Choosing an Auto Accident Attorney: Questions to Ask

Choosing a car accident lawyer goes better with a few clear questions. Some crashes involve a single insurer and a modest property claim, while others involve serious injuries, several policies and disputed fault. The questions below can make a first consultation more useful, regardless of the size of the claim.

Confirm the license and record

Before any meeting, confirm the basics. Every state bar or licensing agency offers a way to check that a lawyer is licensed and in good standing, and many publish public discipline records. A listing in a directory or a badge from a rating publisher reflects that publisher's selection, not a license check and not a prediction of results. If the crash occurred out of state, ask whether the lawyer **car accident lawyer** is licensed there or plans to work with local counsel.

Questions about experience

Ask how many car crash claims the lawyer handles, and of what kind. An auto accident lawyer should be comfortable with coverage questions, such as uninsured motorist (UM) claims, PIP and MedPay, and liens from health plans or Medicare. Ask how the firm collects evidence like crash reports, dashcam video and event data recorder (EDR) downloads. Ask whether the lawyer has tried car crash cases before a jury, because trial experience can shape how a case is prepared, even though most claims settle.

Fees and the written agreement

Many injury lawyers work on a contingency fee, meaning a percentage of any recovery. ABA Model Rule 1.5(c), which many states follow in some form, requires a contingent fee agreement to be in writing and signed by the client, and to explain how the fee is calculated and whether expenses come out before or after it. Ask who pays case costs if there is no recovery, including filing fees, record charges and deposition costs. Ask whether the percentage rises if a lawsuit is filed, and ask for a written closing statement at the end.

Communication and staffing

Ask whether the car accident lawyer you meet will be the one handling the case, and how often to expect https://caraccidentlawyers.wiki/reference/contingency-fees-and-case-costs/ updates. Ask who answers questions when the lawyer is in court, and how updates are usually sent. ABA Model Rule 1.5(e) generally requires the client's written agreement before lawyers in different firms divide a fee, so any referral or co-counsel plan should be explained at the start.

Documents worth bringing

A consultation is more useful when the documents are available. Bring the police report, or at least the report number, along with photos of the scene and the vehicles. Insurance letters, claim numbers and any forms already signed matter as well, since they show who has made contact and what has been agreed. Medical bills and proof of missed work help document the losses so far.

Red flags and realistic expectations

Be wary of anyone who promises a specific dollar amount at a first meeting. No lawyer can predict the outcome of a claim with certainty. Unsolicited calls or visits after a crash are another warning sign, because ABA Model Rule 7.3 generally restricts lawyers from soliciting clients through live person-to-person contact. A motor vehicle accident attorney should be able to explain the statute of limitations that applies. This article is general information and not legal advice.