

# CLARK & TOWNE ATTORNEYS

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

We're on the big three social networking sites. Check us out on  
Twitter: [TWITTER.COM/JESSICATOWNE](https://twitter.com/JESSICATOWNE)  
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LinkedIn: [WWW.LINKEDIN.COM/IN/CLARKTOWNE](https://www.linkedin.com/in/clarktowne)  
and join a group of clients who learn about the latest Georgia legal news.

## CLARKTOWNE.COM

*We strongly believe that education is the first step in the prevention of any type of legal crisis. We've proudly worked to resolve our clients' dilemmas since 1990. We are in your community, have the experience and resources required to work toward your goals, and we're here to help. We also accept a limited number of injury cases each year resulting from serious auto, truck or motorcycle accidents.*

### Do you need a referral?

Chances are we can refer you to an excellent local attorney outside our area of practice: call us at 770.338.2338 or email [jtowne@clarktowne.com](mailto:jtowne@clarktowne.com).

### VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: LAWRENCEVILLE CO-OPERATIVE

The Co-op helps citizens in the Lawrenceville area by providing food, limited emergency financial assistance for utilities, and prescription drugs. The Co-op also connects those in need with various helping sources in the community. The Co-op seeks to help clients identify ways to achieve self-sufficiency. With so many of our neighbors out of work, this group needs your time, talent and money.

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770-339-7887  
[www.lawrencevilleco-op.org](http://www.lawrencevilleco-op.org)

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October 2010

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## Make a Difference Day

Make A Difference Day is celebrated each year on the fourth Saturday of October; this year it falls on October 23. Started by USA WEEKEND Magazine, it has become the nation's largest day of volunteering. It is the most encompassing national day of helping others—a celebration of neighbors helping neighbors. Everyone can participate. Last year, 3 million people cared enough about their communities to volunteer on that day, accomplishing thousands of projects in hundreds of towns. You can do it too. Here's how to get started.

### 1. Find a Need

Learn who needs help in your community. Join a local organization who is doing work you find interesting. We list a local non-profit on the back of each and every Clark & Towne newsletter. You can also find lists of organizations who need



your help on [clarktowne.com](http://clarktowne.com), or contact [HandsOnAtlanta.org](http://HandsOnAtlanta.org) to be matched with an organization who needs someone with your precise skills or availability.

### 2. Plan & Publicize

If you don't find an organization already doing what you think should be done, run your own project! Go to [makeadifferenceday.com](http://makeadifferenceday.com) to find planning tools such as downloadable planning guides, links to groups

offering support and supplies, and a press materials toolkit.

### 3. Report Your Results

After performing your good act on Oct. 23, fill out a simple form describing what took place and the impact you witnessed. Mail it to USA WEEKEND Magazine to be counted and to become eligible for a \$10,000 charitable donation. Of course, many people participate without seeking recognition. Still, by registering your idea, you may inspire others or even obtain publicity for your cause!

## Volunteer Myths

Many people don't volunteer because they think it means doing something awful that no one else wants to do. That simply isn't the case at all! There are many opportunities to volunteer right here in Gwinnett that you may even think are fun.

For instance, the town of Suwanee just had a huge festival in September that required the work of hundreds of volunteers to pull off. They did everything from hanging up posters, to running stage lights, to taking photos. In return, some of the volunteers learned new skills—like

how to light a stage—that they wouldn't have learned anywhere else. Other people volunteered just to meet new people. Still others did it for a sense of community. Some people turn a volunteer position into a new job.

Volunteering doesn't just mean helping those who can't help themselves or fulfilling court-ordered requirements. These are, of course, excellent reasons; but you can also volunteer to help yourself. It's ok. Who knows what you will learn or who you'll meet! Hope to see you out volunteering soon.

"MOTIVATION IS  
WHAT GETS YOU  
STARTED. HABIT IS  
WHAT KEEPS YOU  
GOING."  
— JIM ROHN

## Driving Safety Tip of the Month A safer breakdown

Before you head out on the highway, changing your car's oil and adding air to its tires can help ensure you get there safely.

If your car should break down on the road, follow these recommendations from the National Safety Commission to stay safe:

1. Stop safely on the highway shoulder. You may need to make your way across several lanes. If you cannot make it to the shoulder, turn on your hazard lights.
2. Once you come to a complete stop on the shoulder, turn your wheels all the way to the right, away from traffic.

