



MADISON

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Car Accident: First Steps

Auto accidents are unexpected and stressful. Even the most careful drivers may be involved in a collision. When someone has been injured or killed in a motor-vehicle collision in California, the accident victim and their family members are left with medical bills, lost income, and other costs. It is important to get legal assistance from an experienced Madison Law Attorney to help the accident victim recover, or when the accident is fatal, to help the family members get fully compensated for their losses.

Be prepared

- Carry a set of cones, warning triangles, or emergency flares in your trunk to help alert traffic.
- Keep a pen and paper in your glove box to take down insurance and contact information from those involved in the accident.
- It also helps to have a card with any relevant medical information for you and your family.
- Keep a camera in the vehicle or use your smartphone to take photos of the scene.

Immediately after an accident:

- Check for injuries; call an ambulance when in doubt.
- Call the police and request an officer at the scene, even if the accident seems minor. A police report from the scene can help determine which driver is at fault.
- If the accident is minor, move cars to a safe place, out of traffic. Turn on your vehicle's hazard lights and use cones, warning triangles or flares for safety if available.
- Gather information. Get the names and phone numbers of everyone involved, including witnesses. Also take photographs of the accident before moving vehicles if you can.
- Do not make statements that indicate fault. Apologies can be interpreted as guilt rather than a polite gesture.
- Do not sign any document unless it's for the police or your insurance agent.

After leaving the scene of the accident:

- Seek any needed medical treatment as soon as possible.
- Be sure that you complete all of the treatments prescribed by your healthcare professional.
- Keep a journal of your bills, medications, treatments, and other medical expenses.

You must also contact your insurance company and the insurance companies of those involved. Keep all records of your expenses and cost, such as a rental car, rideshare service, taxi or bus fare. Be careful when you speak to someone else's insurance company. Other insurance companies must protect their clients first, and your statements can be recorded and misinterpreted. You should never give a recorded statement to any insurance company, or even answer their calls before consulting with an experienced personal injury lawyer. Often, insurance adjusters will ask questions that are personal, irrelevant to your accident, or are designed to reduce the value of your claim. You are under no obligation to answer questions that the defendant's insurer asks you.



Important Information (print and keep with insurance documents)

Following is a list of important information that should be gathered, if possible, at the scene of an accident.

Other Vehicle's Information

Name:

Address:

Phone #:

Other Passengers:

Vehicle Make:

Vehicle Model:

Vehicle Year:

Vehicle Description:

Registration Data:

License Plate:

Insurance Carrier:

Insurance Policy No:

Accident Information

Day, Date and Time:

Road you are on:

Intersecting Road:

Landmarks:

Speed Limit:

Direction you were traveling:

Direction other driver was traveling:

Lighting / Visibility Conditions:

Weather Conditions:

Road Hazards / Foreign Bodies:

Grade or Incline: