

CAUSATION

DIRECT CAUSE¹

An action or event that is directly responsible for a series of events occurring without any intervening action which would change or modify the series of events that occurred.

PROXIMATE CAUSE

The immediate cause which connects a tortious act to the consequences and damages for which a defendant would be responsible. The relationship between cause and effect. An action or event which is directly responsible for producing the end result and, if it was not present, the end result would not have occurred. The cause which is responsible for the end result happening.

INTERVENING CAUSE

An action or event that occurs, after an original act or event occurs that sets a series of events into motion, and before the end result. The original action and the end result remain connected even though another intervening action occurs. An event which occurs after a negligent or dangerous act that affects the chain of causation to the ultimate damages that result and thus making the second actor liable rather than the first. For example, John throws a baseball negligently towards a crowd of people but Bob swats it out of the air with a baseball bat and strikes it towards another crowd of people where it strikes and seriously injures a person.

SUPERSEDING CAUSE

An action or event that occurs after an original act or event occurs that sets a series of events into motion which affects a series of events so significantly that the end result is no longer connected with the original direct cause. See intervening cause.

¹ TheLaw.com Law Dictionary & Black's Law Dictionary 2nd Ed.