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

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 attorney looking at either type of crash usually begins with the sequence of events, from each car's speed to the signals that controlled traffic.

How rear-end collisions happen

Many state traffic codes prohibit following another vehicle more closely than is reasonable and prudent, with attention to the speed of traffic and the condition of the road. Distraction is a frequent factor. NHTSA explains 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 will sometimes request the other driver's phone records if distraction is suspected.

The trailing driver is often found at fault in a rear-end crash, but that is not automatic. A car that cuts in and brakes suddenly, brake lights that do not work 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 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 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, pointing to light vehicle damage. Medical records and photos of both vehicles help answer that argument, along with imaging such as an MRI when a doctor orders one.

Why side-impact crashes happen

In a T-bone crash, the front of *car accident lawyer* one vehicle strikes the side of another, most often at an intersection. Typical causes include failing to yield on a left turn and running a red light or a stop sign. A car's sides have less space to absorb crash forces than its front or rear, and the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) evaluates side protection in its own side-impact crash test. People *caraccidentlawyers.wiki* seated on the struck side can suffer serious injuries such as traumatic brain injury or pelvic fractures.

Disputes in these crashes often come down to 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 store speed and braking data from the seconds before impact. A car crash lawyer will usually try to collect video quickly, because many systems record over old footage within days or weeks.

When both drivers share fault

Fault is not always all or nothing. Most states use some version 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 few jurisdictions still apply contributory negligence, which can bar recovery for even slight fault. 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.