Auto Accidents

Maryland Auto Accident Attorney

JGL personal injury attorneys fight for the rights of automobile accident victims. If you have been injured in an auto accident, and it was the fault of another, you are entitled to fair and just compensation.

More than ever, insurance companies seek to avoid or reduce payment when faced with a claim. We encourage you and your family to contact us immediately, before making statements, signing releases, or accepting an inadequate or unjust settlement.

What to Do Immediately Following a Car Accident in Maryland

Car accidents happen without warning. Your life may be turned upside down. You may be driving home from work or headed to your child's soccer game and unexpectedly become the victim of someone else's negligence, which may involve a wrecked vehicle, serious injuries, and loss of work time.

After a collision, follow these important steps:

- Try to stay calm. Turn on your hazard lights and, if safe, move your vehicle out of traffic.
- Call 911, request police and medical assistance, even if you are unsure if anyone is injured.
- Avoid admitting fault or making any statements that may be used against you.
- Speak to the other driver(s), make sure to exchange contact, insurance, and vehicle information with the other drivers. The best way to do this is to take a picture from your phone of all documents, as most people do not have paper and a pen available.
- If there are any witnesses on the scene, gather contact information.
- Take photographs of the accident scene, including:
  - Your own vehicle, inside and outside photographs. Avoid close up photos; there is no perspective.
  - The other vehicles involved in the accident, making sure to capture license plates.
  - The scene or area where this occurred, marking street signs, traffic lights, and damage to any roads, fences, or buildings. Take at least one shot which includes the overall scene with all vehicles.
- Contact your insurance company to report the accident.
- Get medical attention. Following an accident, your adrenaline may be pumping, and you may not feel any injuries. Some injuries cannot be seen physically from the outside. It is important to be checked by a doctor.

Taking time to follow these steps will protect your interests, help to ensure your claim is not compromised, and provide you with the information needed to successfully manage your claim.

When Should You Talk with an Auto Accident Lawyer?

Call Joseph, Greenwald & Laake to discuss your automobile accident as soon as possible. We will provide you with a **free consultation**. We can also provide information and advice on what you can expect based on the unique circumstances of your

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accident.

Not every car accident claim will require an attorney or lead to a lawsuit, but if you have serious injuries, hiring an experienced auto accident attorney can make a life-changing difference. Before hiring your attorney, know these facts:

 Liability and fault are not always clear. Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia have laws with contributory negligence. This means that you must be free from any and all contributions to the accident. Even if you are 1% at fault, you will recover nothing. An experienced attorney will help frame the facts in the best way possible for your claim.

 Insurance companies are tricky and will take advantage of accident victims' inexperience. They may twist the facts to pin blame on you, claiming contributory negligence and attempting to get you to accept a quick settlement which may undervalue your medical expenses, lost wages, pain and suffering, and other "non-economic damages".

 Documenting your claim is critical. The pain you may feel is real, but juries and insurance companies respond to medical records, receipts, and written records documenting your recovery. Lost wages claims often require more than just a pay stub. An experienced attorney can help you keep the documentation needed for your specific claim.

 Beware of exaggerated claims made by some law firms. Every accident is unique; the facts of your case will determine the compensation you deserve. If a law firm promises quick settlements, ask what other damages are available. Rushing into a settlement before knowing the full extent of your injuries may hurt you with long-term medical needs.

 The auto accident attorneys at Joseph, Greenwald, & Laake see you as more than just a number. We listen carefully to your concerns, help to properly guide your individual claim, and provide you with personalized service.

How Our Maryland Auto Accident Attorneys Can Help You

Following an accident, you may experience anxiety, confusion, pain, and stress. Choosing the auto accident attorneys at Joseph, Greenwald & Laake will help you put the pieces of your life back together and guide you through your recovery. Our attorneys are knowledgeable and practiced in handling the legalities of police, health care providers, and vehicle damages.

- Our attorneys do this work every day. This is our passion. We have more than fifty years of experience handling personal injury and wrongful death cases.
- Our experience and reputation in managing insurance claims, medical treatment, and settlements have been proven. We work hard to get you every penny of compensation you deserve.
- You will always have a **free consultation**.
- You pay nothing unless we win. Our firm takes cases on a contingency fee, striving to maximize your settlement while working to reduce the costs involved with medical care and insurance liens.
- Our attorneys provide you with advice for ongoing therapy and counseling, compensation for decreased and/or eliminated earnings, psychological trauma, and ongoing pain and suffering.

How Long Do You Have to File a Car Accident Claim?

There are deadlines in every kind of legal claim. In **Maryland** and **Washington DC,** the statute of limitations is **three years**. So, a lawsuit must be filed within three years of the crash if a settlement is not reached. This means if an accident happened on May 1, 2023, the lawsuit must be filed in court by May 1, 2026. If the deadline date falls on a weekend or other day that the courts are closed, the case can be filed on the next day that courts are open (Maryland Rule 1-203(a), Maryland Code Art. 1). For certain governmental and quasi-governmental agencies, very distinct types of notice may be required, sometimes within 180 days, to preserve the right to bring a claim.

