

Topic for the Month:

What to Do if You Are in a Motor Vehicle Accident

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1. Remain at Scene of Accident. Wisconsin law requires the driver or a vehicle involved in an accident resulting in personal injury, death or property damage to stop his/her vehicle at the scene of the accident.

2. Assist the Injured. Check for injured persons. If someone is seriously injured, call 911 immediately and request emergency aid. Make the injured person comfortable, but do not move the person unless you are skilled in giving emergency care or it's absolutely necessary to avoid further injury. Good intentions on your part could result in further injury to the victim.

Wisconsin has a "Good Samaritan" law under which any person who gives first aid or emergency assistance at the scene of an accident in good faith cannot be liable for providing emergency care.

3. Warn Other Drivers. Make every effort to warn other drivers of the accident to prevent additional accidents. At night use available flares, reflectors, or flashlights.

4. Call an Officer. Wisconsin law requires the driver of a vehicle involved in an accident resulting in personal injury, death, or property damage of \$1,000 or more, or \$200 for government property, to immediately notify the local police department, sheriff, or highway patrol of the accident. Failure to report an accident may result in the revocation of your driver's license. Even if there are no apparent personal injuries, it is advisable to give this notice immediately. Injuries often show up later, and it is important that an officer investigate the accident promptly. Report any injury you have suffered. If you do not request an investigation, you may seriously damage your chances of obtaining full compensation or may be blamed for an accident that is not your fault.

5. Assist the Officer. Remain at the scene, unless injured, until the officer arrives. Cooperate with the officer by relating the basic facts of the accident. Explain what happened. Be complete and accurate. Avoid jumping to conclusions about who was at fault. Avoid talking about the accident with persons other than the investigating police officers. **If it is a serious accident, consult a lawyer who handles accident cases as quickly as possible.**

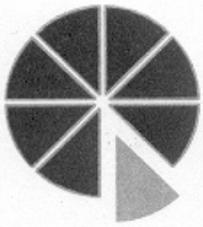
6. Identify the Other driver. Obtain the other driver's name, address, and license plate (vehicle registration) number. Ask to see the other driver's license. Wisconsin law requires exchange of this information among all parties involved in an accident. It is also highly recommended that you get the name of the other driver's insurance company or agent. Keep a pencil and pad with this document in the glove compartment of your automobile.

7. Obtain names and Telephone Numbers of Witnesses. Often, by the time the police arrive at the accident scene, witnesses to the collision may be gone. Therefore, obtain the name, address, and phone number of any witness(es) as soon as you can. Witnesses and others at the scene might have information about the circumstances of the accident.

8. Keep a Record of the Accident. If you are involved in an accident where a law enforcement agency has not filled out an accident report, you will be required to complete a "Driver's Report of Accident" form within ten days of the accident if the accident resulted in personal injury, death, or property damage of \$1,000 or more, or \$200 for government property. To aid you in completing that form, fill out the Accident Information Form at the end of this document.

9. Do not Admit Fault. A ticket or an arrest at the scene of the accident does not necessarily indicate liability. A plea of no contest followed by a conviction in connection with a traffic accident cannot ordinarily be used against you later in a suit for damages. A plea of guilty and conviction, however, may be used against you. **It is important that you contact a lawyer who handles accident cases as soon as possible before admitting any liability or guilt.**

Knowledge is Power. Knowing your rights is important in personal injury claims. **Our firm has a Team of Attorneys with experience in handling personal injury claims.** Feel free to call us at anytime to discuss your rights.



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