

# HP MY NJ INJURY LAWYER Howard P. Lesnik, Esq.

## How to Choose an Attorney for Your New Jersey Criminal Law Case

If you or a family member are facing an investigation for criminal charges or even arrested and charged with a criminal offense – you need legal representation. The Constitution guarantees you the right to an attorney of your choice. In order to assess your rights and all potential defenses, you will need to consult with criminal law attorney – and how do you know where to begin. Relatives and friends may offer you recommendations of attorneys they’ve used in the past. You may also be inundated with letters and brochures from criminal lawyers who obtained your criminal complaint or summonses and used that information to solicit you for your case. Attorneys all offer “aggressive” and “experienced” representation. A difficult task when selecting a lawyer for your NJ criminal law case can be whittling down the large number of attorneys competing for your case. Most attorneys will offer a free consultation to get you in the door. It is difficult to pick up the phone to make the call, and sometimes even more intimidating to walk through the door at an attorney’s office to discuss your situation. Many people feel embarrassed that they even were charged with a criminal offense and do not like to discuss it. Once you are face to face with an attorney to discuss your case, there are some pressing questions you need answered right off the bat. This free report can help you get the information you need to assist you when hiring a NJ criminal law attorney.

## What Does it Mean to be Aggressive?

Any attorney can say “I fight for you” or “I fight for your case.” But what does that actually mean? The true definition of an “aggressive attorney” is someone who actively pursues your case and your best interests. An aggressive attorney has committed to thoroughly represent your NJ criminal case. Your attorney also needs to be aggressive in communicating with you about the progress of your case. You should receive regular updates about the status of your case and your attorney should not let your case languish. A sure sign your attorney is not aggressive is if he is not communicating with you about your case. If he is not communicating with you, then there are not updates in your matter. If there are no updates, he is likely not doing any work on your case. If an attorney is aggressively defending your criminal charges, he will be able to report back to your investigations, witness interviews, meetings with the prosecutors and conferences with the Judge.

Defense attorneys must be familiar with all the facts about your case. Police and law enforcement typically only include information in their investigations that are helpful to the prosecution. Your attorney must review all the police reports to find any inconsistencies and interview all witnesses to see if the police forgot to ask important questions or conveniently left information out of their report that may be helpful to your defense. An aggressive criminal defense attorney has an investigator on staff that can interview these witnesses and also discover witnesses that may also be helpful to your defense. Your criminal defense attorney should also file appropriate discovery and pretrial motions in court when necessary. If you are indicted, there are pretrial deadlines that your attorney must follow and keep you posted along the way.

If your criminal defense attorney is not communicating with you, he is likely not investigating your case, or responding to the prosecutor’s discovery and police reports. Your defense attorney must keep you updated during every step of your criminal case both in and out of court.



The highest compliment I can receive is a referral. If you were satisfied with my service, please send your friends and family my way! Please ask them to mention your name.

My NJ Injury Lawyer,  
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*Certified by the NJ Supreme Court  
as a Criminal Trial Attorney*



Being “aggressive” means your attorney keeps you informed about the status of your case, and means he is available to discuss your case and answer your questions both on the phone and at the office. It also means that your attorney can explain your case in terms that you can understand.

### What are their credentials?

Is your attorney a certified criminal trial attorney, and what does that mean? The New Jersey Supreme Court awarded this designation to lawyers who have demonstrated sufficient levels of experience, education, knowledge and skill in litigation and trial practice. The New Jersey Supreme Court, and the Board on Attorney Certification, designates as certified trial attorneys, only those lawyers who apply for certification, pass a vigorous board examination and who are able to meet the standards set by the Board and approved by the court. A New Jersey attorney that has been certified by the Supreme Court as a Certified Trial Attorney is a member in good standing of the New Jersey bar for at least 5 years, been favorably evaluated by judges and other attorneys, fulfilled ongoing continuing legal education requirements, passed a written examination covering various aspects of trial practice, and demonstrated a significant level of trial experience in handling litigated matters, including numerous jury trials. Only 2% of the 75,000 registered NJ lawyers meet the stringent standards of experience, education and knowledge, to be recognized and achieve board certification by the Supreme Court of New Jersey.

### How do they approach criminal cases?

Every attorney develops their own “playbook” of ways to handle a typical case. Find out what your prospective lawyer’s approach is in the courtroom or at the negotiating table – as well as how he interacts with his clients, witnesses, prosecutors and Judges. Does the lawyer in question prefer to take plea bargains on all his cases or is he willing to file pretrial motions and tangle with prosecutors inside the courtroom? Does the lawyer take cases to trial and is he comfortable selecting a jury, standing up on his own and making opening statements and cross-examining the State’s witnesses and seasoned detectives?

When a decision needs to be made about your case, will the attorney review the pros and cons of your case and present you with the options so you can decide on how to proceed, or will he make a recommendation and try to force you to go along with it?

### What are four things you should ask an attorney before you sign anything?

All lawyers and law firms do business differently. All attorneys handle cases in their own way. You should hire an attorney who will represent you in a way that makes you most comfortable. In order to decide, you must ask the following four critical questions:

1. Who will be working on your case and appearing in court for you?
2. How often will you receive updates on the progress of your case?
3. How much information will these reports contain?
4. If you have questions or concerns, how soon should you expect a reply?

### How would they evaluate your NJ criminal case?

As the client, you should have reasonable expectations about the outcome of your case from the beginning. Your attorney should be able to provide a realistic outcome for your matter and should not exaggerate the outcome of your case just to convince you to hire his office. Your attorney should be upfront with you and be able to assess how long your case may take, what your potential defenses may be, and any potential problems or weaknesses with your case. You should know right from the start if there are any pitfalls that can negatively impact your defenses or your case. This is part of your attorney being “aggressive.” The more you know about your case, the more you know about hiring the right attorney for your NJ criminal defense attorney.

### Do Your Homework.

How can you quietly double-check the reputation of an attorney you’re thinking of hiring (without him or her even knowing it’s happening)? Thanks to the internet, attorneys are easily searchable on the web. You can google any attorney and immediately see if they’re website and google reviews. There are many other free attorney review websites, such as Yelp, [Avvo](#), Martindale, [Lawyers.com](#), and Findlaw.com. Also, many attorneys post their [reviews](#) and testimonials right on their website. Remember to make notes and ask for reviews after the meeting. Make your choice based on who you are the most comfortable with.