In **Virginia,** the statute of limitations is only **two years**, so if your accident took place in Virginia on May 1, 2024, you must file your action before the statute expires on May 1, 2026. Please **don't wait until the last minute** to file suit for personal injuries or wrongful death. Our lawyers receive calls from victims who have spent a long time negotiating with an insurance company, only to realize that when this fails, they do not have enough time to get a reasonable settlement, as the statute of limitations period is almost over. When these victims actually do call a lawyer, most law firms will stay away from cases with short deadlines. Personal injury

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cases can be complicated and need research. Many times, the only way to be safe is to file suit with many months to spare. Sometimes you may not know if you have all the correct defendants.

What Types of Compensation Are Available Following a Car Accident?

As a victim of a car crash, you have the right to full compensation in your case. Your world has changed; medical bills pile up; working your job becomes impossible; and pain becomes constant. **This is not your fault.**

Under the law, the negligent driver who caused an accident can be held liable for all the harm caused by the accident. Whether your injuries were caused by a single driver, a trucking company, or a governmental vehicle, the attorneys at Joseph, Greenwald & Laake will work hard to fight for every dollar allowed by law.

Injuries are usually broken down into two categories: economic and non-economic damages.

Economic Damages

Economic damages include:

- Past or future medical expenses incurred as a result of the accident. Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia follow the "collateral source" rule. This means that you can recover damages for all medical expenses, even if the bills were covered by insurance (including Medicare and Medicaid), workers' compensation, or personal injury protection. This also includes pharmacy and medical devices or equipment.
- Reimbursement for lost wages or loss of earning capacity. If your injuries prevent you from working, you have a right to be compensated for your lost wages. In addition, if your injuries result in a condition which temporarily or permanently impacts your ability to do your job, you can be compensated for future wages or lost earnings capacity.
- Other damages include the cost of hiring someone to care for you during recovery or to perform services which you cannot complete during your treatment.

Non-Economic Damages

Non-economic damages include:

- Compensation for pain and suffering, which is the most significant harm in any accident case. This money will compensate you for the amount of physical and mental suffering caused by your injuries. The more severe and painful the injury is will determine the amount of damages.
- Pain and suffering are the most significant harm in any accident case. This is money to compensate the car accident victim of a motor vehicle accident for the amount of physical and mental suffering caused by their injuries. The more severe and painful the injury, the greater the pain and suffering damages. But remember, no two injuries are the same, and you cannot base your damages on settlements from other seemingly similar cases.
- Damages for permanent injuries, emotional trauma, or wrongful death. Keep in mind, no two injuries are the same, and you cannot base your damages on settlements from other seemingly similar cases. It can be very difficult to determine the amount of pain and suffering in any accident, and it is difficult to quantify a dollar amount.

Understanding Liability in Auto Accidents

Simply put, liability means who is responsible under the law for the damages that result from a motor vehicle crash. Most automobile accident lawsuits in Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia are claims for *negligence*, which means that someone did something wrong. For example, the negligent driver ran a red light, didn't pay attention, rear-ended a stopped car, or made an unsafe lane change.

When driving a vehicle, the law requires that all of us follow the rules of the road. We have to obey the speed limit, follow at a safe distance, yield to oncoming vehicles, and obey traffic signals. Failing to do so is negligent. We cannot drive under the influence of drugs, alcohol, or medications, or drive drowsy or while distracted. Doing so is negligent. Driving in a negligent manner that results

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in an accident establishes liability, or responsibility, under the laws of Maryland for damages that another person suffers as a result of the accident.

It may not always be easy to determine liability following an accident. Often, there are conflicting accounts from the involved drivers and witnesses. Multiple vehicles involved may mean more than one person may be negligent. In some instances, the owner of a vehicle may be liable for the actions of an employee or an inexperienced driver.

Determining the liable person, who is legally responsible for causing an accident, is necessary so that they can be held financially responsible for medical bills, lost wages, and other damages of the injured party.

Do what you can to avoid being involved in an accident, including observing speed limits, yielding to others, changing lanes safely, observing a safe following distance, obeying road signs and traffic lights, avoiding distractions, etc. And although you drive as safely as possible, this does not prevent another road user from making a mistake that causes you to be involved in an accident.

Work with an Experienced Maryland Auto Accident Attorney

What matters to you, matters to us. For over five decades, JGL attorneys have fought to improve the future of families, the arc of careers, the success of business, and your most basic human rights. The attorneys of JGL take your business, family, and personal issues as personally as you do. We relentlessly pursue the outcomes you desire. If you need guidance from a Maryland auto accident attorney, contact JGL.

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