

Auto Accident Victim's Guide

Overview

When you are involved in a car accident, it's easy to become frightened and unsure of what you should do. Keeping track of important details is challenging when you're hurt and getting medical treatment, and it can be difficult to make decisions that could significantly impact your future.

You'll find this guide helpful to keep track of critical facts, details, and just your general impressions and thoughts after being in an auto accident.

This document is not a legal document and it's not something you have to do. It's simply a tool to help you better understand what will happen after an accident, who you should be contacting, and help you to remember and record details that are often quickly forgotten after a crash.

When to Contact a Lawyer

While getting proper medical care for everyone who is hurt is of the utmost importance after an accident, the next thing you'll want to do is contact an experienced auto accident attorney. After a crash, you'll go head to head with insurance companies, which can be frustrating and overwhelming.

Insurance companies have professionals on their side to help them, and you should also have someone in your corner who is willing and able to fight for your rights and interests after a devastating car wreck.

An Important Note to Remember

One of the most critical things to remember after a crash is to **never discuss the case with the other party's insurer**. Understand that anything you say to the insurance company of the other driver may be used against you, and most



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likely will. You will not want to discuss anything with their insurance company until you speak with an attorney.

Even if you aren't sure whether you want to work with a car accident lawyer or not, it's important to at least have a consultation with one to learn about your rights and responsibilities after a crash. At Ginnis & Krathen, we are available **at no charge** to answer your questions and address your concerns and your options. Utilizing your right to consulting with an experienced attorney could have a significant impact your future.

Accident Checklist

Important details can be lost or forgotten in the hectic aftermath of a crash. Write down everything you remember right after it happens. We've put together this guide to help you with that process.

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At the Scene:

There are several pieces of information that you'll need to collect at the scene of the accident:

- Time and date of the accident
- Where the accident occurred
- How many cars were involved in the crash
- Contact information for everyone who was involved in the accident, including passengers
- Contact information for individuals who witnessed the accident and may be able to provide a statement
- Insurance information for the other drivers
- Your insurance information
- Contact information for the law enforcement officer dispatched to the scene
- If an ambulance was involved, the contact information of the paramedics and the ambulance number
- What injuries you discussed with the paramedics at the scene of the accident and what their response and treatments were
- What injuries other people involved in the accident reported to paramedics and what treatments were received
- If you were taken to the hospital, record the name of the hospital, the doctors that treated you, and the treatments you received
- A complete description of everything you remember about the accident
- Write down any unusual details that are significant, such as the smell of alcohol on the other driver's breath or whether they were swerving or driving irrationally before the crash
- Write down the damage sustained to your vehicle if you inspected it at the scene or went to go see it at an impound lot

After the Accident:

- Write down who you talked to when you called your insurance company about the crash, what your claim number is, and what specifically you talked about with the insurer on the phone
- Write down what, if anything, you spoke about with the other driver's insurance company. If you have not yet, it is not recommended that you do
- Keep a record of how your injuries are affecting you at work, and whether they make doing your job difficult or impossible
- Write down any concerns you have about your injuries permanently affecting your ability to work in your current job and why
- Record your thoughts and feelings about how your injuries are affecting your daily life, such as being unable to be a part of activities that you normally enjoy
- Write down any concerns you have about your injuries permanently affecting your ability to be a part of activities that you normally enjoy in the future
- Think about what kind of help you might want from a car accident lawyer and write it down

Recovering from the Accident:

Once the basic details about the accident are recorded, it's time to keep a detailed record of your recovery.

- If you go to the doctor and what the doctor says
- Any medical treatments or medications you are receiving
- How you are following your doctor's instructions after the accident
- What your pain level is every day and throughout the day
- Any discussions you have with your insurance company regarding the accident
- How much work you have missed and any discussions you have with your employer about missed work
- Any activities that you would normally be able to engage in but no longer can after the crash
- Any conversations you have with your attorney and what is discussed
- Your thoughts and feelings about the accident, e.g., if you are afraid to ride in a car, if you have nightmares or anxiety, or any other psychological issues you are experiencing after the crash



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Stay Up to Date With Authorities

In some cases, including negligence or intoxication, there may be a criminal case related to your accident. While this is a separate case from your personal injury case, it is important to gather as much information as possible about the criminal case as well.

Discuss with the county attorney how you would like to stay informed of anything related to your accident, including court dates and decisions that are made by law enforcement or legal authorities.

Important Numbers to Have on Hand:

Ginnis & Krathen: (954) 213-6513

Fort Lauderdale Police Department: (954) 828-5700

Boca Raton Police Department: (561) 338-1234

Broward County Sheriff's Office: (954) 722-5800

Palm Beach County Sheriff's Office: (561) 558-2700

State Police Department: (954) 321-2713

Get Copies of the Accident Report

In many cases, there is no criminal case filed. Even so, it is still critical to contact your local law enforcement agency (typically the officer who responded to the accident scene) and get formal copies of the police report that was filed.

Should you decide to pursue a case later on, the police report will be a critical piece of evidence. Keep several copies in a safe place, along with your accident-related bills. The police report may include valuable witness reports that were given to the police officer at the time of the accident.



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Ongoing Documentation

Injuries and how they affect your life and ability to work can change from day to day during the healing process, so it's a good idea to keep track of your recovery on a daily basis. You may want to purchase a journal that you can use specifically for the purpose of recording your day-to-day observations after the accident, as well as keeping all your bills relating to the accident.

Many accident victims suffer from the after-effects of a crash for the rest of their lives. Both physical and emotional healing can take a long time, and making note of everything you experience now can come in handy later during the claims process.

The Long Road Ahead

Recovering from the physical and emotional damage caused by an accident is no easy task. It takes a long time, and often, life is never quite the same. There's no mitigating the fact that an auto accident will usually affect a family for the rest of their lives in one way or another.

During this time, it is absolutely critical that you have support. Navigating the emotional, physical, and legal aspects of auto accident recovery is difficult, and it's important that you have someone on your side that will zealously advocate for your rights and best interests when you are focused on healing and regaining your life.

At Ginnis & Krathen, we are available to assist you through the process of recovering after a car accident and when it is appropriate, we can help you bring forward a claim for compensation to recover the damages you've incurred. When you or a loved one are hurt in a crash, contact us for a no obligation consultation to discuss your needs. We're here for you.