



- TRIALS & CASES
- OPEN FORUM
- LAW LIBRARY

CNN Sites

[Editions](#) | [myCNN](#) | [Video](#) | [Audio](#) | [Headline News Brief](#) | [Free E-mail](#) | [Feedback](#)

- MAINPAGE**
- WORLD**
- U.S.**
- WEATHER**
- BUSINESS**
- SPORTS**
- TECHNOLOGY**
- SPACE**
- HEALTH**
- ENTERTAINMENT**
- POLITICS**
- LAW**
- trials & cases**
- open forum**
- supreme court**
- law library**
- CAREER**
- TRAVEL**
- FOOD**
- ARTS & STYLE**
- BOOKS**
- NATURE**
- IN-DEPTH**
- ANALYSIS**
- LOCAL**

[search > law center](#)

Jury awards paraplegic man \$5.5 million for defective seat belt

November 15, 2000
Web posted at: 9:05 AM EST (1405 GMT)

CAMDEN, New Jersey (AP) -- General Motors must pay \$5.5 million to a handyman who was paralyzed in a car crash because of a defective seat belt, a jury was decided.

Harold Tucker, 69, of Salem, will receive \$2.5 million for future medical care and \$3 million for the pain he suffered, said his lawyer Andrew Rossetti. Tucker had asked for, but was not granted, an additional \$1 million in interest. The eight-person jury came to its decision Monday after a month-long trial and was expected to deliberate Wednesday on possible punitive damages.

Tucker was riding in the passenger seat of a 1989 Buick Regal on November 28, 1995, when he leaned forward to try to retrieve a cigarette lighter, leaving a foot of slack in the shoulder belt.

When the car crashed into another vehicle, "his body essentially moved as if it was unrestrained," said Rossetti.

GM lawyers had argued that Tucker was not wearing his belt, which they claimed was in proper working order. The belt, used on GM models from 1976-90, was never subject to a recall, Rossetti said.

While Tucker has regained partial use of his left leg and some movement in his arms, he will need a wheelchair for the rest of his life, Rossetti said.

GM said through a spokeswoman that it would not comment until after the trial.

- EDITIONS:
[CNN.com Europe](#)
- [change default edition](#)
- MULTIMEDIA:
[video](#)
[video archive](#)
[audio](#)
[multimedia showcase](#)
[news quiz](#)
[more services](#)

PLAINTIFF'S ATTORNEY
Mr. Andrew J. Rossetti Ferrara, Rossetti & DeVoto www.njinjurylaw.com
PLAINTIFF'S EXPERTS
Mr. Alan Cantor Crash Safety Engineer www.arcca.com
Mr. Richard Hermance Accredited Accident Reconstructionist www.collisionresearchltd.com
Dr. James Pugh Biomechanics