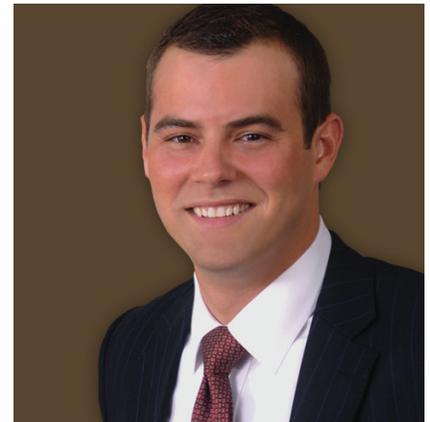


Reuters / Images



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Filing BP Oil Spill Claims: Doubts of Eligibility?

As attorneys we are tasked to evaluate legal challenges from all angles, pointing out strengths and weaknesses in a client's case. Often we must explain why a case may not be as solid as a client believes. **BP claims are different.**

Most businesses located in Gulf Coast counties do not realize they are eligible to file claims. Although Florida's beaches remained unscathed, local businesses weren't as lucky. News of the spill convinced travelers to rethink vacation and seasonal residency plans, impacting Florida businesses that are reliant on this type of commerce. That impact is the driving force behind the class action litigation and the inclusion of Florida's Gulf Coast businesses in the BP settlement.

Although most businesses probably qualify to file a claim, many owners hold tight to a belief they don't meet the requirements. But this couldn't be further from the truth. Nearly all businesses located in a Florida Gulf Coast county and counties in Florida's Panhandle can be deemed eligible for recovery.

Under the settlement, BP no longer has the ability to decide which businesses are compensated and how much they will receive. Instead, a court-appointed, neutral settlement administrator is tasked with compensating businesses who demonstrate they are eligible for compensation pursuant to the terms of the settlement agreement. Determining eligibility comes down to three basic factors: Location, Industry, and Financial Performance.

Location: If you own a business with one or more facilities in a coastal county you are in the right location. Additionally, most counties in the Florida Panhandle are

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eligible even if they do not border the Gulf Coast as are all businesses located in Mississippi, Louisiana, and Alabama.

Industry: Unless your industry is specifically excluded from the settlement, your business is in an eligible industry. Exclusions are few, and cover the following industries: finance, gaming, insurance, oil & gas, defense contractors, real estate developers (multiple parcel properties, subdivisions, etc.), sellers of BP fuel, and governmental entities.

Financial Performance: An eligible business must demonstrate that its revenue meets certain pre and post-spill patterns. If your business experienced these revenue patterns, and satisfies the other requirements above, then your business is entitled to compensation under the BP settlement. Compensation for eligible businesses is based on so-called "lost variable profits" which requires a complex financial analysis. We have assembled a team of knowledgeable staff, attorneys, and outside experts to determine and maximize claim value for our clients.

The deadline for filing all business claims is April 22, 2014, or six months after the resolution of all appeals filed in the case. To date, there have been at least 8 appeals filed so it is foreseeable that the deadline may be extended beyond April 22, 2014.

The BP litigation is a class action-- all eligible businesses have already released BP from liability under the terms of the court-approved settlement. The only remaining question is whether each eligible business will claim and recover the compensation provided for it.

For more information please visit our BP oil spill claims website:

www.OilSpillClaims.org

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