. Zabel, 1

Zarling v. LaSalle Coca-Cola Bottling Co., 3200

Zartner v. Scopp, 1053, 1195, 1354

Zastrow v. Journal Communications, Inc., 1

Zawistowski v. Kissinger, 1707.1

Zehren v. F. W. Woolworth Co., 1900.4, 1902, 1904

Zeinemann v. Gasser, 1140, 1280

Zeller v. Northrup King Co., 1707

Zenner v. Chicago, St. P., M. & O. Ry., 315, 1210

Ziegler Co., Inc. v. Rexnord, Inc., 2769

Ziino v. Milwaukee Elec. Ry. & Transp. Co., 1145

Zimmerman Bros. & Co. v. First Nat'l Bank, 3014

Zinda v. Louisiana Pacific Corp., 2550, 2552

Zindell v. Central Mut. Ins. Co., 1030, 1804

Zintek v. Perchik, 1816

Zinzow Constr. Co. v. Giovannoni, 3220

Zoellner v. Fond du Lac, 1049

Zoellner v. Kaiser, 1056, 1320

Zombkowski v. Wisconsin River Power Co., 8100

Zuelke v. Gergo, 3048

Zummach v. Polasek, 4005 Zweck v. D. P. Way Corp., 3051

Assault, 2004 Assumption of due care by highway user, 1030 Assumption, of duty, voluntary, 1397 Attorney, See also Counsel fees, 3760 malpractice, 1023.5 status as a specialist, 1023.5A Attractive nuisance, 1011, 8025 Audible, defined, 1210 Authority apparent, agency, 4005 implied, agency, 4010 Automobile, See also Vehicles damage to, 1805 defective condition of, host's liability, 1032 driver of, agency, 1600 joint adventure (enterprise), 1610 Lemon Law, 3300, 3301, 3302, 3303, 3304 loss of use, damages not repairable, 1801 repairable, 1800 Magnuson-Moss Act claim, 3310 owner's permission for use of, 3112 racing of, 1107 Avoidance of contract for mutual mistake of fact, 3072  B Backing, lookout, 1060 Bad faith by insurance company, 2760, 2761, 2762 Bailment defined, 1025.5 duty of bailee under for mutual benefit, 1025.7 duty of bailer under for mutual benefit, 1026.5 Bailor, negligence of gratuitous, 1025.8 Battery, defense of property, 2006.5 defined, 2005
Assumption of due care by highway user, 1030 Assumption, of duty, voluntary, 1397 Attorney, See also Counsel fees, 3760 malpractice, 1023.5 status as a specialist, 1023.5A Attractive nuisance, 1011, 8025 Audible, defined, 1210 Authority apparent, agency, 4005 implied, agency, 4010 Automobile, See also Vehicles damage to, 1805 defective condition of, host's liability, 1032 driver of, agency, 1600 joint adventure (enterprise), 1610 Lemon Law, 3300, 3301, 3302, 3303, 3304 loss of use, damages not repairable, 1801 repairable, 1800 Magnuson-Moss Act claim, 3310 owner's permission for use of, 3112 racing of, 1107 Avoidance of contract for mutual mistake of fact, 3072  B Backing, lookout, 1060 Bad faith by insurance company, 2760, 2761, 2762 Bailment defined, 1025.5 duty of bailee under for mutual benefit, 1025.7 duty of bailer of hire, 1025.6 negligence of bailee may be inferred, 1026 negligence of carrier presumed, 1026.5 Bailor, negligence of gratuitous, 1025.8 Battery,
Assumption of due care by highway user, 1030 Assumption, of duty, voluntary, 1397 Attorney, See also Counsel fees, 3760 malpractice, 1023.5 status as a specialist, 1023.5A Attractive nuisance, 1011, 8025 Audible, defined, 1210 Authority apparent, agency, 4005 implied, agency, 4010 Automobile, See also Vehicles damage to, 1805 defective condition of, host's liability, 1032 driver of, agency, 1600 joint adventure (enterprise), 1610 Lemon Law, 3300, 3301, 3302, 3303, 3304 loss of use, damages not repairable, 1801 repairable, 1800 Magnuson-Moss Act claim, 3310 owner's permission for use of, 3112 racing of, 1107 Avoidance of contract for mutual mistake of fact, 3072  B Backing, lookout, 1060 Bad faith by insurance company, 2760, 2761, 2762 Bailment defined, 1025.5 duty of bailee under for mutual benefit, 1025.7 duty of bailer for hire, 1025.6 negligence of bailee may be inferred, 1026 negligence of carrier presumed, 1026.5 Bailor, negligence of gratuitous, 1025.8
Assumption of due care by highway user, 1030 Assumption, of duty, voluntary, 1397 Attorney, See also Counsel fees, 3760 malpractice, 1023.5 status as a specialist, 1023.5A Attractive nuisance, 1011, 8025 Audible, defined, 1210 Authority apparent, agency, 4005 implied, agency, 4010 Automobile, See also Vehicles damage to, 1805 defective condition of, host's liability, 1032 driver of, agency, 1600 joint adventure (enterprise), 1610 Lemon Law, 3300, 3301, 3302, 3303, 3304 loss of use, damages not repairable, 1801 repairable, 1800 Magnuson-Moss Act claim, 3310 owner's permission for use of, 3112 racing of, 1107 Avoidance of contract for mutual mistake of fact, 3072  B Backing, lookout, 1060 Bad faith by insurance company, 2760, 2761, 2762 Bailment defined, 1025.5 duty of bailee under for mutual benefit, 1025.7 duty of bailer for hire, 1025.6 negligence of bailee may be inferred, 1026 negligence of carrier presumed, 1026.5
Assumption of due care by highway user, 1030 Assumption, of duty, voluntary, 1397 Attorney, See also Counsel fees, 3760 malpractice, 1023.5 status as a specialist, 1023.5A Attractive nuisance, 1011, 8025 Audible, defined, 1210 Authority apparent, agency, 4005 implied, agency, 4010 Automobile, See also Vehicles damage to, 1805 defective condition of, host's liability, 1032 driver of, agency, 1600 joint adventure (enterprise), 1610 Lemon Law, 3300, 3301, 3302, 3303, 3304 loss of use, damages not repairable, 1801 repairable, 1800 Magnuson-Moss Act claim, 3310 owner's permission for use of, 3112 racing of, 1107 Avoidance of contract for mutual mistake of fact, 3072  B Backing, lookout, 1060 Bad faith by insurance company, 2760, 2761, 2762 Bailment defined, 1025.5 duty of bailee under for mutual benefit, 1025.7 duty of bailor for hire, 1025.6 negligence of bailee may be inferred, 1026
Assumption of due care by highway user, 1030 Assumption, of duty, voluntary, 1397 Attorney, See also Counsel fees, 3760 malpractice, 1023.5 status as a specialist, 1023.5A Attractive nuisance, 1011, 8025 Audible, defined, 1210 Authority apparent, agency, 4005 implied, agency, 4010 Automobile, See also Vehicles damage to, 1805 defective condition of, host's liability, 1032 driver of, agency, 1600 joint adventure (enterprise), 1610 Lemon Law, 3300, 3301, 3302, 3303, 3304 loss of use, damages not repairable, 1801 repairable, 1800 Magnuson-Moss Act claim, 3310 owner's permission for use of, 3112 racing of, 1107 Avoidance of contract for mutual mistake of fact, 3072  B Backing, lookout, 1060 Bad faith by insurance company, 2760, 2761, 2762 Bailment defined, 1025.5 duty of bailee under for mutual benefit, 1025.7 duty of bailor for hire, 1025.6
Assumption of due care by highway user, 1030 Assumption, of duty, voluntary, 1397 Attorney, See also Counsel fees, 3760 malpractice, 1023.5 status as a specialist, 1023.5A Attractive nuisance, 1011, 8025 Audible, defined, 1210 Authority apparent, agency, 4005 implied, agency, 4010 Automobile, See also Vehicles damage to, 1805 defective condition of, host's liability, 1032 driver of, agency, 1600 joint adventure (enterprise), 1610 Lemon Law, 3300, 3301, 3302, 3303, 3304 loss of use, damages not repairable, 1801 repairable, 1800 Magnuson-Moss Act claim, 3310 owner's permission for use of, 3112 racing of, 1107 Avoidance of contract for mutual mistake of fact, 3072  B Backing, lookout, 1060 Bad faith by insurance company, 2760, 2761, 2762 Bailment defined, 1025.5 duty of bailee under for mutual benefit, 1025.7
Assumption of due care by highway user, 1030 Assumption, of duty, voluntary, 1397 Attorney, See also Counsel fees, 3760 malpractice, 1023.5 status as a specialist, 1023.5A Attractive nuisance, 1011, 8025 Audible, defined, 1210 Authority apparent, agency, 4005 implied, agency, 4010 Automobile, See also Vehicles damage to, 1805 defective condition of, host's liability, 1032 driver of, agency, 1600 joint adventure (enterprise), 1610 Lemon Law, 3300, 3301, 3302, 3303, 3304 loss of use, damages not repairable, 1801 repairable, 1800 Magnuson-Moss Act claim, 3310 owner's permission for use of, 3112 racing of, 1107 Avoidance of contract for mutual mistake of fact, 3072  B Backing, lookout, 1060 Bad faith by insurance company, 2760, 2761, 2762 Bailment defined, 1025.5
Assumption of due care by highway user, 1030 Assumption, of duty, voluntary, 1397 Attorney, See also Counsel fees, 3760 malpractice, 1023.5 status as a specialist, 1023.5A Attractive nuisance, 1011, 8025 Audible, defined, 1210 Authority apparent, agency, 4005 implied, agency, 4010 Automobile, See also Vehicles damage to, 1805 defective condition of, host's liability, 1032 driver of, agency, 1600 joint adventure (enterprise), 1610 Lemon Law, 3300, 3301, 3302, 3303, 3304 loss of use, damages not repairable, 1801 repairable, 1800 Magnuson-Moss Act claim, 3310 owner's permission for use of, 3112 racing of, 1107 Avoidance of contract for mutual mistake of fact, 3072  B Backing, lookout, 1060 Bad faith by insurance company, 2760, 2761, 2762 Bailment
Assumption of due care by highway user, 1030 Assumption, of duty, voluntary, 1397 Attorney, See also Counsel fees, 3760 malpractice, 1023.5 status as a specialist, 1023.5A Attractive nuisance, 1011, 8025 Audible, defined, 1210 Authority apparent, agency, 4005 implied, agency, 4010 Automobile, See also Vehicles damage to, 1805 defective condition of, host's liability, 1032 driver of, agency, 1600 joint adventure (enterprise), 1610 Lemon Law, 3300, 3301, 3302, 3303, 3304 loss of use, damages not repairable, 1801 repairable, 1800 Magnuson-Moss Act claim, 3310 owner's permission for use of, 3112 racing of, 1107 Avoidance of contract for mutual mistake of fact, 3072  B Backing, lookout, 1060 Bad faith by insurance company, 2760, 2761, 2762
Assumption of due care by highway user, 1030 Assumption, of duty, voluntary, 1397 Attorney, See also Counsel fees, 3760 malpractice, 1023.5 status as a specialist, 1023.5A Attractive nuisance, 1011, 8025 Audible, defined, 1210 Authority apparent, agency, 4005 implied, agency, 4010 Automobile, See also Vehicles damage to, 1805 defective condition of, host's liability, 1032 driver of, agency, 1600 joint adventure (enterprise), 1610 Lemon Law, 3300, 3301, 3302, 3303, 3304 loss of use, damages not repairable, 1801 repairable, 1800 Magnuson-Moss Act claim, 3310 owner's permission for use of, 3112 racing of, 1107 Avoidance of contract for mutual mistake of fact, 3072  B Backing, lookout, 1060
Assumption of due care by highway user, 1030 Assumption, of duty, voluntary, 1397 Attorney, See also Counsel fees, 3760 malpractice, 1023.5 status as a specialist, 1023.5A Attractive nuisance, 1011, 8025 Audible, defined, 1210 Authority apparent, agency, 4005 implied, agency, 4010 Automobile, See also Vehicles damage to, 1805 defective condition of, host's liability, 1032 driver of, agency, 1600 joint adventure (enterprise), 1610 Lemon Law, 3300, 3301, 3302, 3303, 3304 loss of use, damages not repairable, 1801 repairable, 1800 Magnuson-Moss Act claim, 3310 owner's permission for use of, 3112 racing of, 1107 Avoidance of contract for mutual mistake of fact, 3072
