

Child's family sues over injury at Kohl's \$250,000 sought for child injured by display hook

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The family of a Forty Fort boy is suing Kohl's Department Stores after they say the child was blinded in one eye and suffered brain injuries caused by a low-hanging display hook in the Wilkes-Barre Township store in 2012.

Philadelphia-based attorneys representing William Heckman and his family filed the suit Monday in Philadelphia County, seeking in excess of \$250,000, plus interest and costs. The victim is the son of William C. Heckman Jr. and Jessica Heckman.

"The lawsuit seeks damages for the lifetime care of a catastrophically injured child," attorney [Thomas Kline](#) said.

Named as defendants are Kohl's Department Stores Inc. and the store manager. Efforts to reach a Kohl's spokesperson were not successful Tuesday afternoon.

On Dec. 19, 2012, Heckman, then 6, was Christmas shopping with his mother and older sister at the store on Wilkes-Barre Township Boulevard when he dropped his hat and bent over to pick it up, according to the suit. In doing so, the boy struck his right eye on the end of a display hook used to hang children's clothing, the suit maintains.

As a result, Heckman had surgical procedures but ended up losing sight in his eye, the suit says. He also contracted meningoencephalitis, which caused seizures and tremors in addition to permanent cognitive deficits.

The suit alleges negligence and recklessness, maintaining that the aisle was overcrowded with merchandise, with no signs or bright colors warning about the dangerous nature of the hooks, which were at children's eye level.

The suit also points to two prior incidents involving Kohl's display hook injuries to children, including another 6-year-old boy suffering a similar eye injury at the same store five years earlier as well as a 2008 incident in Illinois.

According to the suit, Kyle McAndrew was injured at the Wilkes-Barre Township location on July 20, 2007.

In addition to the injuries suffered by Heckman, the suit claims "severe emotional distress" on the part of his mother, who was "shocked and traumatized" by the injuries her son suffered.

The plaintiffs have requested a jury trial in Philadelphia County Court, noting that Kohl's does business in that jurisdiction.