

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO

if You're Involved **in a Car Accident**



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WHAT TO DO AFTER A CAR CRASH

Following a car accident, there are several things a person should do to ensure that the legal ramifications are dealt with properly. The aftermath of an accident can be stressful, and it's easy to forget to do everything one should do after an accident. By following this advice, you will be more likely to recuperate your damages and less likely to be held accountable for an accident that is not your fault.



Always call the police

This is important. In the event of an accident, you always want to contact the police. The police will document the scene in their report, which the insurance company often uses when processing a claim. The police report works to preserve evidence. Even if you are at fault for the accident, you'll want the police to document the accident so that you can't be held liable for injuries or damages that didn't originate from the accident. The other driver may try to compel you to not contact the police, but it's always in your best interest to do so.



Never admit fault

Never admit fault at the scene of an accident. Accidents can be confusing, and while you may feel as though you were at fault in the immediate wake of an accident, it could be that the fault lays with the other driver, or is shared. Tell the police the complete truth and let them determine fault.



Record witness contact information

Not all the witnesses at the scene of an accident will be able to wait around for the police to arrive, and even those who can may not be questioned. Make sure to collect the contact information of all the witnesses on the scene for your own records. If you have a cellphone that records video, you could also record actual witness testimonies. This is beneficial because the accident is fresh in their memory. A video of them providing testimony at the scene of the accident also proves that they were there when the accident occurred.



Take pictures

Almost all cellphones can take photographs and video. You should take pictures and/or video of the scene of the accident, including the position of the cars involved, the damage to each vehicle, and any possible environmental factors that may have contributed to the accident. If you don't carry a cellphone, or your cellphone doesn't have the ability to take pictures or record video, then you should keep a disposable camera in your glove box in case of emergencies.



Seek medical attention

Unless you're absolutely sure that you're completely uninjured, you should seek medical attention after an accident. This doesn't mean that you need to accept an ambulance ride to the hospital, but you should see a medical professional to make sure that you didn't sustain any serious injuries. The adrenaline pumping through your bloodstream in the aftermath of an accident can work to mask pain, and a serious injury can present itself with little to no discomfort. You can also prove that your injuries were sustained in the accident by seeing a doctor in a timely manner, so that they can connect your recent injuries to the accident itself.



Contact a lawyer if you've been injured

It's the job of the insurance company to look out for their own best interests, so it's important that you have someone on your side who will look out for yours. If you've been injured in a car accident, one of the first people you should contact is an attorney who can advise you and represent you if the insurance company is unwilling to pay all your damages. You should speak to an attorney before speaking with the insurance company so that you can go over your statement and make sure you don't say anything that the insurance company can use against you. People who hire an attorney after being injured in a car accident generally get 2-5 times more money than those who deal with the insurance company themselves.



Exchange insurance information

It's important to have the other driver's insurance information. Normally this information is contained in the police report, but occasionally the police don't include it. For your own records, it's a good idea to exchange insurance information with the other driver independent of the police.



Have your car inspected by a professional

Not all damage is visible. It's important to have your car checked out by a professional mechanic to make sure there isn't any additional damage. A mechanic will also be able to determine whether the damage and/or mechanical issues are due to the accident.



Understand what you are entitled to

Speak with your attorney about what you're entitled to recuperate in damages.



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If you were injured in an accident that was caused by another driver, you should contact a personal injury lawyer to discuss your legal options. For more information on what to do if you were involved in an accident, please contact The Pottenger Law Firm or visit our website today for a free consultation.