Assumption of due care by highway user, 1030 Assumption, of duty, voluntary, 1397 Attorney, See also Counsel fees, 3760 malpractice, 1023.5 status as a specialist, 1023.5A Attractive nuisance, 1011, 8025 Audible, defined, 1210 Authority apparent, agency, 4005 implied, agency, 4010 Automobile, See also Vehicles damage to, 1805 defective condition of, host's liability, 1032 driver of, agency, 1600 joint adventure (enterprise), 1610 Lemon Law, 3300, 3301, 3302, 3303, 3304 loss of use, damages not repairable, 1801 repairable, 1800 Magnuson-Moss Act claim, 3310 owner's permission for use of, 3112 racing of, 1107 Avoidance of contract for mutual mistake of fact, 3072
Assumption of due care by highway user, 1030 Assumption, of duty, voluntary, 1397 Attorney, See also Counsel fees, 3760 malpractice, 1023.5 status as a specialist, 1023.5A Attractive nuisance, 1011, 8025 Audible, defined, 1210 Authority apparent, agency, 4005 implied, agency, 4010 Automobile, See also Vehicles damage to, 1805 defective condition of, host's liability, 1032 driver of, agency, 1600 joint adventure (enterprise), 1610 Lemon Law, 3300, 3301, 3302, 3303, 3304 loss of use, damages not repairable, 1801 repairable, 1800 Magnuson-Moss Act claim, 3310 owner's permission for use of, 3112 racing of, 1107 Avoidance of contract for mutual mistake of fact, 3072
Assumption of due care by highway user, 1030 Assumption, of duty, voluntary, 1397 Attorney, See also Counsel fees, 3760 malpractice, 1023.5 status as a specialist, 1023.5A Attractive nuisance, 1011, 8025 Audible, defined, 1210 Authority apparent, agency, 4005 implied, agency, 4010 Automobile, See also Vehicles damage to, 1805 defective condition of, host's liability, 1032 driver of, agency, 1600 joint adventure (enterprise), 1610 Lemon Law, 3300, 3301, 3302, 3303, 3304 loss of use, damages not repairable, 1801 repairable, 1800 Magnuson-Moss Act claim, 3310 owner's permission for use of, 3112 racing of, 1107
Assumption of due care by highway user, 1030 Assumption, of duty, voluntary, 1397 Attorney, See also Counsel fees, 3760 malpractice, 1023.5 status as a specialist, 1023.5A Attractive nuisance, 1011, 8025 Audible, defined, 1210 Authority apparent, agency, 4005 implied, agency, 4010 Automobile, See also Vehicles damage to, 1805 defective condition of, host's liability, 1032 driver of, agency, 1600 joint adventure (enterprise), 1610 Lemon Law, 3300, 3301, 3302, 3303, 3304 loss of use, damages not repairable, 1801 repairable, 1800 Magnuson-Moss Act claim, 3310 owner's permission for use of, 3112 racing of, 1107
Assumption of due care by highway user, 1030 Assumption, of duty, voluntary, 1397 Attorney, See also Counsel fees, 3760 malpractice, 1023.5 status as a specialist, 1023.5A Attractive nuisance, 1011, 8025 Audible, defined, 1210 Authority apparent, agency, 4005 implied, agency, 4010 Automobile, See also Vehicles damage to, 1805 defective condition of, host's liability, 1032 driver of, agency, 1600 joint adventure (enterprise), 1610 Lemon Law, 3300, 3301, 3302, 3303, 3304 loss of use, damages not repairable, 1801 repairable, 1800 Magnuson-Moss Act claim, 3310 owner's permission for use of, 3112 racing of, 1107
Assumption of due care by highway user, 1030 Assumption, of duty, voluntary, 1397 Attorney, See also Counsel fees, 3760 malpractice, 1023.5 status as a specialist, 1023.5A Attractive nuisance, 1011, 8025 Audible, defined, 1210 Authority apparent, agency, 4005 implied, agency, 4010 Automobile, See also Vehicles damage to, 1805 defective condition of, host's liability, 1032 driver of, agency, 1600 joint adventure (enterprise), 1610 Lemon Law, 3300, 3301, 3302, 3303, 3304 loss of use, damages not repairable, 1801 repairable, 1800 Magnuson-Moss Act claim, 3310 owner's permission for use of, 3112
Assumption of due care by highway user, 1030 Assumption, of duty, voluntary, 1397 Attorney, See also Counsel fees, 3760 malpractice, 1023.5 status as a specialist, 1023.5A Attractive nuisance, 1011, 8025 Audible, defined, 1210 Authority apparent, agency, 4005 implied, agency, 4010 Automobile, See also Vehicles damage to, 1805 defective condition of, host's liability, 1032 driver of, agency, 1600 joint adventure (enterprise), 1610 Lemon Law, 3300, 3301, 3302, 3303, 3304 loss of use, damages not repairable, 1801 repairable, 1800 Magnuson-Moss Act claim, 3310
Assumption of due care by highway user, 1030 Assumption, of duty, voluntary, 1397 Attorney, See also Counsel fees, 3760 malpractice, 1023.5 status as a specialist, 1023.5A Attractive nuisance, 1011, 8025 Audible, defined, 1210 Authority apparent, agency, 4005 implied, agency, 4010 Automobile, See also Vehicles damage to, 1805 defective condition of, host's liability, 1032 driver of, agency, 1600 joint adventure (enterprise), 1610 Lemon Law, 3300, 3301, 3302, 3303, 3304 loss of use, damages not repairable, 1801 repairable, 1800
Assumption of due care by highway user, 1030 Assumption, of duty, voluntary, 1397 Attorney, See also Counsel fees, 3760 malpractice, 1023.5 status as a specialist, 1023.5A Attractive nuisance, 1011, 8025 Audible, defined, 1210 Authority apparent, agency, 4005 implied, agency, 4010 Automobile, See also Vehicles damage to, 1805 defective condition of, host's liability, 1032 driver of, agency, 1600 joint adventure (enterprise), 1610 Lemon Law, 3300, 3301, 3302, 3303, 3304 loss of use, damages not repairable, 1801
Assumption of due care by highway user, 1030 Assumption, of duty, voluntary, 1397 Attorney, See also Counsel fees, 3760 malpractice, 1023.5 status as a specialist, 1023.5A Attractive nuisance, 1011, 8025 Audible, defined, 1210 Authority apparent, agency, 4005 implied, agency, 4010 Automobile, See also Vehicles damage to, 1805 defective condition of, host's liability, 1032 driver of, agency, 1600 joint adventure (enterprise), 1610 Lemon Law, 3300, 3301, 3302, 3303, 3304 loss of use, damages
Assumption of due care by highway user, 1030 Assumption, of duty, voluntary, 1397 Attorney, See also Counsel fees, 3760 malpractice, 1023.5 status as a specialist, 1023.5A Attractive nuisance, 1011, 8025 Audible, defined, 1210 Authority apparent, agency, 4005 implied, agency, 4010 Automobile, See also Vehicles damage to, 1805 defective condition of, host's liability, 1032 driver of, agency, 1600 joint adventure (enterprise), 1610 Lemon Law, 3300, 3301, 3302, 3303, 3304
Assumption of due care by highway user, 1030 Assumption, of duty, voluntary, 1397 Attorney, See also Counsel fees, 3760 malpractice, 1023.5 status as a specialist, 1023.5A Attractive nuisance, 1011, 8025 Audible, defined, 1210 Authority apparent, agency, 4005 implied, agency, 4010 Automobile, See also Vehicles damage to, 1805 defective condition of, host's liability, 1032 driver of, agency, 1600 joint adventure (enterprise), 1610
Assumption of due care by highway user, 1030 Assumption, of duty, voluntary, 1397 Attorney, See also Counsel fees, 3760 malpractice, 1023.5 status as a specialist, 1023.5A Attractive nuisance, 1011, 8025 Audible, defined, 1210 Authority apparent, agency, 4005 implied, agency, 4010 Automobile, See also Vehicles damage to, 1805 defective condition of, host's liability, 1032 driver of, agency, 1600
Assumption of due care by highway user, 1030 Assumption, of duty, voluntary, 1397 Attorney, See also Counsel fees, 3760 malpractice, 1023.5 status as a specialist, 1023.5A Attractive nuisance, 1011, 8025 Audible, defined, 1210 Authority apparent, agency, 4005 implied, agency, 4010 Automobile, See also Vehicles damage to, 1805 defective condition of, host's liability, 1032 driver of, agency, 1600
Assumption of due care by highway user, 1030 Assumption, of duty, voluntary, 1397 Attorney, See also Counsel fees, 3760 malpractice, 1023.5 status as a specialist, 1023.5A Attractive nuisance, 1011, 8025 Audible, defined, 1210 Authority apparent, agency, 4005 implied, agency, 4010 Automobile, See also Vehicles damage to, 1805 defective condition of, host's liability, 1032
Assumption of due care by highway user, 1030 Assumption, of duty, voluntary, 1397 Attorney, See also Counsel fees, 3760 malpractice, 1023.5 status as a specialist, 1023.5A Attractive nuisance, 1011, 8025 Audible, defined, 1210 Authority apparent, agency, 4005 implied, agency, 4010 Automobile, See also Vehicles damage to, 1805
Assumption of due care by highway user, 1030 Assumption, of duty, voluntary, 1397 Attorney, See also Counsel fees, 3760 malpractice, 1023.5 status as a specialist, 1023.5A Attractive nuisance, 1011, 8025 Audible, defined, 1210 Authority apparent, agency, 4005 implied, agency, 4010 Automobile, See also Vehicles
Assumption of due care by highway user, 1030 Assumption, of duty, voluntary, 1397 Attorney, See also Counsel fees, 3760 malpractice, 1023.5 status as a specialist, 1023.5A Attractive nuisance, 1011, 8025 Audible, defined, 1210 Authority apparent, agency, 4005 implied, agency, 4010
Assumption of due care by highway user, 1030 Assumption, of duty, voluntary, 1397 Attorney, See also Counsel fees, 3760 malpractice, 1023.5 status as a specialist, 1023.5A Attractive nuisance, 1011, 8025 Audible, defined, 1210 Authority apparent, agency, 4005
Assumption of due care by highway user, 1030 Assumption, of duty, voluntary, 1397 Attorney, See also Counsel fees, 3760 malpractice, 1023.5 status as a specialist, 1023.5A Attractive nuisance, 1011, 8025 Audible, defined, 1210 Authority
Assumption of due care by highway user, 1030 Assumption, of duty, voluntary, 1397 Attorney, See also Counsel fees, 3760 malpractice, 1023.5 status as a specialist, 1023.5A Attractive nuisance, 1011, 8025 Audible, defined, 1210
Assumption of due care by highway user, 1030 Assumption, of duty, voluntary, 1397 Attorney, See also Counsel fees, 3760 malpractice, 1023.5 status as a specialist, 1023.5A Attractive nuisance, 1011, 8025
Assumption of due care by highway user, 1030 Assumption, of duty, voluntary, 1397 Attorney, See also Counsel fees, 3760 malpractice, 1023.5 status as a specialist, 1023.5A
Assumption of due care by highway user, 1030 Assumption, of duty, voluntary, 1397 Attorney, See also Counsel fees, 3760 malpractice, 1023.5 status as a specialist, 1023.5A
Assumption of due care by highway user, 1030 Assumption, of duty, voluntary, 1397 Attorney, See also Counsel fees, 3760 malpractice, 1023.5
Assumption of due care by highway user, 1030 Assumption, of duty, voluntary, 1397 Attorney, See also Counsel fees, 3760
Assumption of due care by highway user, 1030 Assumption, of duty, voluntary, 1397 Attorney, <u>See also</u> Counsel
Assumption of due care by highway user, 1030 Assumption, of duty, voluntary, 1397
Assumption of due care by highway user, 1030
· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
Assault, 2004
Asking questions, by juror, 57
Artificial condition as attractive nuisance, 1011
Arterial, driver on, right of way, 1090
without a warrant, reasonable grounds, 2115
false, 2115
excessive force in, 2008, 2155
defined, 2115
Arrest
preliminary instruction, 50
instruction at close of evidence, 110
Arguments of counsel
Approach of emergency vehicle, right of way, 1210
1157
Approaching or entering intersection about same time,
Approaching nonarterial intersections, right of way, 1155
on highway, defined, 1205
at intersection, defined, 1195
Approaching car
Application for insurance, <u>See</u> Insurance
Apparent authority, agency, 4003

