

# ON YOUR SIDE

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*An informative presentation from your Pre-Paid Legal  
District of Columbia/Maryland Provider*

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## LOYALTY



**Greetings to all of our LOYAL members!**

**The WOW ... Service from the Heart customer service campaign continues this month in order to exceed expectations and provide exemplary service to all of our members. During July, Pre-Paid Legal and Weinstock, Friedman & Friedman are celebrating the creed of Loyalty.**

### **Loyalty - I promise to make earning the Member's loyalty the goal of every call.**

We understand the importance of your business and strive to make every interaction with our law firm an experience where you are satisfied with the service provided by our attorneys and staff. From the moment you contact us, our staff is ready to assist and welcome any of your questions or concerns. Also, our attorneys are available for consultation on a variety of legal matters and able to provide you with any and all options to help resolve your matter. Weinstock, Friedman & Friedman is dedicated to our members, especially as we know that you have made a long-term investment in our law firm. Our objective is to provide excellent customer service such that we can retain your business and earn your loyalty. We want you to think of "Pre-Paid Legal" or "Weinstock, Friedman & Friedman" when you encounter a difficult situation, need advice on new facets of the law, or to draft those important legal documents. As your provider law firm, we want you to have confidence that we will be successful in delivering benefits that you cannot get elsewhere. We appreciate your trust in us and that you come back call after call as loyal customers. In turn, we remain steadfast in our loyalty to represent your interests and build relationships with each one of you!

### **Loyalty - to one's loved ones**

An essential part of loyalty includes proper Estate Planning. This loyalty from Pre-Paid Legal Services, Inc. to its members as well as loyalty from the firm to its Pre-Paid Legal Services clients. We hope that this instills a sense of loyalty from the client back to the firm. Most importantly, this Demonstrates loyalty to one's family and loved ones. Your Pre-Paid membership contract provides no additional cost benefits for the primary member and nominal cost reciprocal documents for the secondary dependant member (usually the spouse). Estate planning can be a complex issue but typically is not nearly as daunting as most people think. A substantial percentage of our members can have significant Estate Planning achieved without any additional costs or with only nominal costs under your Pre-Paid plan. According to a recent publication, costs for basic Estate Planning generally begin in the range of \$800.00 to \$1,800.00. More complex documents can cost an additional \$2,000.00 and up. Your Pre-Paid Legal Membership allows you to circumvent much of that initial \$800.00 to \$1,800.00 range and offers significant discounts on any documents over and above any additional costs benefits.

### **Loyalty - to one's future self**

Related to Estate Planning is the concept of savings for retirement. In the current economic climate, many people are considering cashing out their 401(k)'s and/or borrowing from their 401(k)'s. Your provider firm wants to make sure that you make an informed decision before doing so. We fully understand that with interest rates on many credit cards being in the double digits, borrowing money from one's 401(k) may seem tempting because the rates are much lower; typically the prime interest rate plus a certain low percentage. At the time of this publication, those rates are still safely within single digits. However, this is not risk free. First, you can be putting your retirement in jeopardy. Second, if your employment status changes and you can't pay the loan back, the loan gets converted to a withdrawal

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## WOW SERVICE FROM THE HEART

status. What that means is that you would have to pay an income tax on the withdrawal and if you are under the age of 59 1/2, you will also be subject to an additional 10% penalty for that early withdrawal. There are certain hardship exceptions and if you are facing a catastrophic situation, use of your 401(k) may be wise or the best of bad options. As noted previously, there are certain exceptions and short term hardships such as a finite period disability (short term disability), may be an appropriate scenario to utilize a loan from a 401(k). In cases such as medical bills that exceed 7.5% of your adjusted gross income, an outright withdrawal may be better than a loan. Such large medical bills oftentimes allow you to withdraw these funds without the 10% penalty. The withdrawal is still subject to regular tax income rates.

### COMMON SENSE FINANCIAL WELL BEING TIPS

The general caveat is that this firm is not a financial advisor, but a law firm. However, the below is a compilation of common sense tips accumulated from various media sources.

