

Car Accident Lawyers in Columbia Helping You Understand the Claims Process

Almost every driver ends up in a car accident eventually, but even a fender bender can cause injuries. When you've been involved in an accident and you aren't sure what to do next, our firm can help. We are an experienced car accident law firm that is able to answer your questions, discuss your case, and help you understand your options. Below you can find answers to questions we commonly get from prospective clients about what happens after a car accident.

If you're looking for a car accident lawyer, contact the law firm of [CLIENT], to schedule a free consultation. We offer legal representation to victims of car accidents and can help you understand your rights and how filing a lawsuit can help you recover compensation.

What Should I Do After I've Been Involved in a Car Accident?

It's normal to be shaken, scared, and even a little confused after a car accident. Crashes can happen in a split second, and the rush of adrenaline your body sends out can make it more difficult for you to think clearly or remember exactly what happened. That's why it's important to know what to do after a car accident before it happens so that you can react appropriately in the moment.

Attend to Any Injuries

The first thing you should do after being involved in a car accident doesn't have anything to do with legal matters. Before anything else, it's important to attend to any injuries that either party may have. Car accident injuries can include very serious injuries like traumatic brain injuries, broken limbs, and punctured lungs. In general, it's advised not to move people out of the vehicle if they can't move on their own, unless the car is on fire. Try to keep those at the scene alert and talking until the EMTs arrive to take over.

When you are getting your injuries treated, try not to think about the medical bills that may be coming afterward. The most important thing is to ensure that you get the care you need to be

able to recover, and expenses can be dealt with later — possibly through a personal injury lawsuit.

<h3>Do Not Admit Fault</h3>

It's normal to immediately apologize or otherwise take partial blame immediately after a car accident, but admitting fault — even casually — can be an issue later if you want to file a car accident claim. Car accidents can be complex situations, and you may not even be fully aware of all of the factors that went into the wreck. For example, you may think you pulled out in front of someone but they may have been speeding and not had their lights on during poor weather conditions. This is why car accidents have to be investigated to really understand who the negligent driver was. The police will ask you to write a statement for the police report immediately after the accident, but be careful to stick to the facts and avoid admitting fault or taking on any part of the blame.

<h3>Alert Your Insurance Company</h3>

Once your immediate medical needs have been taken care of, you will need to let your insurance company know that you've been in an accident so they can get started on your car accident claim. They will likely send an adjuster out to look at your car to determine the amount of damage, and they will start getting in contact with the other party's insurance company.

The insurance companies determine who is at fault for the accident. In cases where they determine that both parties had some responsibility for the accident, they will assign a percentage of fault, such as saying one party was 70 percent responsible and the other was 30 percent responsible. The important thing to know about these numbers in South Carolina is that you have to be found less than 50 percent at fault for the accident to be able to file a personal injury lawsuit against the other party.

<h3>Talk to Car Accidents Lawyers</h3>

While your first priority is to recover and take care of your health, as soon as you are feeling up to it, it's a good idea to reach out to a car accident lawyer to start talking about your case and options. You don't have to file a car accident lawsuit right away, as the statute of limitations for car accident cases is three years in South Carolina, but the sooner you have legal representation involved the better. A car accident lawyer can talk to insurance companies on your behalf and provide counsel throughout the process to ensure your rights and interests are protected.

<h2>What Kind of Compensation Can Victims Recover After Car Accidents?</h2>

As experienced car accident lawyers, one of the most common questions we get from clients is, “How much can I get?” And while we’d love to be able to give our clients an exact number to expect in compensation, the truth is that the legal system just doesn’t work that way. Instead, a better way to look at how much compensation you may be entitled to is to break it down into the three main categories below.

<h3>Medical Bills</h3>

The bulk of the compensation in a car accident lawsuit is usually focused on the medical bills and other expenses the victim incurred as a direct result of the accident. This could cover everything from the initial ambulance ride and ER treatment to post-accident surgeries, physical therapy, and special medical equipment, such as a wheelchair or brace. It’s important to keep track of your medical bills in the weeks and months after your accident and ask your doctor how your injuries might affect your health later on and what expenses may be tied to the future as well.

<h3>Pain and Suffering</h3>

Car accident injuries cause physical pain, but they can also involve emotional and mental pain. The courts give room for this to be considered when you are seeking compensation through the category of pain and suffering. It can be difficult to put a monetary value on an emotional subject, but it can help to frame it in terms of how the accident and the resulting injuries have affected your quality of life. An attorney can also help you get a better understanding of how much the courts are usually willing to award for pain and suffering in similar cases.

<h3>Lost Wages</h3>

Lost wages makes up another large part of possible compensation. Depending on your job, you may have some initial paid leave such as sick pay or vacation pay that you can use to give yourself time to recover from your injuries. However, this is a privilege that isn’t enjoyed by everyone, and even if your job does offer these kinds of perks, it’s not uncommon for victims to need more time off than their employer offers to heal from serious injuries.

If you had to take time off of work to be able to recover from your injuries, this can further compound the stress surrounding medical expenses. But you can add the amount of these lost wages to your car accident claim as part of the compensation you are seeking from the courts. If your injuries meant that you could no longer continue in your current line of work even after you

had recovered, you may be able to use this to show that your salary potential was permanently lowered and add that loss in as well. Compensation can be complicated to address, so if you have questions about what you can ask for and what reasonable amounts are for intangibles like pain and suffering, a car accident attorney can help.

<h2>Should I Settle With the Insurance Company?</h2>

It's very common for insurance companies to offer to settle with victims after motor vehicle accidents, but this is something you should investigate with extreme caution and talk with your car accident lawyer about. After a car accident claim has been filed, the insurance company's legal team will evaluate what their odds are if the case were to go forward to trial. Their main goal is to pay as little as possible to the victim. So, this means that they will likely offer less in a settlement than they think they would be forced to pay if the victim wins the lawsuit in court.

However, this doesn't mean that you should never accept a settlement. Going with a settlement can help you get the financial compensation more quickly so you can use it to immediately pay medical expenses and do what you need to get back on your feet. If you are offered a settlement, it's important to discuss it with your attorney to ensure you understand what happens if you accept the settlement in comparison to what you could get if you went ahead with a trial.

<h2>Why Should I Work With a Car Accident Lawyer?</h2>

Many people wonder why they need to work with a car accident lawyer and why they can't just pursue the case on their own. Particularly, if the insurance company has determined that the other driver was 100% at fault, it can seem like an open and shut case that doesn't require legal expertise to pursue. However, it's important to remember that the other party's insurance company will have a full legal team who is dedicated to preserving their clients' interests. It can be difficult and intimidating to go up against an experienced legal team alone.

After a car accident, it's important to talk to an experienced car accident attorney as soon as possible about your rights and options. Having legal representation as you navigate the court system and file a personal injury lawsuit can make the process less stressful and ensure you have someone on your side to explain things every step of the way. Our law firm offers clients a free consultation so we can learn more about your case and how we can help.