excessive force in arrest, 2008, 2155 Battery (continued) liability of aider and abettor, 2007	Charge after verdict, 197 Chemical tests, intoxication, 1008 Child
offensive contact 2005.5	and adult, comparative negligence, 1582
punitive damages, 1708	attractive nuisance, 1011, 8025
self-defense, 2006	death of adult child, pecuniary loss, 1885
sports participant, injury, 2020	death of addit clind, peculiary loss, 1885 death of child, parents' loss of society and
Bell, railroad, duty to ring within municipality, 1402	companionship, 1895
Belt, safety, failure to use, 1277	death of minor child, pecuniary loss, 1890
Benefit-of-the-bargain, 2405, 2405.5	driver's duty when present, 1045
Benefits, special, defined, eminent domain, 8115	injury to, parents' damages
Bifurcation, punitive damages, 1707.1 (comment)	for loss of child's services, 1835
Blind persons	for loss of society and companionship, 1837
duty of, 1050	for medical expenses, 1840
right of way, 1170	for services rendered to child, 1845
Blood test for alcohol, 1008	injury to parent, 1838
Brakes, equipment, and maintenance of vehicles, 1054 Breach of contract, 3053	loss of society and companionship for death of parent, 1897
by purchaser, damages, 3750	negligence of, 1010
by seller, damages, 3755	negligence of child compared with adult, 1582
Breach of warranty, See Products liability	parents' duty
Building	negligent entrustment, 1014
abutting on a public highway, owner's duty, 8030	to control, 1013
public, negligence of owner, safe-place statute, 1904	to protect, 1012
Building contractor, negligence of, 1022.4	trespasser, 8025, 8027
Building contracts, damages, 3700, 3701	Chiropractor
Burden of proof, See Evidence	determining treatability, 1023.9
Bus, school	duty to inform patient, 1023.15, 1023.16, 1023.17
flashing red signals, 1133	negligence of, 1023.8, 1023.9
stopped on highway, 1132	Circumstantial evidence, 230
Business	Civil rights, See Federal civil rights
defined, safe-place statutes, 1910	Civil theft
defined, strict liability (products), 3264	by contractor, 2722
injury to, 2820, 2822	by contractor of movable property of another, 2420
liability of proprietor, patron injured, act of third	Closing instruction, 190, 191
person, 8045	Collateral source, 1756, 1757
loss of profits, damages, 1750.2, 1754, 1780	College degree, delay in obtaining, 1760
nuisance arising out of operation of, 1924	Connege degree, delay in obtaining, 1700  Commitment
Buyer, duty of, 3254	of a mentally disabled person, 7050
Bystander recovery, 1510	
Bystander recovery, 1310	of an alcoholic, 7070
	Common carrier, negligence of, defined, 1025
C	Common motor carrier
	defined, 1339
Camouflage	stop at all railroad crossings, 1339
lookout, 1056	Common scheme or plan, 1740
speed, 1320	Comparable sales, eminent domain, 8120
Capitalization of rental income, eminent domain, 8130	Comparative negligence
Care, ordinary, varies with circumstances, 1020	adult and child, 1582
Caregiver, duty of, 1021	basis of comparison, 1580, 1585, 1590
Carrier, common, 1025	multiple driver-multiple guest comparison, 1591
Castle Doctrine, 2006.2	recommended questions, 1592
Cause	when negligence or cause question has been answered
defined, 1500	by the court, 1595
informed consent cases, 1023.1, 1023.3, 1023.16,	Compensatory damages, See Damages
1023.17	Computer use, by jurors, 50
normal response, 1501	Concerted action, 1740
probable cause, malicious prosecution, 2605	Condemnation, See Eminent domain
proximate, 1500	Conditional privilege
relation of collision to physical injury, 1506	defamation, abuse of, 2509
risk contribution theory, 3295	emergency vehicle, 1031
where cause of death is in doubt, 1505	invasion of privacy, abuse of, 2552

Consortium, defined, 1815	offer
	acceptance, 3014
Conspiracy	making, 3012
affiliated corporations, between, 2808	rejection, 3016
defined, 2800	revocation, 3018
evidence of to be viewed as a whole, 2806	partial integration, contract partly written, partly
indirect proof, 2802	oral, 3042
injury to business, 2820, 2822	real estate listing contract
overt acts, 2810	broker's commission on sale subsequent to
proof of membership, 2802	expiration of contract containing "extension
restraint of will, 2822	clause, 3090
Construction workers, right of way, 1265	termination for cause, 3088
Constructive eviction, 3095	validity, performance, 3086
Consumer, duty of, 3254	rescission for nonperformance, 3076
Contact sports injury, 2020	sale of goods, delivery or tender of performance, 3056
Contractor	subsequent construction by parties, 3050
building, contract damages, 3701, 3700	substantial performance, 3052
building, negligence of, 1022.4	termination of servant's employment
independent, defined, 4060	additional consideration provided by servant,
liability of one employing, 1022.6	3084
theft by, 2722	employer's dissatisfaction, 3083
Contracts	indefinite duration, 3082
abandonment, mutual, 3078	time as an element, 3048
agreement, 3010	tortious interference with, 2780
ambiguous provisions, 3051	voidable contracts, duress, fraud,
avoidance for mutual mistake of fact, 3072	misrepresentation, 3068
breach, 3053	waiver, 3057
by purchaser, damages, 3750	waiver of strict performance, 3058
by seller, damages, 3755	Contribution, risk, 3295
building contracts, damages, 3700	Contributory negligence
consideration, 3020	defined, 1007
damages, out-of-pocket rule, 3710	highway defect, 1048
definiteness and certainty, 3022	of guest
definitions — "bona fide," 3045	intoxication, 1035
demand for performance, 3054	failure to protect, 1047
duration, 3049	placing self in position of danger, 1049
estoppel, 3074	of mentally disabled person, 1007, 1385.5
frustration of purpose, 3070	of patient and informed consent, 1007, 1023.4
good faith, 3044	of pedestrian, sidewalk defect, 1049 of rescuer,
hindrance or interference with performance, 3060	1007.5
implied contract	Control and management, See Management and control
general, 3024	Controlled intersection, right of way, 1150 Conversion
promise to pay reasonable value, 3026	damages, 2201
unjust enrichment, 3028	destruction of property, 2200.2
implied promise of no hindrance, 3046	dispossession, 2200
impossibility	failure to return upon demand, 2200.1
act of God, 3066	Corporate officers, liability of, 1005
disability or death of a party, 3067	Costs, reproduction, eminent domain, 8125
original, 3061	Counsel
partial, 3063	advice of, as defense, malicious prosecution, 2610
superior authority, 3065	arguments of, 110
supervening, 3062 temporary, 3064	objection of, 115 reference to insurance company, 125
insurance contracts, <u>See</u> Insurance interference with, 2780	Course of dealing, implied warranty, 3203, 3206
	Court
integration of several writings, 3040	appreciation of jury's services, 197
landlord-tenant, 3095	damage question answered by, 150
modification	demeanor of, 120
by conduct, 3032	finding in special verdict that one or more parties at
by mutual assent, 3030	fault, 108
novation, 3034	negligence question answered by, 155

order striking testimony, 130	of wife, pecuniary loss, 1861
reference to insurance company, 125	defamation
Credibility of witnesses, 50, 215	compensatory, 2516
Credible evidence, defined, 200	punitive, 2520
Crops, damages for injury to, 1806	disability, past and future, personal injury, 1750.1,
Crossing arterial highway, lookout, 1065	1750.2, 1766, 1767, 1768
Crossing, railroad	divisible injuries from nonconcurrent or successive
duty of railroad to maintain open view, 1411	torts, 1722
duty of train crew, 1405	dog bite, 1390
Crossing roadway, pedestrian's duties, See Right of way	duty to mitigate, 1730, 1731
Crosswalk, pedestrian's rights and duties, See	earnings, loss of, as, 1760, 1762
Right of way	effects of inflation, 1797
Custom and usage, evidence of in determining negligence,	eminent domain
1019	change in grade, 8110
	loss of access, 8110
D	severance, 8105
_	unit rule, 8100, 8101
Damages	unity of use, two or more parcels, 8107
activation of latent disease or condition, 1720	emotional distress, 1770
aggravation of injury because of medical	enhanced injury, 1723
malpractice, 1710	estate's recovery, 1850, 1855
aggravation of preexisting injury, 1715	fraud and deceit, See Misrepresentation future profits,
attorney fees, 3760	3725
automobile	general instruction on, 1700
loss of use, 1800	incidental, 3720
property, 1805	income, loss of, as 1760, 1762
breach of contract	income, not taxable as, 1735
building contracts, 3700, 3701	in general, 1700
burden of proof, 202	injury to child, parents' damages
by purchaser, 3750	for loss of child's services, 1835
by seller, 3755	medical expenses, 1840
bystander, 1510	services rendered to child, 1845
collateral source, 1756, 1757	injury to a growing crop, 1806
common scheme or plan, 1740	injury to parent, 1838
compensatory, burden of proof as to, 202	injury to spouse
condemnation, See Eminent domain	loss of consortium, 1815
consortium, 1815	medical and hospital expenses, 1825
contracts	wife's responsibility for her own, 1830
building, 3700	nursing services, 1820
breach by purchaser, 3750	loss of consortium, 1815
breach by seller, 3755	loss of expectation, 3735
general, 3710	misrepresentation
conversion, 2201	basis for liability and damages, 2400
crops, 1806	fraud and deceit, measure of damages in sale or
damage question answered by the court, 150	exchange of property, 2405
death, wrongful	negligence, out-of-pocket rule, fraud, 2406
estate's recovery for medical, hospital, and	strict responsibility, 2405.5
funeral expenses, 1850	mitigate, duty to, 1730, 1731
estate's recovery for pain and suffering, 1855	nominal, 1810
of adult child, pecuniary loss, 1885	not taxable as income, 1735
of child, parents' loss of society and	personal injury
companionship, 1895	aggravation or activation of latent disease or
of husband, all items, 1861	condition, 1720
of minor child, pecuniary loss, 1890	aggravation of injury because of medical
of parent,	malpractice, 1710
loss of society and companionship, 1897	aggravation of preexisting injury, 1715
pecuniary loss, 1880	disability, 1750.1, 1750.2, 1766, 1767, 1768
of spouse, loss of society and companionship,	earning capacity, impairment of, 1750.1, 1750.2,
1870	1760, 1762
of wife, medical, hospital, and funeral expenses,	earnings, loss of
1875	delay in obtaining a degree, 1760