3. Turn on your hazard lights and headlights for visibility.

4. Exit the vehicle on the passenger's side or whichever side is farthest from traffic. Get to safety, possibly behind a barrier, but not between your car and oncoming traffic.

5. Do not attempt to place any warning devices on the road.

6. Use your cell phone to dial \*477 to contact the Georgia Highway Patrol. Then contact family members to let them know where you are.

## From Our Blog

### Avoid "Groucho" lawyers

**Misconception:** There isn't much difference among Atlanta DUI lawyers.

**Reality:** Lawyers have different areas of specialty and levels of ability. Some continue to hone their knowledge throughout their careers, while others stop doing so when they've landed a job.

**Misconception:** All good DUI lawyers go to trials.

**Reality:** Not every case is best resolved with a trial; lawyers who have a general practice rarely go to trial. Lawyers who work primarily in DUI defense should have a lot of courtroom experience (perhaps obtained by working as prosecutors earlier in their careers), even if few of their DUI cases have gone to trial.

**Misconception:** "Pick-a-lawyer" websites are useful in finding a lawyer.

**Reality:** These sites can be helpful in your



search, but always keep in mind that such sites have varying standards. To be put on a website may only require a check from the lawyer.

**Misconception:** The state bar allows lawyers to advertise themselves as DUI defense specialists.

**Reality:** Advertising in any type of specialty is basically unrestricted.

**Misconception:** An Atlanta lawyer who advertises himself as a DUI defense lawyer must be an expert in that field.

**Reality:** Being able to advertise doesn't equal experience. He/she may be a new on this area of law for all you know.

**Misconception:** Successful Atlanta lawyers advertise on TV.

**Reality:** Your decision shouldn't be based on the type of advertising a lawyer uses. Interviewing the lawyer on his skills and experience is the way to go.

MISCONCEPTION:  
ALL GOOD DUI  
LAWYERS GO TO  
TRIALS.

## Ask Jessica

### High - Speed Tickets

**Question:** I got pulled for doing 72 mph in a 55 mph zone. I know I was given a ticket for going really fast, but it's still just a speeding ticket. Do I really need a lawyer to handle this?

**Answer:** I am frequently asked if I can help someone with a speeding ticket for driving 15+ mph above the speed limit. Most of the time, I turn down such requests unless there are special circumstances. Instead, I encourage people to handle the ticket themselves and save hundreds of dollars in attorney fees. This is what I suggest:

1. Go to court yourself at the appointed day and time.
2. When your case is called, you have a choice to either say "Not guilty" or "I want to talk to the prosecutor."
3. Speak calmly to the prosecutor and explain your position.

The prosecutor does not want a trial on another day any more than you do. Ask him or her to drop the speed to below 14 mph over

the limit so the clerk of the court isn't required to report the ticket to the Department of Driver Services. This way, no one will know about the ticket except for you and the officer. If the prosecutor doesn't initially agree to your request, explain your circumstances in more detail. If the prosecutor still won't budge, tell the prosecutor that you'd like to come back for trial — at which point you'll probably need to hire a lawyer. Please note, even if the speed is reduced, the court still wants its money, *so expect the fine to remain the same.*

If you don't feel confident doing this, hire an attorney and go to trial. A good attorney still may not win; after all, an officer is allowed to make an "eyeball estimate" that you were driving above the speed limit, and then the judge can find you guilty of speeding. Of course, you can't win if you don't fight. A good attorney is an expensive proposition: \$500 - \$1,000 depending on the number of court appearances. You may not have to attend court the first time if you hire an attorney; you'd only need to show up for trial.



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SPEED IS  
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## Are We Too Picky?

One quirk about Clark & Towne: We're picky about who we agree to work with, and turn down as many clients as we accept. If that happens to someone you referred to us, it's not a judgment of your referral or a reflection on you. It's simply this: Clark & Towne is a small firm—and we choose to keep it that way. We have no desire to become all things to all potential clients, or to tell clients we'll go to trial when, in fact, there is a better solution.

Each and every client's situation is unique, and we recognize that. Every client defines "win" differently, and we have respect for our clients because of that. Since we choose to remain relatively small, we can work with only a limited number of clients and still offer one-on-one personal service. We look to work only with highly motivated clients.

## Thank You!

My Staff and I welcome the new clients who've joined the Clark & Towne family this past month, and we send our personal thanks to all those who referred friends and family and went out of their way to send notes of appreciation. Thanks also to all of you who took the time to request topics they would like to see addressed in this newsletter and on the clarktowne.com blog. Thank you and please, feel free to call the Office if we can be of help.