



Verizon to pay \$125M to New Jersey lawyer paralyzed by falling pole

It's the largest settlement in state history, attorney says

By [Stephanie Pagones](#) | FOXBusiness |

'Enormous surge' in network since coronavirus outbreak: Verizon CEO

Verizon CEO Hans Vestberg says the network is 'keeping up very well' despite a rise in usage since coronavirus started.

[Verizon](#) has settled with the family of an attorney [paralyzed](#) by a falling telephone pole for \$125 [million](#) in what has been called "the [largest](#) settlement in New Jersey history," according to a recent report.

Maria Moser Meister was waiting at a bus stop in Union City, New Jersey, in 2017 when a rotted utility pole fell on top of her, crushing her, [Law.com reported](#). On Monday, a judge approved Verizon's \$125 million settlement to resolve the matter.

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Court papers [shared](#) by Law.com show Meister will receive \$118,275,00, while her husband, who brought the case against Verizon New Jersey Inc. and a handful of other defendants on her behalf, will be paid \$7 million.

Their attorney, David Mazie of Mazie Slater Katz & Freeman, told the outlet it was "[b]y far this is the largest settlement in New Jersey history," surpassing a 2005 settlement for \$46 million.

Verizon spokesperson Rich Young said the Meisters and their children "have been constantly on our minds since this happened and will continue to be in the years to come."

"Words cannot adequately express the remorse, sympathy and compassion that we have for Maria Meister and her family," Young said in an emailed statement. "While no

amount of compensation can make up for what was lost, we hope the resolution of this case helps bring some measure of comfort, and provides care for Maria and her family, now and in the future.”

Meister, 50, worked as an attorney at New York City-based Milberg Factors in January 2017 when the 43-year-old, semi-rotten wooden utility pole landed on her head and body, NJ.com [reported](#), citing court papers.

She suffered a severe brain injury, in addition to numerous fractures in her spine, broken ribs, difficulty using her left arm, paralysis from the middle of her chest down and visual impairment, Mazie told Law.com.

“This is a very tragic circumstance, and nobody gets paid these kinds of numbers without having a catastrophic, life-changing injury,” Mazie told Law.com. “This has devastated her life and her husband and children, and she will never be put back together.”

Mazie added that Meister “has made a remarkable recovery.”

(REUTERS/Brendan McDermid)

PSE&G, which co-owned the utility pole with Verizon, had concluded in 1999 that a new pole should be installed to replace the one that ultimately struck Meister, according to the report. Verizon, in turn, submitted a work order for the job to be executed that same year.

Despite plans for the pole to be replaced at least nine different times following the 1999 determination, it was never done, Law.com reported, citing court documents.

Verizon reportedly claimed responsibility for the catastrophic oversight.

According to Law.com, PSE&G Services Corp. and Altice USA, also named defendants in the case, will pay \$250,000 and \$25,000, respectively.

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