1. Have a saved, liquid, emergency fund that can help cover unanticipated expenses or unexpected loss of income. Most experts recommend that an emergency fund should equal six (6) months worth of living expenses. Those funds should not be invested in high risk places. You are trading security and preparedness in exchange for losing the opportunity for your money to grow. The most common options are regular bank savings accounts. Yes, these interest rates are typically below 1% but your money is safe and liquid as long as you stable the FDIC insurance limits of \$250,000.00 per depositor on any individual accounts. Another safe option is a Certificate of Deposit (CDs). Bank CDs are also FDIC insured, up to the applicable limits, and typically pay higher rates than basic savings accounts. However, if you withdraw the funds before the CD maturity date, you will lose money through early withdrawal penalties. That noted, there are short term CDs with lower interest rates. Different banks offer different terms and rates but the terms can be six (6) months or a year and typically require rather modest initial deposits.



### COMMON SENSE HOME INVESTMENTS TO AVOID MAJOR EXPENSES

Again, the general caveat is that this is a law firm and not a home improvement advisor. However, the following represents various tips from media sources and the firm wanted to share the compiled synopsis to our Members as a demonstration of our loyalty:

1. Test for radon-radon is a gas that you can't see, smell or taste. Radon is the leading cause of lung cancer among non-smokers in the United States. It can effect different homes even on the same street differently. Testing is inexpensive and can be done over a weekend. The costs are typically about \$20.00 for a test kit.
2. Install a smoke detector in every bedroom. Having one smoke detector upstairs, one downstairs, and one in the kitchen (the old formula) is no longer considered enough. Every bedroom should have its own smoke detector. Batteries should be tested periodically and replaced twice per year. Additionally, there should be carbon monoxide testers on every floor of your home. The costs range greatly from less than \$10.00 to upwards of \$50.00.
3. Insure that any stairway handrails are properly installed -handrails should be installed 32 to 36 inches from the floor to the top of the rail on both sides. They should be a different color than the color of the wall to avoid a camouflage effect. While the costs vary greatly, it is rather inexpensive to raise or better secure most rails.
4. Check the charge on your fire extinguisher- every fire extinguisher should have a gauge on it. Green means good. Red means replace. Also, make sure you have the right kind of extinguisher for the right room. Some extinguishers are specifically designed for kitchen fires while others are specifically designed for electrical fires. Again, costs vary greatly depending on the type of fire extinguisher.
5. Fix broken fence hinges and locks around the pool- while no one invites un-welcomed guests into their pool, these things do happen. Further, small children sometimes might go into a pool without your permission. There are many reasons to insure better security and safety around a pool, or even your back yard. Latches on a gate should close automatically and should be at least 54" from the ground according to most experts.

## **COMMON SENSE VEHICLE SAFETY**

Again, the general caveat is that this firm is not an automobile driving safety expert. However, we have vast experience with Personal Injury and Worker's Compensation cases as well as civil defense work and insurance company representation. This has provided us with quite a bit of expertise on auto safety. Additionally, much of this information is a compilation of various media sources.

1. One-third of all accidents reported are rear end collisions, and are generally avoidable. The American Driver & Traffic Safety Education Association suggests that you follow a simple three second rule to stay safe. The rule applies to the average person's reaction time to movements of the vehicle ahead and your vehicle's stopping distance. Most experts also state that if the road is slippery or if you are crowded by a tailgater, or you are towing a trailer, or driving a large truck, you should add additional seconds to this rule.
2. In any event, the three-second rule can be applied simply that when the vehicle ahead of you passes a stationary object, start counting one thousand one, one thousand two, one thousand three. The first second is your reaction time. The next two (2) seconds accounts for breaking distance. At a typical legal speed limit, each second should account for at least one car length of distance between you and the vehicle ahead of you. At a vehicle speed of 55 mph, the three-second rules create a gap of over 240 feet between cars. If you adhere to the three-second rule, you are generally not following a vehicle too closely.

## **Have a Safe and Happy Holiday**

On behalf of the firm, we hope that you have found the above to be helpful tips to save money and better plan for the future. As always, we thank you for your continued membership with Pre- Paid Legal Services and encourage you to utilize those services. We want to wish everyone a happy Independence Day holiday and hope that everyone enjoys and planned vacations and the summer season generally.