future, 1762	media defendant, abuse of constitutional privilege,
past, 1760	2509
professional, 1785	private individual versus media defendant, 2509
injuries from nonconcurrent or successive torts,	private individual versus private individual, 2501
1722	public figure, 2511
Damages (continued)	punitive damages, 2520
life expectancy and mortality tables, 1795	truth as defense, 2505, 2505A
loss of business, profits, 1760, 1762	Defective condition of car, host's liability, 1032
loss of professional earnings, 1760, 1762	Defects
malpractice, lack of informed consent, 1741	highway, 8035
malpractice, offsetting benefit, 1742	contributory negligence, 1048
medical and hospital expenses	if known in a product, then no implied warranty, 3207
future, 1750.1, 1750.2, 1758	sidewalk, 8035
past, 1750.1, 1750.2, 1756, 1757	contributory negligence, 1049
pain and suffering	Defense of property, 2006.5
future, 1750.1, 1750.2, 1767, 1768	Degree, delay in obtaining, 1760
past, 1750.1, 1750.2, 1766, 1768	Deliberation, process of, 191
traumatic neurosis, 1770	Demeanor of judge, jury to ignore, 120
present value of future damages, 1796	Dentist
property automobile	duty to inform patient, 1023.15-1023.17 negligence of, 1023.14
damage to, 1804	Depositions, use of, See Preliminary instructions before
loss of use, 1800	trial
personal	Destruction of personal property, 1803
damage to, 1804	Deviation  Deviation
destruction of, 1803	ascertainment that movement can be made with
punitive	reasonable safety, 1354
when awarded, 1707, 1707.1	from clearly indicated traffic lanes, 1355
defamation, 2520	signal required, 1350
products liability, 1707A, 1707.2	Directional signals, 1350
question answered by the court, 150	Disability, damages, 1750.1, 1750.2, 1766, 1767, 1768
severance	Disabled vehicle, parking, 1125
change in grade, 8110	Discharge, wrongful, 2750
defined, 8105	Discovery, 950
loss of access, 8110	Disease or condition, latent, aggravation or activation of,
subsequent event causing further injury, 1725	damages, 1720
termination of real estate listing contract by	Dissenting jurors, to sign verdict, 180
seller, broker's recovery, 3740	Distance between front and rear car, 1112
Deaf person, duty of, 1050	Divided highway, pedestrians' rights, 1160
Dealership, See Fair Dealership Law this index.	Divisible injuries, 1722
Death	Doctor, See Physician
cause of in doubt, 1505	Dog bite, 1390
of adult child, pecuniary loss, 1885	Dog owner or keeper, liability of
of child, parents' loss of society and companionship,	common law, 1391
1895	statutory, 1390
of husband, all items, 1861	Domestic partner, 1861, 1870 (comment)
of minor child, pecuniary loss, 1890	Double damages, dog bite, 1390
of parent,	Drinking by driver or guest, relation to negligence, 1035
pecuniary loss, 1880	Driver of automobile
society and companionship, 1897	drinking by, relation to negligence, 1035 duties
of spouse, loss of society and companionship, 1870	approaching intersection when yellow light shows,
of wife, medical, hospital, and funeral expenses, 1875	1192
of wife, pecuniary loss, 1861	at railroad crossing, 1336, 1337
presumption of due care, 353	entering intersection with green light in his favor,
Deceive, defined, 3105	1191
Defamation 2516	following another, 1112
compensatory damages, 2516	preceding another, lookout, 1114
conditional privilege, abuse of privilege, 2507 defined, 2501	preceding another, slowing or stopping, signalling, 1113
express malice, 2513	when children present, 1045
Law Note, 2500	inattentive, 1070

obstructed view, 1310	unit rule, 8100, 8101
position on right side of roadway and exceptions,	unity of use, 8104
1135, 1140	Emotional distress
seat belt negligence, 1277	bystander, 1510
as servant, 1600	intentional infliction of, 2725
scope of employment, 1605	negligent infliction of, 1510, 1511
Driver's manual, use by jury, 255	Employees of hospital, See Hospital employees
Driveway	Employer
emerging from a private driveway or other	duty of, safe-place statute, 1900.2
nonhighway access, 1355	liability of one employing independent contractor,
left turn into, 1352	1022
Due care, by highway users	negligence of, safe-place statute, 1900.4
right to assume, 1030	negligent supervision, training, or hiring by, 1383
presumption of, 353	vicarious liability of, 4055
Duties, See entries under specific titles	wrongful discharge, 2750
Duty to inform patient	Employment, See also Agency; Scope of employment safe
cause, 1023.3, 1023.17	place, 1900.2, 1900.4
chiropractor, 1023.15-1023.17	wrongful discharge, 2750
dentist, 1023.15-1023.17	Enhanced injuries, 1723
medical, 1023.1-1023.4	Entering
optometrist, 1023.15-1023.17	defined, 1175
podiatrist, 1023.15-1023.17	from alley or nonhighway access point, 1175
special verdict, 1023.1, 1023.16	or crossing through highway, 1065
Duty to sound horn, nonstatutory, 1096	Enterprise, joint, automobile, 1610
Duty, voluntary assumption of, 1397	Entrustment, negligent, 1014, 1014.5
2 wij, retuinary accomplication, 1007	Equipment and maintenance of vehicles
E	brakes, 1054
Ľ	directional signals, 1350
Faminas loss of	general duty, 1052
Earnings, loss of business profits, 1750.1, 1750.2, 1760, 1762	headlights, 1053
	school bus, flashing red signals, 1133
delay in obtaining degree, 1760	Equitable actions, right to jury trial, 1
impairment of earning capacity, future, 1762	Estate's recovery
past, 1750.1, 1750.2, 1760	for medical, hospital, and funeral expenses, 1850
professional, 1760, 1762	for pain and suffering, 1855
Easement, termination by abandonment, 3079 Economic loss doctrine, 2419	Eviction, constructive, 3095
	Evidence
Economic waste, 3700 Emergency doctrine, 1105A	burden of proof, 200
	adverse possession, 200, 205
Emergency vehicle, approach of, right of way, 1210	compensatory damages, 202
Emergency vehicle, conditional privilege, 1031 Emerging from alley or other	defined, 100
nonhighway, 1175, 1270, 1330, 1335	false imprisonment, 2105
Emerging from, defined, 1270	"fraud" standard, 205
Eminent domain, 8100-8145	higher civil standard, 205
access rights, defined, 8111	medical or scientific treatise, 261
air rights, defined, 8112	middle, 205
	ordinary civil standard, 200
assemblage, 8145	preliminary instruction, 50
capitalization of rental income, 8120	circumstantial, 230
change in grade, 8110	credibility of witnesses, 215, 415
comparable sales, 8120	driver's manual, use by jury, 255
cost approach, 8135	expert testimony, 260, 265
fair market value	failure to call witness, 410
defined, 8100	false testimony, 405
lands containing marketable deposits, 8105	falsus in uno, 405
partial taking, 8101	general, 260
income approach, 8130	hypothetical question, 265
inconvenience to landowner, 8125 (withdrawn)	inferences, permissive, 356
legal nonconforming use, 8140	Law Note, 349
reproduction costs, 8135	measurements, use of, 305
severance damages, 8102, 8103	medical or scientific treatise, 261
special benefits, 8115	inicatear of betefinite treatibe, 201

negative testimony, 315	Five-sixths verdict, 180
opinion of expert, 260	Fixed speed limits, 1290
physical facts, use of as, 325	Flammable liquid, defined, 1339
permissive inferences, 356,	Flashing traffic signal
Law Note, 349	red, 1133
positive testimony, 315	yellow, 1090
presumptions, 350-356 spoliation, 400	Following car, operation of, 1112
subsequent remedial measures, 358	Franchise, wrongful termination of, 2770
summary of, 103	Fraud, See also Misrepresentation
Evidence (continued)	elements of, 2400, 2419
weight of, 215	Frequenter
witness	defined, 1900.4, 1901
absence of, 410	injury to, safe-place statute, 1900.4
impeachment of, 420	negligence of, safe-place statute, 1902
prior conviction of, 415	Front car
prior inconsistent statement of, 420	duty of preceding driver to following driver, 1114
self-incrimination of, 425	slowing, stopping and signalling, 1113
	Funeral
Exhibits, 50, 100	
Expert testimony	burial expenses, wrongful death, 1850 procession, right of way, 1180
general, 260	
hypothetical question, 265	Future and past disability, damages, 1750.1, 1750.2, 1766,
Express malice, defamation, 2518	1767, 1768
Express warranty, <u>See</u> Products liability	Future damages, present value of, 1796
$\mathbf{F}$	G
Failure	Gas company
of insured to cooperate, 3115	duties relating to company's pipes, mains, and meters,
materiality of failure, 3116	1003
to examine product, implied warranty, 3208	duties relating to customer's pipes or appliances, 1002
to give notice to insurer, 3117	General agent, defined, 4001
to give hotice to insurer, 3117 to protest, guest, 1047	General benefit, eminent domain, 8115
to see object in plain sight, 1070	General disability, one question as to, 1750.2
to use safety belt, 1277	
	General verdict, submission on, 106 Good faith,
to use safety helmet, 1278	
to yield roadway, slow moving vehicles, 1305	duty of, 3044
Fair Dealership Law, 2769-2772	Lemon law, 3300
Fair market value	Gratuitous bailor, negligence of, 1025.8
defined, 1803, 8100, 8105	Green arrow, traffic signal, 1185
lands containing marketable deposits, 8102	Green light, entering intersection with, 1191
testimony by owner, 260	Green or go, traffic signal, 1190
False arrest	Gross negligence, See also Negligence
felony, 2115	defined, intoxication not involved, 1006
False arrest	reckless conduct, 1006, 2020
reasonable grounds to believe offense committed,	Growing crop, damage to, 1806
2115	Guardianship, 7054, 7055, 7056, 7060, 7061
False imprisonment, 2100	Guest
Falsely represent, defined, 3100	automobile
False representative, <u>See</u> Insurance; Misrepresentation	active negligence, management and control,
False testimony, willful, 405	1047.1
Falsus in uno, 405	drinking of intoxicants, relation to negligence,
Fault, defined, ultimate fact verdict, 1001	1035
Federal civil rights	failure to protest, contributing negligence, 1047
excessive force in arrest (in maintaining jail security),	lookout
2155	duty of with respect to, 1075
Section 1981 actions, 2150	duty to warn, 1076
Section 1982 actions, 2150	placing self in position of danger, 1046
Section 1983 actions, 2151	<del>-</del>
Fees, attorney, 3760	Н
Felony, false arrest for, 2115	
Fitness for particular purpose, warranty, 3202	Handicaps, physical, duty of persons with, 1050

Headlights	injury to, <u>See</u> Spouse
automobile, 1053	Hypothetical question, expert testimony, 265
railroads, 1412	
Helmet negligence, 1277 (comment), 1278	I
Highway	
defects, 8035	Ignoring judge's demeanor, 120
defects, contributory negligence, 1048 defined, 1325A	Illness without forewarning, 1021.2
divided, defined, 1160	Immunity, abrogation of torts,
	Law Note, 2900
Highway (continued)	Impairment of earning capacity, See Earnings
entering from an alley or nonhighway access point,	Impeachment of witness, prior inconsistent or
1175	contradictory statements, 420
entering or crossing through highway, 1065	Impeding traffic
insufficiency, 8035	by reason of slow speed, 1300 failure to yield
intersection, right of way, 1157	roadway, 1305
obst ructions, public utility, non-energized facilities,	Implied authority, agency, 4010
1395	Implied duty of good faith, 3044
users, right to assume due care, 1030 worker, right of way, 1265	Implied warranty, <u>See</u> Products liability
Hiring, Negligent, 1383	Imprisonment, See False imprisonment
	Improper use, implied warranty, 3210
Horn duty to sound when passing vehicles proceeding in	Imputed negligence, driver of automobile
same direction, statutory, 1144	agency, 1600
failure to sound, duty, nonstatutory, 1096	joint adventure (enterprise), 1610
Horse, liability of owner or keeper, common law, 1391	scope of employment, 1605
Hospital, negligence of, in granting staff privileges, 1384	Inattentive driving, 1070
Hospital employees, negligence	Income, damages award, not taxable as, 1735
injury resulting from patient's inability to look out for	Income, loss of, 1760, 1762
own safety, 1385	Income approach, eminent domain, 8130
registered nurses and licensed technicians performing	Incompetent person, 7054-7061
skilled services, 1023.7	Inconvenience to landowners, eminent domain, 8125
suicide or injury resulting from escape or attempted	Independent contractor
suicide, 1385.5	defined, 4060
Hospital expenses	liability of one employing, 1022.6 Inference,
estate's recovery for, 1850	self-incrimination, 425
injury to child, 1840	spoliation, 400
injury to spouse, 1825	Inflation, effects of, 1797
personal injuries, 1750.1, 1750.2, 1756, 1757, 1758	Infliction of emotional distress, 1510, 1511, 2725
wife's responsibility for own, 1830	Informed consent, 1023.2, 1023.3
wrongful death, 1850	causation, 1023.3
Hospital licensed technicians, See Hospital employees	contributory negligence, 1007, 1023.4
Host-guest relationship	dentist, 1023.15-1023.17
agency, driver of automobile, 1600	optometrist, 1023.15-1023.17
contributory negligence of guest, placing self in	podiatrist, 1023.15-1023.17
position of danger, 1046	duty of chiropractor, 1023.15-1023.17
contributory negligence of guest, riding with host,	duty of physician, 1023.2
1047	suggested verdict, 1023.1
danger, 1046	Injuries, divisible, 1722
defective condition of car, host's liability, 1032	Injury
drinking by driver, relation to negligence, 1035	aggravation of, because of medical malpractice, 1710
driver's management and control, limited skill, 1110	caused by subsequent event, 1725
guest's duty as to lookout, 1075	enhancement of, 1723
joint enterprise, automobile cases, 1610	from failure to wear safety belt, 1277 from fright,
Hotel innkeeper	1510
duty to furnish reasonably safe premises and furniture	personal, See Damages
for his guests, 8051	preexisting, aggravation or activation of, 1715
duty to provide reasonable security, 8050	relation of collision to physical injury, 1506
Household member, 3110	to child
Household services, loss of, 1816, 1817	parents' damages for loss of child's services, 1835
Husband	parents' damages for medical expenses, 1840
death of, damages, all items, 1861, 1870	- · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·

