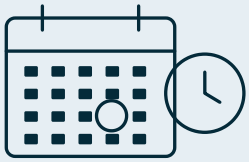
Your California injury deadlines

The general rules, the law behind each one, and room for your own dates.



The general rules

If	The general deadline	The law
You were hurt by a person or a business	Generally 2 years from the injury to file a lawsuit.	Code of Civil Procedure 335.1
Someone in your family died	Generally 2 years from the date of the death, not the date of the accident.	Code of Civil Procedure 335.1
Your car or other property was damaged	Generally 3 years.	Code of Civil Procedure 338(c)
A city, county or other public entity was involved	A written claim within 6 months. A lawsuit filed without one can be dismissed.	Government Code 911.2
You missed the 6-month claim	An application for leave to present a late claim, made within a reasonable time and no later than 1 year after the injury.	Government Code 911.4
You filed the claim with the public entity	The entity has 45 days to act on it. If it does not, the claim is treated as rejected.	Government Code 912.4
The public entity rejected your claim	A lawsuit within 6 months after a written notice of rejection, or within 2 years if no notice was given.	Government Code 945.6
The person hurt is a child	For a claim against a person or business, the 2-year clock generally does not start until the child turns 18. The 6-month claim against a public entity applies to children too.	Code of Civil Procedure 352 and 352(b); Government Code 911.2
A doctor or hospital was negligent	Generally 3 years from the injury or 1 year from when you discovered it, whichever comes first.	Code of Civil Procedure 340.5

An open insurance claim does not pause these deadlines. If the case has not settled as the deadline nears, a lawsuit must be filed to protect it.

Exceptions can make your real deadline earlier or later, so check it with a lawyer. Claims for sexual abuse follow separate laws that this sheet does not cover.

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This is general information about California law, not legal advice for your situation. Reading or using it does not make us your lawyers.

Scan for the deadline calculator

My dates

Date I was hurt

My general deadline

The rule (from the table)

Who caused it

- ☐ A person or a business
- ☐ A doctor or hospital
- ☐ A city, county or other public entity
- ☐ I'm not sure

Reminders to put in my calendar

Lawsuits and claims take time to prepare. Write each date below, then add it to the calendar on your phone.

For a 2-year deadline

12 months before

6 months before

2 months before

2 weeks before

For a 6-month claim

2 months before

1 month before

2 weeks before

Notes

Who I talked to, and when

Claim or case number

Next step

If you haven't talked to a lawyer yet, do it well before the date. A first conversation with us is free.