

What To Do If In An Accident With A Tractor-Trailer

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Chances are on your next road trip, or even just running errands, you will encounter a tractor-trailer during your venture. Our economy relies heavily upon the 30 million tons of freight moved daily by 2 million tractor-trailers. However, at 80,000 pounds, a combined 73 feet long, and a capability of reaching speeds in excess of 70 MPH these gigantic vehicles represent the single largest hazard to the safety of you and your family on our highways.

The role of freight trucks in our economy will only continue to grow as consumers purchase more products online in lieu of purchase goods in person. This upsurge will only serve to increase the amount of tractor-trailers on our highways, as well as pressure to meet shipping deadlines, creating an unfortunate opportunity for motor vehicle accidents.

In the unfortunate event that you find yourself involved in a motor vehicle accident we recommend you do the following:

1. **Stay calm and dial 911.** The post-crash scene can be chaotic and filled with uncertainty. Depending on the severity of your incident, the decisions you make in the next 30 to 60 minutes may affect you for the rest of your life. For these reasons it is critical that you remain calm, think coherently, to enable you to make good decisions. Remaining calm will also help you begin the post-accident investigation by having a clear communication with the 911 operator to provide your location and health status.
2. **Seek health care.** Some injuries are obvious, however, there are several injuries (concussion, muscle strain, contusions, etc.) that are not readily apparent without a thorough examination or after your adrenalin has lowered. Please remember that it is critical for you to be examined by an EMT on site and for you to request transportation to the nearest Emergency Department for a more complete physical and mental examination. It is also important to schedule a follow-up visit with your Primary Care Physician when you are discharged from the Emergency Department.
3. **Remain in your vehicle until clear.** Please assume the immediate accident scene is dangerous and remain in your vehicle until you can see that traffic has stopped or is under control.
4. **Exchange insurance information and notify your insurance carrier.** You will need to notify your insurance carrier of the accident and provide detailed information about your motor

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vehicle accident. You will also need to secure the insurance information for the driver of the tractor-trailer and provide it to your insurance carrier. We recommend taking a picture of the documents on your cell phone and sharing them with your insurance carrier.

5. **Speak with the driver of the tractor-trailer.** While speaking with the driver of the tractor-trailer regarding his or her insurance, we also recommend that you ask to confirm the owner of the tractor-trailer. Please remember to ask for whom he or she is employed by as they might not be the owner of the truck or trailer. This information may be helpful in the event you need to file a claim.
6. **Speak with witnesses.** In the event you can identify witnesses to your motor vehicle accident, we recommend confirming their name, address, telephone number, and email address to enable you, your attorney, and/or your insurance carrier to contact them during the investigation of your claim.
7. **Take photographs or videos.** If you can use your phone, we recommend taking pictures or recording videos of the accident scene, damage to all vehicles involved, and road conditions. As mentioned above, we also recommend taking photographs of important insurance documents and driver's licenses for all parties involved in the collision.
8. **Speak with investigating officer.** You will also need to speak with the investigating law enforcement officer regarding the motor vehicle accident. Please share all the details of the accident with the officer to ensure the documentation and results are as accurate as possible. The officer will take the information he/she obtains from all parties involved, as well as available witnesses, and complete an accident investigation report.
9. **Decline to sign.** The insurance company for the trucking company or the driver of the tractor-trailer may reach out with documents for you to sign. The fine print of these documents may require you to forfeit your right to pursue a claim for a small sum of money. The insurance companies routinely try to convince victims to reach settlements as soon as possible, however, rarely does the victim of a motor vehicle accident fully appreciate the extent of their injuries and medical bills until several months have passed. Remember, any settlement you reach regarding the motor vehicle accident is final without regard for pending results of a medical examination or what may be discovered in the future. For these reasons, it is critical that you speak with an experienced attorney before you sign any document provided by an insurance company or any entity associated with the owner of the tractor-trailer.
10. **Hire an attorney.** If you or a loved has been involved in a motor vehicle accident with a tractor-trailer you will need an experienced attorney to help you navigate through the investigation of your case. An experienced attorney knows which questions to ask, is well-versed in the nuances of the trucking industry, and knows when to be aggressive to obtain the result you deserve.

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The experienced attorneys at Bailey Glasser have litigated trucking accidents on behalf of injured motorists and know the trucking industry from bumper to bumper. The experienced attorneys at Bailey Glasser will provide you a free consultation to evaluate your case.

Attorneys

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Practice Areas

Catastrophic Personal Injury