parents' damages for services rendered to child, 1845	J
to frequenter, safe place, 1900.4	Joint adventure, enterprise, automobile, 1610
to spouse	Joint and several liability, 1740
medical and hospital expenses, 1825	Judge, See Court
wife's responsibility for own, 1830	Juror
nursing services, 1820	computer use by, 50
services, society, and companionship, 1815	conduct during trial, 50
Inspection, no duty of, express warranty, 3222	duties in general, 100-197
Insufficiency of highway or sidewalk, 8035	knowledge, 215
, ,	no obligation to discuss case, 197
Insurance	questions, 57
agent, negligence of, 1023.6	Jury
application for	appreciation of services, 197
false representations, 3100	asking questions, 57
misrepresentation with intent to deceive, 3100	conduct of, 50
bad faith by insurance company, 2760, 2761, 2762	election of foreman, 190
breach of	not to discuss case after verdict, 197
affirmative warranty, 3100	note taking, 60, 61
promissory warranty, 3105	reaching a verdict, 190
failure of condition, 3105	unable to agree, supplemental instruction, 195
failure of insured to cooperate, 3115	use of driver's manual, 255
materiality, 3116	view, 152
failure to give notice to insurer, 3117	Jury trial, right to, 1
materiality, 3118	
household member, 3110	Just compensation, eminent domain, 8100, 8105
resident covered by, 3110	17
Intent, defined, 3100	K
Intentional deceit, misrepresentation, 2401	V C : 1 !: 1 !!
Intentional tort, 2000	Keeper or owner of animal, liability of common law, 1391
infliction of emotional distress, 2725	statutory, 1390
interference with contract, 2780	Knowledge of juror, 215
liability of minor, 2000	Ŧ
mitigation of damages, 1732	L
verdict in cases involving	- "
joint tortfeasors, 1580 (comment)	Landlord-tenant, 3095
Interrelationship of special verdict questions, 145	Landowner, inconvenience to, eminent domain, 8125
Intersection	Latent disease or condition, activation or
alley, stop emerging from, 1330	aggravation of, 1720
defined, 1325A	Lay witness, 268
driver on arterial approaching, 1090	Leaving curb or place of safety, pedestrian, 1255
left turn at, 1195	Leaving vehicle
lookout, 1090, 1191	off the roadway, 1115
of highways, right of way, 1157	on the roadway, 1120
pedestrians' right, 1158, 1159, 1160, 1165	lights, 1130 on or off the roadway, exception to prohibition, 1125
right of way, See Right of way	
stop at, 1325, 1325A	Left side of road, driving on, 1135 violation excused, 1140
Intoxicants	Left turn at intersection, 1195, 1352
drinking by driver, 1035	Legal nonconforming use, eminent domain, 8140
drinking by guest, 1040	Legar noncomorning use, emineric domain, 8140 Lemon Law, 3300, 3301, 3302, 3303, 3304
Intoxication	Liability
chemical tests, 1008	of abettor, battery, 2007
not involved in gross negligence, 1006	of dog (animal) owner or keeper, common law, 1391
of driver, 1035	of dog owner or keeper, statutory, 1390
Intrusion, invasion of privacy, 2551	of employer, 4055
Invasion of privacy, 2550, 2551, 2552	of host, defective condition of car, 1032
Involuntary commitment of mentally ill person, 7050	of minor, intentional tort, 2000
Involuntary commitment: mentally ill: recommitment	of one employing independent contractor, 1022.6
alleging Wis. Stat. § 51.20(1)(am), 7050A	of principal for acts of agent, See Agency

of proprietor for injury to patron caused by third	instituting civil proceeding, 2605		
person, 8045	instituting criminal proceeding, 2600		
Libel, See Defamation	Malpractice		
Licensed technician, negligence of, 1023.7	aggravation of injury because of medical malpr		
Life expectancy and mortality tables, 1795	1710		
Lights, motor vehicle	attorney, 1023.5, 1023.5A		
directional signals, 1350	cause, medical, informed consent cases, 1023.3		
flashing red, school bus, 1133	chiropractor, 1023.8, 1023.9		
headlights, equipment, and maintenance, 1053	dentist, 1023.14		
Limitations period, 950	nurse, 1023.7		
Limited skill and judgment of host driver, 1110	physician, 1023		
Livestock	professional, 1023.5		
on highway, 1200 right of way, 1200	psychiatrist, 1023 (comment)		
Long term care providers, damages, 1757, 1815, 1870,	res ipsa loquitur, 1024		
1897	Management and control		
Loitering on roadway, thumbing rides, 1250	defined, 1105		
	in an emergency, 1105A		
* 1 ·	negligence of guest, active, 1047.1		
Lookout	Manufacturer, negligence of, See Products liability		
approaching flashing yellow traffic signal, 1090	Market value, property damaged, 1804, 1805		
ascertainment that movement can be made with	Master and servant, <u>See</u> Servant		
reasonable safety, 1354	Measurements, evidence, 305		
backing, 1060	Medical expenses, <u>See</u> Hospital expenses		
camouflage, 1056	Medical negligence, 1023		
driver on arterial approaching intersection, 1090	informed consent, 1023.2		
entering intersection on green light, 1191	informed consent, cause, 1023.3		
entering or crossing through highway, 1065	res ipsa loquitur, 1024		
failure to see object in plain sight, 1070	Medical technician, <u>See</u> Hospital employees		
guest, 1075	Medical treatise, 261		
guest's duty to warn, 1076	Meeting and passing		
limited duty	position on highway, 1135		
on private property, 1080	violation excused, 1140		
to rear, 1114	Meeting at intersection of highways, right of way, 1155		
on through highway, 1090	Member of household, 3110		
passing, vehicles proceeding in same direction, 1141	Mentally disabled, <u>See</u> also Protective placement		
pedestrian, 1095	contributory negligence of, 1007, 1021, 1385.5		
turn or deviation, 1354	involuntary commitment, 7050		
Loss of	recommitment alleging § 51.20(1)(am), 7050A		
access, eminent domain, 8105	negligence of, 1021		
child's services, 1835	Merchantability, defined, 3201		
earnings, <u>See</u> Earnings	Middle burden of proof, 205		
society and companionship of domestic partner, 1870	Military convoys, right of way, 1180		
(comment)	Minor		
society and companionship of spouse, 1815, 1870	attractive nuisance, 1011		
society and companionship of parent, 1838	death of, pecuniary loss, 1890		
use of automobile, not repairable, 1801	liability of, intentional tort, 2000		
use of repairable automobile, 1800	parents' duty		
	to control, 1013		
$\mathbf{M}$	to protect, 1012		
	Misrepresentation, fraud		
Magnuson-M oss Claim, 3310	bases for liability and damages, 2400		
Maintenance and equipment of vehicles, See Equipment	damages, measure of, in actions involving sale or		
and maintenance of vehicles	exchange of property, 2405		
Maintenance workers on highway, 1265	damages, out-of-pocket rule, negligent		
Malice	misrepresentation, 2406		
defined, 1707	intentional deceit, elements of fraud, 2401		
express, defamation, 2513	negligence, 2403		
punitive damages, 1707, 1707A	property loss (Wis. Stat. § 895.80), 2419		
Malicious prosecution	strict responsibility, 2402		
advice of counsel as defense, 2610, 2611	under Wis. Stat. § 100.18, 2418		
elements, 2600, 2605	unfair trade practice, 2418		

verdicts suggested, 2402, 2403	diagnosis, 1023.4
insurance	driver, See individual headings
application with intent to deceive, 3105	duty of
in application for insurance, 3100	agent to principal, 4020
Mistake of fact, mutual, avoidance of contract, because of,	buyer, 3254
3072	consumer, 3254
Mitigation of damage,	driver
breach of contract, 1731	approaching intersection when yellow light
intentional torts, 1732	shows, 1192
negligence, 1731	at railroad crossing, 1336
physical injuries, 1730	children, when present, 1045
Modification or exclusion of the implied warranty, 3205	drinking, 1035
Mortality tables and life expectancy, 1795	entering intersection with green light in his
Motor vehicles, See specific headings	or her favor, 1191
Moving from parked position, 1205	entering or crossing arterial highway, 1065
Multiple driver-multiple guest comparison, 1591	following another car, 1112
recommended questions, 1592	front car, 1114
Municipality, creating or maintaining nuisance, 1922	slowing, stopping, or signalling, 1113
	highway defect or insufficiency, 1048
Mutual mistake of fact, avoidance of contract,	horn, to sound, 1012
because of, 3072	lookout
	defined, 1055
N	private property, 1080
	management and control, 1047.1, 1105
Negative testimony, defined, 315	speed, obstructed vision, 1310
Negligence	speed, nighttime, 1315
attorney, 1023.5, 1023.5A	to see defects, 1048
bailee, 1026	employer, in hiring, training, or supervising, 1383
for hire, 1025.6	employer, safe-place statute, 1900.4
	frequenter, safe-place statute, 1902
for mutual benefit, 1025.7	gas company
inferred, 1026	relating to company's pipes, mains, and
bailor, 1026.8	meters, 1003
building contractor, 1022.4	relating to customer's pipes or appliances,
bus driver, 1025	1002
carrier	
common, 1025	guest, See Contributory negligence; Guest
negligence presumed, 1026.5	highway defect, 1049
children, 1010	hiring, 1383
chiropractor, 1023.8, 1023.9	hospital employees
common carrier, 1025	employees, 1385, 1385.5
comparative, See also Comparative negligence	registered nurses and technicians, 1023.7
adult and child, 1582	hotelkeeper, to furnish reasonably safe premises
basis of comparison, 1580	and furniture for his guests, 8051
multiple driver-multiple guest comparison, 1591	informed consent, 1023.1-1023.4, 1023.15-
recommended questions, 1592	1023.17
where negligence or cause question has been	insurance agent, 1023.6
answered by the court, 1595	jurors, in general, 100-195
contributory, See also Contributory negligence	licensed technician, 1023.7
defined, $\overline{1007}$	manufacturer, See Products liability mentally ill,
highway defect, 1048	1021
of guest	mitigate damages, injured person, 1730, 1731
drinking by, 1035	municipality, highway or sidewalk defects and
failure to protest, 1047	insufficiency, 8035
in informed consent case, 1021	nurse, 1023.7
placing self in position of danger, 1046	owner
of mentally disabled person, 1021	of building on public highway, 8030
of plaintiff frequenter, safe-place statute, 1902	of land to user, 8020
	of place of amusement, 8040
sidewalk defect, 1049	of place of business, duty to protect patrons,
defamation, 2509	8045
defined, 1005	of public building, safe place, 1904
dentist, 1023.14	of public building, safe place, 1704

