Rear-End and T-Bone Collisions: Fault, Injuries and Evidence

Rear-end crashes and T-bone collisions are two crash types that come up often in injury claims. The name of the crash describes how the vehicles met, but it does not decide who was at fault. A car accident attorney looking at either type of crash will usually start with the sequence of events, from each car's speed to the signals that controlled traffic.

Why rear-end crashes happen

Many state traffic laws bar drivers from following another vehicle more closely than is reasonable and prudent, taking into account the speed of traffic and the condition of the road. Distraction is a frequent factor. NHTSA notes that sending or reading a text takes a driver's eyes off the road for 5 seconds, which at 55 mph is like driving the length of a football field with eyes closed. An auto accident attorney may car accident lawyer ask for the other driver's phone records when distraction is suspected.

The trailing driver is often found at fault in a rear-end crash, yet that result is not automatic. A vehicle that cuts in and stops short, brake lights that fail or a vehicle backing up may shift part or all of the fault. In a chain-reaction crash, each impact is a separate event, and a middle car pushed into the car ahead may not be at fault for that second impact.

Whiplash and soft tissue injuries

Rear-end impacts are often associated with whiplash, a neck injury caused by the head snapping back and forth. Symptoms such as neck pain and headaches may not appear until hours after the crash, which is one reason a prompt medical evaluation matters. Insurers sometimes dispute injury claims from low-speed rear-end crashes, citing minor vehicle damage. Medical records and photos of both vehicles help answer that argument, together with imaging such as an MRI when a doctor orders it.

How T-bone collisions happen

A T-bone collision happens when the front of one vehicle strikes the side of another, most often at an intersection. Common causes include running a red light or a stop sign and failing to yield on a left turn. A car's sides have less space to absorb crash forces than its front or rear, and the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety https://caraccidentlawyers.wiki/directory/metro-atlanta-law-firms/ (IIHS) evaluates side protection in its own side-impact crash test. Occupants on the struck side can suffer serious injuries, including traumatic brain injury and pelvic fractures.

These crashes often turn on who had the right of way. Useful evidence includes signal timing records, intersection camera video, nearby business surveillance footage, dashcam video and witness statements, plus the event data recorder (EDR) in each car, which may hold speed and braking data from the seconds before the crash. A car crash lawyer typically moves quickly to collect video, because many systems record over old footage within days or weeks.

Shared fault and comparative negligence

Fault is often shared. Most states apply some form of comparative negligence, which reduces a recovery by the injured person's percentage of fault. Under modified comparative negligence, a person found at least 50 or 51 percent at fault, depending on the state, may recover nothing, while pure comparative negligence

allows a reduced recovery at any percentage of fault. A small number of jurisdictions still follow contributory negligence, which can bar recovery for any fault at all. A car accident attorney can explain which rule applies where the crash happened.

A note on deadlines

Each state sets its own statute of limitations for injury claims, and claims against a government agency can require written notice much sooner. This article is general information, not legal advice, and no article can predict how a claim will turn out.