How Fault Works in Rear-End and T-Bone Car Crashes

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 settle who was at fault. A car accident lawyer reviewing one of these crashes usually begins with the sequence of events, from the speed of each car to the signals that controlled the intersection.

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. Distracted driving is a common 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. A car accident attorney may 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 car that cuts in and brakes suddenly, brake lights that fail or a vehicle backing up may shift part or all of the fault. In a chain-reaction crash, every impact is its own event, and a middle vehicle pushed forward may not be responsible for the second impact.

Neck injuries after a rear-end crash

Rear-end impacts are often linked to whiplash, a neck injury caused by the head snapping back and forth. Neck pain and ***car accident lawyer*** headaches may not show up 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, usually 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, which is why the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) rates side protection in a separate side-impact crash test. People seated on the struck side can suffer serious injuries such as traumatic brain injury or pelvic fractures.

These crashes often turn on who had the right of way. Evidence can include signal timing records, intersection camera video, nearby business surveillance footage, dashcam video and witness statements, as well as the event data recorder (EDR) in each car, which may store speed and braking data from the seconds before impact. 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 not always all or nothing. Most states use some version of comparative negligence, which lowers a recovery by the injured person's Car Accident Lawyers Wiki share 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 level 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 involving a government vehicle or agency can require written notice much sooner. This is general information and not legal advice, and it cannot predict the outcome of any claim.