of public business, not safe place, 8040	highway defect or insufficiency, 1048
of vehicle, to equip and maintain, 1052	highways and sidewalks, care of, 8035
to trespasser, 8025	hospital
parent	employees, 1385, 1385.5
to control minor child, 1013, 1014	registered nurses and technicians, 1023.7
to protect minor child, 1012	imputed, See Imputed negligence
pedestrian, See also Right of way	independent contractor, liability of one employing,
lookout, 1095	1022.6
sidewalk defect or insufficiency, 1049	infliction of emotional distress, 1510, 1511
physically handicapped persons, 1050	informed consent, 1023.1, 1023.2, 1023.3, 1023.4
place of amusement, owner, 8040	intentional acts compared to, 1004, 2001
place of business, owner's duty to protect patrons,	lookout, 1055
8045	malpractice
possessor of land to user, 8012	attorney, 1023.5
private nuisance, 1920	chiropractor, 1023.08
proprietor for injury to patron caused by third	dentist, 1023.14
person, 8045	physician, 1023
1	res ipsa loquitur, 1024
Negligence (continued)	management and control, 1047.1, 1105
public utility, highway obstructions, non-	manufacturer, See Products liability
energized facilities, 1395	mentally ill, 1021, 1385.5
railroad crossing, driver's duty, 1336	misrepresentation, 2403
railroad, See Railroads	municipality
registered nurse, 1023.7	highway and sidewalk defect, 8035
restaurant operator, sale of food containing	highway and sidewalk insufficiency, 8035
harmful natural ingredients, 3248	nuisance, 1922
risk contribution, 3294, 3295	owner, See Owner
school bus driver	owner of animal
and other drivers when bus is stopped, 1132	common law, 1391
to display flashing red signals when bus is	statutory, 1390
stopped, 1133	per se, 950
seller, See Products liability	physically handicapped person, 1050
sensory handicapped persons, 1050	physician, malpractice by, 1023
sidewalk defect, 1048	res ipsa loquitur, 1024
subsequent remedial measures, 358	plaintiff frequenter, 1902
superior skills doctrine, 1005	product user, 3268
supervision, 1383	psychiatrist, 1023 (comment) question answered by
teacher	court, 155
to instruct or warn, 1380	res ipsa loquitur
to supervise students, 1381	defined, 1145
technicians, 1023.7	malpractice, physician, 1024
training, 1383	rescuer, 1007.5
worker, preoccupation in work minimizes duty,	restaurant operator, sale of food containing harmful
1051	natural ingredients, 3248
emergency doctrine, 1105A	right to assume due care by highway users, 1030
employer, in hiring, 1383	seat belt, failure to use, 1277
employer, in supervising, 1383	seller, See Products liability
employer, in training, 1383	sensory handicapped persons, 1050
employer, safe place, 1900.2	sidewalk defect, duty of pedestrian, 1049
entrustment, 1014, 1014.5	speed, See Speed
evidence of custom and usage, 1019	sports participant, 2020
fault, ultimate fact verdict, 1001	strict liability, 3260
frequenter, safe place, 1902	supplier, See Products liability
gas company	taxicab driver, 1025
relating to company's pipes, mains, and meters,	teacher
1003	instruct or warn, 1380
relating to customer's pipes and appliances, 1002	supervise students, 1381
gross, See Gross negligence	user, strict liability, 3260
handicapped persons	violation of safety statute, 1005, 1009
physical, 1050	worker, preoccupation in work minimizes duty, 1051
sensory, 1050	Negligent

conduct contrasted to intentional conduct 1004, 2001 entrustment, 1014, 1014.5 hiring, 1383 infliction of emotional distress, 1510, 1511	of building abutting on a public highway, 8030 of place of amusement, common law, 8040 of place of business, duty to protect patrons, 8045 of place of employment, safe place, 1900.4 of public building, safe place, 1904
misrepresentation, 2403 supervising, 1383 training, 1383	of public business not under safe-place statute, 8040 of vehicle, 1600
Nominal damages, 1810	permission for use of automobile, 3112
Nonconcurrent or successive torts	testimony of, to establish value, 260 (comment)
divisible injuries from, 1722	common of the common turns, 200 (common)
Nonconforming use, legal, eminent domain, 8140	P
Nonexpert witness, 268	<del>-</del>
Nonhighway access, emerging from, 1270	Pain and suffering, damages
No passing zone, vehicles proceeding in same direction,	estate's recovery for, 1855
1143	future, 1768
Normal response, cause, 1501	past, 1766, 1768
Notetaking by jury, 60, 61	past and future disability, 1750.1, 1750.2, 1756, 1767
Notice	Parent
actual or constructive, as to defect, 1900.4	damages
of breach, implied warranty, 3211	adult child, pecuniary loss, 1885
Notice (continued)	loss of society and companionship, 1895
of municipality with respect to highway or sidewalk	minor child
defects, 8035	postmajority pecuniary loss, 1892
timeliness of, breach of warranty, 3211	premajority pecuniary loss, 1890
to third parties of termination of agency, 4028	death of, pecuniary loss, 1880
Nuisance	injury to child
attractive, 1011, 8025	loss of child's services, 1835
private, 1920, 1922, 1924, 1926	loss of society and companionship, 1837
public, 1920, 1928, 1930, 1932 Nursing services	medical expenses, 1840
personal injury, 1756, 1758	services rendered to child, 1845
injury to spouse, 1820	injury to parent, 1838
O	death of, child's loss of society and companionship, 1897
O	duty of to control minor child, 1013, 1014
Objections of counsel	to protect minor child, 1012
instruction at conclusion of trial, 115	paternity, 5001
preliminary instruction, 50	Parked position, moving from, 1205
Obstructed view, passing, 1142	Parked vehicle
Obstructed vision, driver, speed, 1310	disabled vehicle, 1125
nighttime, 1315	leaving off the roadway, 1115
Offensive bodily contact, battery, 2005.5	leaving on or off the roadway, exception to
Offer, making, 3012	prohibition, 1125
Opening instruction, 100	leaving on the roadway, 1120
Opening statements of counsel, See Preliminary	yield right of way to moving vehicles, 1205
instructions before trial	Participation in a recreational activity, 1393
Opinion of nonexpert witness, 268	Parties to lawsuit, 50
Optometrist, duty to inform patient, 1023.15-1023.17	Partnership, defined, 4080
Order(s), See Court	Passenger, See Guest
Order of proof, See Preliminary instructions before trial	Passing, vehicles proceeding in same direction
Ordinary burden of proof, 200, 202	lookout, 1141
Ordinary care	no passing zone, 1143
defined, 1005	obstructed view, 1142
varies with circumstances, 1020	overtaken vehicle turning left, 1143
Out-of-pocket	signal, return to right-hand lane, 1144
rule damages, 3710	Paternity, 5001
negligence misrepresentation, 2406	Pecuniary loss
Owner	death of
dog, 1390	adult child, 1885
duty to trespasser, 8025	domestic partner, 1861
duty to user, 8020	husband, 1861

minor child, 1890	basic fact uncontradicted, possibility of nonexistence
parent, 1880	of presumed fact, 352
spouse, 1861	due care by decedent, 353 medical expenses, 1756,
wife, 1861	1757
Pedestrian	possibility of nonexistence of presumed fact, basic fac
crossing railroad tracks, 1337.5	conflict, 350
lookout, 1095	possibility of nonexistence of presumed fact, basic fac
right of way, See Right of way	uncontradicted, 352
sidewalk defect, contributory negligence, 1049	presumed fact may be inferred, basic fact conflict, 354
standing or loitering on highway, 1250	servant status from ownership of vehicle, 1600
suddenly leaving curb or place of safety, 1255	Principal, and agent, See Agency
walking on highway, position on highway, 1260	Prior conviction of witness, 415
Permission of owner for use of automobile, 3112	Prior inconsistent or contradictory statements, 420
Permissive inferences, 356	Privacy, invasion of, 2550, 2551, 2552
Law Note, 349	Private driveway, emerging from or other nonhighway
Personal injury, See Damages	access, 1335
Personal property, See Property damage	Private nuisance, 1920, 1922, 1924, 1926
Persons in specific situations, duties of, 1030-1355	Private property, lookout, limited duty on, 1080
Persons with physical handicaps, duties of, 1050	Privilege 425
Physical danger	against self-incrimination, 425
in field of, 1510	conditional, abuse of, defamation, 2507
Physical facts, 325	invasion of privacy, 2552
Physical handicaps, duty of persons with, 1050	public official, abuse of, defamation, 2509
Physical injury, relation of collision to, 1506	Probable cause, malicious prosecution, 2600, 2610
Physician 1022.2	Process, abuse of, 2620
duty to inform patient, 1023.2	Procession, funeral, right of way, 1180
medical malpractice, 1023	Products liability
negligence of hospital in granting staff	allergy of user, 3209, 3260 (comment)
privileges to, 1384	basis, 3200
standard of skill, 1023	breach of warranty, notice of, implied warranty, 3211
Place of business, owner's duty to protect patrons, 8045	business defined, strict liability, 3264
Place of employment, safe-place statute, 1910	buyer, duty of, 3254
Plaintiff frequenter, negligence of, safe-place statute, 1902	consumer, duty of, 3254
Podiatrist, duty to inform patient, 1023.15-1023.17	contributory negligence, strict liability, 3268
Point of access, defined, 1175	defect, use of product after defect known, 3207
Position and method of turn to right or left, 1352	exclusion by reason of course of dealing or usage of
Position on highway on meeting and passing, 1135	trade, 3206 exclusion or modification, 3205
violation excused, 1140	express warranty
Positive testimony, defined, 315 Possessor	general, 3220 no duty of inspection, 3222
consent of to another's being on his premises, 8015	statement of opinion under Uniform Commercial
of land, duty to user, 8020	Code, 3225, 3230
Post-traumatic disorder, 1511, 1770	implied warranty
Posted speed limit, 1290	allergy of user, 3209
Preceding car	by reason of course of dealing or usage of trade,
duty of driver to following driver, 1114	3203
slowing, stopping, signalling, 1113	exclusion by reason of course of dealing or usage
Preexisting injury, aggravation of, 1715	of trade, 3206
Preliminary instructions before trial, 50	failure to examine product, 3208
Preoccupation in work minimizes duty of worker, 1051	fitness for particular purpose, 3202
Present value of future damages, 1796	food, sale of, 3204
Presumption, negligence	improper use, 3210
res ipsa loquitur, 1145	merchantability, defined, 3201
res ipsa loquitur, malpractice, physician, 1024	notice of breach, 3211
Presumptions	use of product after defect known, 3207
and permissive inferences	negligence
Law Note, 349	duty of buyer, 3254
basic fact conflict, possibility of nonexistence of	duty of consumer, 3254
presumed fact, 350	duty of manufacturer, 3240
basic fact conflict, presumed fact may be inferred, 354	,,

