

swits & deals

Sidewalk Fall Causing Back Injuries Nets \$2.75M Jury Award in Essex



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A woman in a sidewalk slip-and-fall was awarded \$2.75 million by an Essex County jury on Oct. 8.

In September 2009, Kiiana Askew, then 31, was walking her daughter to school on West Main Street in Bogota, N.J., when her foot became caught in a hole left by a missing brick paver, causing her to fall forward, according to her lawyer, **Jeffrey Hasson**, who heads a Teaneck, N.J., firm.

Askew sustained two herniated lumbar discs and underwent chiropractic treatment, physical therapy, epidural injections, an unsuccessful discectomy procedure and, finally, a two-level spinal fusion procedure. She now has limited strength and motion, and wears a back brace at all times, Hasson said.

She claimed that the owner of the commercial property adjacent to the sidewalk, [REDACTED] negligently failed to address a dangerous condition that had been present for at least three years, while [REDACTED] claimed he wasn't aware of the hole and Askew should have noticed it, Hasson said.

After a week-and-a-half trial before Superior Court Judge **W. Hunt Dumont**, the jury unanimously found [REDACTED] liable, and awarded \$574,941 for medical expenses and \$2.175 million for pain and suffering. The panel found 6-1 that Askew was not comparatively negligent.

[REDACTED] counsel, **Robert Kovacs** of **Gregory Hellfrich's** Summit, N.J., firm, didn't return a call.