Austin Car Accident Guide from Colley Law
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How to Report a Car Accident in Austin, Texas

If you have been involved in a car accident, the very first thing you should do is to contact the police about your accident right away! Reporting a car accident to the authorities and filing a police report will be in your favor.

Call 911

After any type of vehicle accident, regardless of the severity, always call 911 and tell the dispatcher your location and that you were involved in a car wreck. A police officer will arrive to the scene shortly after the phone call. Be sure to provide the officer important details about your accident, which they will include in the police report, also known as accident or incident report.

What do I tell the officer?

Explain what happened in detail. The officer will help by asking strategic questions such as “were you wearing a seatbelt?” “who’s at fault?”, etc. All of this information will be in the report that will provide you support further down the road if you are in a court case. It will be crucial to establish fault during the insurance claims process as well.

You will also have to give the officer your proof of insurance, driver’s license, and vehicle registration. Tip: Keep all these items in a folder in your glove box at all times.

How to Get Access to the Police Report?

By Texas law, a police officer has to submit a report to the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDot) for an accident that has a personal injury, death, or damage to property in excess of $1,000 no later than 10 days after the car crash. TxDot records car accidents on all roadways, not just the highways. There are some pieces of information that you need to provide in order to obtain the report.

- Name of everyone present in the car(s) at the time of the crash
- Date and/or location of the accident

You are able to access this report by simply filling out some information on the Crash Report Online Purchase System on [https://cris.dot.state.tx.us/public/Purchase/](https://cris.dot.state.tx.us/public/Purchase/) from [http://www.txdot.gov/driver/laws/crash-reports.html](http://www.txdot.gov/driver/laws/crash-reports.html).

The cost is: $6.00 for a regular copy and $8.00 for a certified copy, required for most legal proceedings.
Important Information to Gather

Many people involved in car accidents are frazzled by the event and often forget key information that they should gather after the accident. This is important for getting medical and work compensation after the accident during your personal injury claim and negotiations. Here is a quick list of information you need in any car accident. We recommend you to print off this list and keep it in your car for easy access, if and when you are involved in an accident.

At the Scene of an Accident

- Photos of the accident scene and all vehicles involved
- Company name, policy number and phone number for other insurance companies
- Location of the accident
- Names, phone numbers, addresses, and email addresses of all occupants and witnesses
- If emergency services respond: police report number, phone number, officer name and badge number, etc.

After the Accident

- Police Report
- Job Related Records (to prove lost income)
- Medical Records
- Vehicle Damage Estimates and Proof of Fair Market Value (Kelly Blue Book)
- Personal Car Accident Statement (What happened, how were you feeling)
Battling with the insurance companies after a car accident can be tricky sometimes. Your insurance premium will likely rise because you are now considered a liability on the road. Be aware of insurance scams where agents take advantage of these unfortunate events. It’s always best to contact a car accident attorney to get the legal view of your situation before trusting in a car insurance salesperson. In fact, car accidents involved with uninsured or underinsured drivers result in very complicated legal proceedings.

**Do:**

- Call Colley & Colley before talking to your insurance company. But don’t wait more than 24 hours.
- Politely tell the other driver’s insurance company that you will return their call after talking to a lawyer.

**Don’t:**

- Never lie to your insurance company (never lie period!)
- Don’t make a recorded statement until you have spoken with an attorney.
- Don’t answer questions about who was at fault
- Don’t accepted a settlement from the insurance company until you have talked with a lawyer to be confident that you are receiving a “fair” amount to cover all expenses.

All insurance companies have the duty to act in good faith. If you feel that you have been wronged by an insurance company or have any concerns, contact a lawyer to understand your rights.
Avoid Making These Mistakes After a Car Accident

Car accidents in Austin, Texas and anywhere else can be a traumatic experience and a costly one, for that matter! Protect yourself and be aware of these common mistakes many people make after a car accident.

Mistake #1
Not Seeking Medical Attention
Many people after an accident feel “okay” and don’t want to take the time to visit a medical practitioner for a comprehensive exam. You are in shock right now and may actually not notice that your neck or back is in pain from whiplash. Symptoms creep up a day or two after the incident in most cases. Make sure to seek medical attention following an accident right away!

Mistake #2
Admitting You’re at Fault
You could very well be at fault but avoid taking full responsibility until you have spoken with a lawyer. You may not be aware that the other driver was texting, speeding, drinking and driving, or maybe their vehicle wasn’t operating properly due to a product defect.

Mistake #3
Forgetting to Gather Information
Always, always, always gather the other drivers personal information after the car accident. This is crucial for legal proceedings, and will help your case. Document the facts by taking notes with your cell phone and pictures of the damages.

Mistake #4
Speaking Too Soon With Insurance Companies
You could easily provide information to the insurance company that wouldn’t be in your favor and could very well deny yourself compensation for your expenses, without speaking to a personal injury attorney beforehand. Most insurance companies will record the call, so whatever you say will be on tape! Be choiceful with your words. Contact a lawyer to know what not to say.
Signs That You Should Hire a Lawyer to Represent Your Case

Consult a lawyer — you don’t get charged unless we win your case. It won’t cost you a dime!

If you are questioning whether or not you should hire a lawyer in Austin, Texas to represent your car accident case ask yourself these questions:

- Did I sustain injuries from the accident?
- Was the accident a result of someone else’s negligence?
- Did someone else cause the accident?

If you have answered yes to these three questions then you should hire a personal injury attorney or car accident lawyer to represent your case!

Here’s Why You Should Hire a Lawyer:

- The cause of the accident may be due to faulty equipment, car defect, or some other non-obvious reason. A personal injury attorney will be able to investigate the facts.
- You may need a lawyer on your side when dealing with insurance companies. Some companies don’t practice good faith and may deny you a fair claim.
- You may end up with a lot of bills! Whether it’s medical bills from receiving immediate medical attention, or lost income from missing work due to the accident.

At Colley & Colley, LLP, we know the devastation a car accident can cause to a person’s life. It can take weeks or months to recover from injuries sustained in a serious accident, and that can threaten your job security and financial stability. The added stress of wondering whether or not you will be able to see compensation for the hardships endured post-accident can be too very difficult to handle.

We will make the legal process easy for you, removing any fear or stress that is inhibiting you from getting behind the wheel again or handling costly medical expenses from the negligence of another driver.