duty of manufacturer to give adequate	Public utility, duty of, highway obstructions, nonenergized	
instructions as to the use of a complicated	facilities, 1395	
machine (product), 3244	Publication, defamatory effect of, 2514	
duty of manufacturer (seller) to warn of dangers	Puffing, 3225	
with respect to intended use, 3242	Punitive damages	
duty of manufacturer (seller) who undertakes to	defamation, 2520	
give instructions as to the use of a machine	intentional disregard, 1707.1	
(product), 3246	malice, 1707, 1707.1	
duty of restaurant operator in sale of food	mitigation of, by provocation of battery, 1708	
containing harmful natural ingredients, 3248	outrageousness, 1707	
duty of seller installing (servicing) a product,	products liability, 1707A, 1707.2	
3250	Purchaser, breach of contract by, 3750	
duty of seller to warn of dangers of product with		
respect to intended use, 3242	Q	
punitive damages, 1707A, 1707.2		
Restatement, Third, of Torts, 3260 (comment)	Quantum meruit, 1812	
risk contribution theory, 3294, 3295, 3296	Questions,	
strict liability	answered by the court	
comparative negligence, 3290, 3290.1	damages, 150	
contribution, 3290 (comment)	negligence, 155	
contributory negligence of user, 3268, 3290,	by juror, 57	
3290.1	special verdict, interrelationship, 145	
definition of business, 3264		
duty of manufacturer to ultimate user, 3260,	R	
3260.1		
Products liability (continued)	Racing, 1107	
duty of manufacturer (supplier) to warn, 3260.1,	Railroads	
3262	crossing	
duty of supplier to warn, 3260.1, 3262	driver's duty, 1336	
suggested special verdict, 3290, 3290.1	duty of train crew approaching crossing, 1405	
Professional earnings, loss of, 1760, 1762	duty to maintain open view at, 1411	
Proof, burden of, <u>See</u> Burden of proof	nonoperation of signals, 1338	
Property	signs, duty to maintain, 1410	
automobile	special vehicles required to stop at all crossings,	
damages to, 1805	1339	
loss of use, not repairable, 1800	ultrahazardous or unusually dangerous, increased	
loss of use, repairable, 1801	duty, 1413	
eminent domain, <u>See</u> Eminent domain	vehicles stopping at signals, 1337	
personal	duty to blow whistle	
damage to, 1804	outside municipality, 1402	
damage to, property not repairable, 1805	within municipality, 1403	
destruction of, 1803	duty to ring bell within municipality, 1401	
relation of property owners to others, 1900.4, 1904,	headlights, duty to have proper, 1412	
8012	pedestrian crossing tracks, 1337.5	
with market value, 1805	speed	
without market value, 1803	fixed limits, 1407	
Property loss through misrepresentation, 2419	negligent, causation, 1409	
Proprietor of business, duty to protect person from	no limit, 1408	
injury by act of third person, 8045	Ratification	
Prosecution, malicious, <u>See</u> Malicious prosecution	by master of servant's wrongful acts done outside	
Protective placement, 7060	scope of employment, 4050	
Protective services, 7061	of agent's acts by principal, 4015	
Protest, failure to on part of guest, 1047	Rear car, operation of, 1112	
Proximate cause, 1500	Rear lookout, limited duty, 1114	
Psychiatrist, negligence of, 1023 (comment)	Reasonable grounds to believe offense committed, defined,	
Public building, safe-place statute, 1904	2115	
Public business, not under safe-place statute, duties of	Recording played to the jury, 80	
owner, 8040  Public guiagness 1020, 1028, 1020, 1022	Red traffic control light, 1193	
Public nuisance, 1920, 1928, 1930, 1932	flashing, 1193.5	
Public official, defamation, abuse of privilege, 2509	signalling stop, 1193	
	Reduce speed	

obstructed vision, 1310	crossing at controlled intersection or
nighttime, 1315	crosswalk, 1225
reasonable and prudent speed, 1285	crossing roadway at point other than
Reference to insurance company by counsel, 125	crosswalk, 1230
Registered nurse, <u>See</u> Hospital employees, negligence	green arrow, facing, 1240
Relation of collision to physical injury, 1506	red or stop signal, facing, 1245
Release, agreement, avoidance of for mutual mistake of	standing or loitering on highway, 1250
fact, 3072	to stop when vehicle using alley or nonhighway
Rental income, capitalization of, 8130	access, 1270
Representations, false, <u>See</u> Misrepresentation Reproduction	uncontrolled intersection or crosswalk, suddenly
costs, eminent domain, 8135 Res ipsa loquitur	leaving curb or place of safety, 1255
defined, 1145	walking on highway, 1260
malpractice, medical, 1024	walk signal, 1159 when yield sign installed, 1275
permissive inference, 356	persons working on highway, 1265
Rescuer, contributory negligence of, 1007.5	Right side of roadway
Resident, defined, 3110	meeting and passing, 1135
Response, normal, cause, 1501	Right side of roadway, meeting and passing
Responsibility, strict, misrepresentation, 2402	violation excused, 1140
Restatement, Third, of Torts, effect on products liability,	Right to assume due care by highway users, 1030
3260 (comment)	Risk contribution theory, 3294, 3295, 3296
Restaurant operator, duty of, in sale of food containing	Roadway, defined, 1160
harmful natural ingredients, 3248	110001100, 00111100, 1100
Restraint of will, 2822	$\mathbf{S}$
Right-hand lane, return to, after passing, vehicles	S
proceeding in same direction, 1144	Safe-place statute
	business, 1910
Right of way	control, 1911
auto	duty of employer, 1900.2
at intersection of highways, nonarterial, 1155	frequenter
at intersection of highways, nonarterial, ultimate	defined, 1901
fact question, 1157	injury to, 1900.4
at intersection with through highway, 1153	negligence of
emergency vehicle approach of, 1210	employer, 1900.4
entering highway from an alley or nonaccess	owner of place of employment, 1900.4
points, 1175	owner of public building, 1904
funeral procession, 1180	plaintiff frequenter, 1902
green arrow, 1185	place of employment, defined, 1910
green or go signal, 1190	public building, defined, 1904
left turn at intersection, 1195	public business not under, duties of owner, 8040
livestock, 1200	Safety belt, failure to use, 1277
meeting at intersection, 1155	Safety, defined, 1900.4-1904
military convoy, 1180	Safety helmet negligence, 1277 (comment), 1278
moving from parked position, 1205	Safety statute, 1005, 1009 Safety zone, defined, 1160
vehicles using alley or nonhighway access, 1270	Sale of food, implied warranty, 3204
when yield sign installed, 1275	Sales, comparable, eminent domain, 8120
highway worker, 1265	Scene, view of, by jury, 152
livestock, 1200	Scientific treatises, 261
pedestrian at intersections or crosswalks on divided	School bus
highways provided with safety zones, 1160	flashing red warning lights, 1133
at uncontrolled intersections or crosswalks, 1165	stop for, 1340
blind pedestrian on highway, 1170	stopped, position on highway, 1132
control signal, 1159, 1220	School zone, speed, 1290
crossing at controlled intersection, 1158, 1225	Scope of employment
crossing at place other than crosswalk, 1095,	driver, 1605
1230	servant
divided highways or highways with safety	defined, 4030
zones, 1235	going to and from place of employment, 4040 master's ratification of wrongful acts done
duty of	outside of, 4050
at pedestrian control signals, 1220	while traveling 4050

Seat belt, failure to use, 1277	strict liability, 3290		
Section 1983, 2151, 2155	ultimate fact verdict, 107		
Self-defense	when court finds one or more parties at fault, 108		
battery, 2006	Speed		
defense of property, 2006.5	camouflage, 1320		
Self-incrimination, 425	driver on arterial not bound to reduce speed when		
Seller	approaching intersection, 1090		
breach of contract by, damages, 3755	failure to yield roadway, 1305		
negligence of, duty of, <u>See</u> Products liability	fixed limits, 1290		
Sensory handicaps, duty of persons with, 1050	impeding traffic, 1300		
Servant, See also Scope of employment	obstructed vision, 1310		
defined, 4030	nighttime, 1315		
driver of automobile, 1600	posted limit, 1290		
Services rendered to child, past and future, 1845	reasonable and prudent, reduced speed, 1285		
Services, society and companionship	school zone, 1290		
death of child, 1895	slow-moving vehicles, 1305		
death of spouse, 1870	special restrictions for certain vehicles, 1295		
injury to spouse, 1815	Speed, railroads		
Severance damages, eminent domain, 8102, 8103	fixed limits, 1407		
Sidewalk			
	negligent speed, causation, 1409		
defect, contributory negligence, 1049	no limit, 1409		
defects, 8035	Spendthrift, 7056		
insufficiency, 8035	Spoliation of evidence, 400		
Signal, required	Sports participant injury, 2020		
audible warning when passing, 1144	Spouse		
deviation, 1350	death of		
school bus, flashing red, 1133	loss of society and companionship, 1870		
slow or stop, 1113	medical, hospital, and funeral expenses, 1875		
Signal, required (continued)	pecuniary loss, 1861, 1861		
turn, 1350	• •		
Signals, railroad crossing	injury to		
non-operation of, 1338	household services, loss of, 1816, 1817		
stop at, all vehicles, 1337	medical and hospital expenses, 1825		
Signals, traffic control, <u>See</u> Traffic signals	wife's responsibility for own, 1830		
Signs	nursing services, 1820		
railroad crossing, duty to maintain, 1410	services, society, and companionship, 1815,		
stop, 1325, 1325A	1816, 1817		
Skidding, 1280	Standing on highway, pedestrian's duty, 1250		
Slander, See Defamation	Statement of opinion, express warranty, 3225		
Slow moving vehicles, 1300	Statement, slander, <u>See</u> Defamation		
Society and companionship	Statute of Limitations, 950		
death of child, 1895	Stop		
death of parent, 1897	at intersection, 1325, 1325A		
death of spouse, 1870	at railroad crossing signals, 1337		
injury to minor child, 1837	duty of preceding driver to signal, 1113		
injury to parent, 1838	emerging from an alley, 1330		
Special agent, defined, 4002	emerging from a private driveway or other		
Special benefits, eminent domain, 8115	nonhighway access, 1335		
Special circumstances, negligence under, 1020	for school bus, 1340		
Special knowledge and skills doctrine, 1005 (comment)	leaving vehicle off roadway, 1115		
Special verdict	non-operation of railroad crossing signals, 1338		
five-sixths verdict, 180	parking on or off roadway, exception to		
informed consent, 1023.1, 1023.15	prohibition, 1125		
Lemon Law, 3300	parking on roadway, 1120		
mentioned in court's opening statement, 100	pedestrian crossing railroad tracks, 1337.5		
questions, interrelationship, 145	special vehicles at all railroad crossings, 1339		
recommended, comparative negligence, multiple	train whistle within municipality, 1403		
driver-multiple guest comparison, 1592	Stopped school bus, 1132		
risk contribution, 3294	Stopping and leaving vehicle		
suggested	off roadway, 1115		
misrepresentation, 2402, 2403	on or off roadway, exception to prohibition, 1125		

on roadway, 1120	Training, negligence in, 1383
Stricken testimony, 130	Treatises, 261
Strict liability, See Products liability	Trespass
Strict responsibility, misrepresentation, 2402	nominal damages, 1810
Submission on general verdict, 106	verdicts, 8026, 8027
Submission on ultimate fact verdict, 107	Trespasser
when court finds one or more parties at fault, 108	attractive nuisance, 1011, 8025
Subsequent event causing further injury, 1725	children, 1011, 8025
Subsequent remedial measures, 358	consent, 8015
Successive or nonconcurrent torts	defined, 8012
injuries from, 1722	duty of owner to, 8025
Suddenly leaving curb or place of safety, 1255	Truth as defense to defamation, 2505, 2505A
Summary exhibit, 103	Turning movements
Superior skills doctrine, 1005	ascertainment that turn can be made with reasonable
Supervising, negligence in, 1383	safety, 1354
Supplemental instruction on agreement, 195	deviation from clearly indicated traffic lanes, 1355
· ·	directional signals, 1350
T	left turn, 1195
•	lookout, 1354
Taxicab driver, negligence of, 1339	overtaken vehicle turning left, passing, 1143
Teacher, duties	position and method when not otherwise marked or
to instruct or warn, 1380	posted, 1352
to supervise students, 1381	signal required, 1350
Tenant, constructive eviction of, 3095	•
Termination	U
agency	C
general, 4027	Ultimate fact question, attractive nuisance, 1011
notice to third parties, 4028	Ultimate fact verdict, <u>See also</u> Special verdict
dealership, 2770	fault, defined, 1001
Termination (continued)	submission on, 107, 108
employment, <u>See</u> Wrongful discharge	Ultimate verdict question, right of way at intersection of
franchise, 2770	nonarterial highways, 1157
Testimony	Ultrahazardous or unusually dangerous railroad crossings,
expert	increased duty, 1413
general, 260	Unavoidable accident, 1000
hypothetical question, 265	Uncontrolled intersection or crosswalk, right of way, 1165
negative, 315	Unfair trade practice (Wis. Stat. § 100.18), 2418
positive, 315	Uniform Commercial Code, express warranty under, 3230
stricken, 130	Unit rule, 8100, 8101
Tests, intoxication, chemical, 1008	Unity of use, two or more parcels, severance damages,
Textbooks, 261	8104
Theft by contractor, 2722	Unjust enrichment, 3028
Through highway, lookout on, 1065, 1090	Unlawful, defined, false imprisonment, 2100
Timeliness of notice, breach of warranty, 3211	Unreasonably dangerous, defined, 3200, 3260
Tort, See individual heading	Usage of trade, implied warranty, 3203
Tortious interference with contract, 2780	Use
Traffic signals or signs flashing red, 1133	improper, implied warranty, 3210
flashing yellow, 1090	legal nonconforming, eminent domain, 8140
green arrow, 1185	of product after defect known, 3207
green light, 1190	User, contributory negligence, strict liability, 3268
pedestrian, duty of	
pedestrian control, 1220	${f V}$
red light, pedestrian facing, 1245	·
stop sign, 1245	Value, fair market, 8100
walk signal, 1159	expert testimony to establish, 260
red flashing, 1090	Vehicles
red light, 1245	distance between, 1112
stop sign, 1325, 1325A	equipment and maintenance of
yellow flashing, 1090	brakes, 1054
yellow light, 1192	general duty, 1052
yield sign, 1275	5-11-121 2017, 1002

headlights, 1053	Witness
horn, 1096	absent witness, 410
following, 1112	contradictory statements, 420
lemon law and, 3300, 3301, 3302, 3303, 3304	credibility of, 50, 215
parked, See Parked vehicles	expert testimony
passing, proceeding in same direction, See Passing	general, 260
position and method when turning, 1352	hypothetical question, 265
slow moving, 1300, 1305	falsus in uno, willful false testimony, 405
stopping, <u>See</u> Stop; Stopping and leaving vehicle	impeachment of witness, prior inconsistent or
Vehicular traffic, defined, 1185	contradictory statements, 420
Verdict	opinion of nonexpert, 268
case involving intentional and negligent joint	prior conviction, 415
tortfeasors, 1580 (comment)	self-incrimination, 425
dissenting juror to sign, 180 five-sixths, 180	
	spoliation of evidence by, 400
general, 106	Working on highway, 1265
product liability, 3290, 3290.1	Worker
risk contribution, 3295, 3296	preoccupation in work minimizes duty, 1051
special, question, interrelationship, 145	when required to work in unsafe premises, 1051.2
suggested special	Wrongful death
misrepresentation, 2402, 2403	adult child, pecuniary loss, 1885
strict liability, 3290	child, parents' loss of society and companionship,
ultimate fact	1895
fault, 1001	domestic partner, 1861, 1870 (comment)
submission on, 107	estate's recovery
when court finds one or more parties at fault, 108	medical, hospital, and funeral expenses, 1850
Vicarious liability of employer, 4055	pain and suffering, 1855
View	husband's death, all items, 1861
by jury, 152	minor child, pecuniary loss, 1890
railroads duty to maintain open view, 1411	parent, child's loss of society and companionship,
Violation of safety statute, 1005, 1009	1897
riciation of safety statute, 1003, 1005	parent, pecuniary loss, 1880
Vision, obstructed, speed, 1310	spouse, loss of society and companionship, 1870
nighttime, 1315	wife
Voluntary assumption of duty, 1397	medical, hospital, and funeral expenses, 1875
Voluntary assumption of duty, 1377	pecuniary loss, 1861
***	Wrongful discharge, 2750
$\mathbf{W}$	
	Wrong side of road, driving on, 1135 violation excused, 1140
	violation excused, 1140
Wages, See Earnings	· ·
Walking on highway, pedestrian's duty, 1260	
	Y
Walking on highway, pedestrian's duty, 1260	
Walking on highway, pedestrian's duty, 1260 Walk signal, pedestrian, 1159	
Walking on highway, pedestrian's duty, 1260 Walk signal, pedestrian, 1159 Warn	$\mathbf{Y}$
Walking on highway, pedestrian's duty, 1260 Walk signal, pedestrian, 1159 Warn guest's duty to, 1076	Y Yellow flashing signal, 1090 Yellow light, duty of driver, 1192
Walking on highway, pedestrian's duty, 1260 Walk signal, pedestrian, 1159 Warn guest's duty to, 1076 teacher's duty to, 1380 Warrant, arrest without, false arrest	Y Yellow flashing signal, 1090
Walking on highway, pedestrian's duty, 1260 Walk signal, pedestrian, 1159 Warn guest's duty to, 1076 teacher's duty to, 1380 Warrant, arrest without, false arrest felony, 2115	Y Yellow flashing signal, 1090 Yellow light, duty of driver, 1192
Walking on highway, pedestrian's duty, 1260 Walk signal, pedestrian, 1159 Warn guest's duty to, 1076 teacher's duty to, 1380 Warrant, arrest without, false arrest felony, 2115 Warranty claim, Magnuson-Moss, 3310	Y Yellow flashing signal, 1090 Yellow light, duty of driver, 1192
Walking on highway, pedestrian's duty, 1260 Walk signal, pedestrian, 1159 Warn guest's duty to, 1076 teacher's duty to, 1380 Warrant, arrest without, false arrest felony, 2115 Warranty claim, Magnuson-Moss, 3310 Warranty, express or implied, See Products liability	Y Yellow flashing signal, 1090 Yellow light, duty of driver, 1192
Walking on highway, pedestrian's duty, 1260 Walk signal, pedestrian, 1159 Warn guest's duty to, 1076 teacher's duty to, 1380 Warrant, arrest without, false arrest felony, 2115 Warranty claim, Magnuson-Moss, 3310 Warranty, express or implied, See Products liability Weight of evidence, 215	Y Yellow flashing signal, 1090 Yellow light, duty of driver, 1192
Walking on highway, pedestrian's duty, 1260 Walk signal, pedestrian, 1159 Warn guest's duty to, 1076 teacher's duty to, 1380 Warrant, arrest without, false arrest felony, 2115 Warranty claim, Magnuson-Moss, 3310 Warranty, express or implied, See Products liability Weight of evidence, 215 Whistle, railroads, duty to blow	Y Yellow flashing signal, 1090 Yellow light, duty of driver, 1192
Walking on highway, pedestrian's duty, 1260 Walk signal, pedestrian, 1159 Warn guest's duty to, 1076 teacher's duty to, 1380 Warrant, arrest without, false arrest felony, 2115 Warranty claim, Magnuson-Moss, 3310 Warranty, express or implied, See Products liability Weight of evidence, 215 Whistle, railroads, duty to blow outside municipality, 1402	Y Yellow flashing signal, 1090 Yellow light, duty of driver, 1192
Walking on highway, pedestrian's duty, 1260 Walk signal, pedestrian, 1159 Warn guest's duty to, 1076 teacher's duty to, 1380 Warrant, arrest without, false arrest felony, 2115 Warranty claim, Magnuson-Moss, 3310 Warranty, express or implied, See Products liability Weight of evidence, 215 Whistle, railroads, duty to blow outside municipality, 1402 within municipality, 1403	Y Yellow flashing signal, 1090 Yellow light, duty of driver, 1192
Walking on highway, pedestrian's duty, 1260 Walk signal, pedestrian, 1159 Warn guest's duty to, 1076 teacher's duty to, 1380 Warrant, arrest without, false arrest felony, 2115 Warranty claim, Magnuson-Moss, 3310 Warranty, express or implied, See Products liability Weight of evidence, 215 Whistle, railroads, duty to blow outside municipality, 1402 within municipality, 1403 Wife	Y Yellow flashing signal, 1090 Yellow light, duty of driver, 1192
Walking on highway, pedestrian's duty, 1260 Walk signal, pedestrian, 1159 Warn guest's duty to, 1076 teacher's duty to, 1380 Warrant, arrest without, false arrest felony, 2115 Warranty claim, Magnuson-Moss, 3310 Warranty, express or implied, See Products liability Weight of evidence, 215 Whistle, railroads, duty to blow outside municipality, 1402 within municipality, 1403 Wife death of	Y Yellow flashing signal, 1090 Yellow light, duty of driver, 1192
Walking on highway, pedestrian's duty, 1260 Walk signal, pedestrian, 1159 Warn guest's duty to, 1076 teacher's duty to, 1380 Warrant, arrest without, false arrest felony, 2115 Warranty claim, Magnuson-Moss, 3310 Warranty, express or implied, See Products liability Weight of evidence, 215 Whistle, railroads, duty to blow outside municipality, 1402 within municipality, 1403 Wife death of loss of society and companionship, 1870	Y Yellow flashing signal, 1090 Yellow light, duty of driver, 1192
Walking on highway, pedestrian's duty, 1260 Walk signal, pedestrian, 1159 Warn guest's duty to, 1076 teacher's duty to, 1380 Warrant, arrest without, false arrest felony, 2115 Warranty claim, Magnuson-Moss, 3310 Warranty, express or implied, See Products liability Weight of evidence, 215 Whistle, railroads, duty to blow outside municipality, 1402 within municipality, 1403 Wife death of loss of society and companionship, 1870 medical, hospital and funeral expenses, 1875	Y Yellow flashing signal, 1090 Yellow light, duty of driver, 1192
Walking on highway, pedestrian's duty, 1260 Walk signal, pedestrian, 1159 Warn guest's duty to, 1076 teacher's duty to, 1380 Warrant, arrest without, false arrest felony, 2115 Warranty claim, Magnuson-Moss, 3310 Warranty, express or implied, See Products liability Weight of evidence, 215 Whistle, railroads, duty to blow outside municipality, 1402 within municipality, 1403 Wife death of loss of society and companionship, 1870 medical, hospital and funeral expenses, 1875 pecuniary loss, 1861	Y Yellow flashing signal, 1090 Yellow light, duty of driver, 1192
Walking on highway, pedestrian's duty, 1260 Walk signal, pedestrian, 1159 Warn guest's duty to, 1076 teacher's duty to, 1380 Warrant, arrest without, false arrest felony, 2115 Warranty claim, Magnuson-Moss, 3310 Warranty, express or implied, See Products liability Weight of evidence, 215 Whistle, railroads, duty to blow outside municipality, 1402 within municipality, 1403 Wife death of loss of society and companionship, 1870 medical, hospital and funeral expenses, 1875 pecuniary loss, 1861 injury to	Y Yellow flashing signal, 1090 Yellow light, duty of driver, 1192
Walking on highway, pedestrian's duty, 1260 Walk signal, pedestrian, 1159 Warn guest's duty to, 1076 teacher's duty to, 1380 Warrant, arrest without, false arrest felony, 2115 Warranty claim, Magnuson-Moss, 3310 Warranty, express or implied, See Products liability Weight of evidence, 215 Whistle, railroads, duty to blow outside municipality, 1402 within municipality, 1403 Wife death of loss of society and companionship, 1870 medical, hospital and funeral expenses, 1875 pecuniary loss, 1861 injury to medical and hospital expenses, 1825	Y Yellow flashing signal, 1090 Yellow light, duty of driver, 1192
Walking on highway, pedestrian's duty, 1260 Walk signal, pedestrian, 1159 Warn guest's duty to, 1076 teacher's duty to, 1380 Warrant, arrest without, false arrest felony, 2115 Warranty claim, Magnuson-Moss, 3310 Warranty, express or implied, See Products liability Weight of evidence, 215 Whistle, railroads, duty to blow outside municipality, 1402 within municipality, 1403 Wife death of loss of society and companionship, 1870 medical, hospital and funeral expenses, 1875 pecuniary loss, 1861 injury to medical and hospital expenses, 1825 wife's responsibility for own, 1830	Y Yellow flashing signal, 1090 Yellow light, duty of driver, 1192
Walking on highway, pedestrian's duty, 1260 Walk signal, pedestrian, 1159 Warn guest's duty to, 1076 teacher's duty to, 1380 Warrant, arrest without, false arrest felony, 2115 Warranty claim, Magnuson-Moss, 3310 Warranty, express or implied, See Products liability Weight of evidence, 215 Whistle, railroads, duty to blow outside municipality, 1402 within municipality, 1403 Wife death of loss of society and companionship, 1870 medical, hospital and funeral expenses, 1875 pecuniary loss, 1861 injury to medical and hospital expenses, 1825	Y Yellow flashing signal, 1090 Yellow light, duty of driver, 1192