MARTIN & JONES PLLC
Attorneys at Law

When experiencing car trouble or other issues, people immediately think the best thing to do is to pull onto the shoulder. Unfortunately, the shoulder of the road is one of the most dangerous places you can be. If you have been injured in a car accident on the shoulder of the road, a car accident lawyer can help you rebuild your life.

How Car Accidents Happen on the Side of the Road

There are many different ways that car accidents can happen on the shoulder of the road. Distracted driving is perhaps one of the most common causes, but speeding and other dangerous driving habits also play a role. The reality is that motorists stopped on the side of a busy highway pose a hazard to themselves and to other drivers. Here are some of the most common ways that car accidents occur on the road shoulder.

- A driver stops their vehicle on the side of the road in the dark but does not utilize their hazard lights, use flares, or take other efforts to increase its visibility. Another driver strikes the vehicle but likely would have avoided the accident had they been able to see the car.
- Another driver stops their vehicle on the side of the road but turns on their hazard lights and takes other safety precautions. Unfortunately, the vehicle is struck by another driver who is not paying attention.
- The driver stops their vehicle and takes whatever precautions that they can, but is struck by a passing vehicle when they exit the car.
- A driver is stopped on the side of the road during inclement weather and is struck by another vehicle that loses control due to the poor weather conditions.
- A driver attempts to stop on the side of the road, but due to the conditions of the shoulder (soft shoulder or a harsh drop off from the road surface), the driver loses control of the vehicle and gets into an accident.
- A driver stopped on the side of the road becomes a distraction to other drivers that cause an accident.
- A driver who was stopped on the side of the road causes an accident when they attempt to re-enter traffic but fail to do so safely.

Semi-trucks or tractor-trailers are particularly hazardous to other vehicles when stopped on the side of the road. Due to their height, they present a risk of what is commonly known as an underride accident, where a passenger vehicle is

crushed underneath the rear of the trailer. These accidents can be catastrophic and result in severe injuries and even death.

Whatever the circumstances, if you have been involved in a roadside accident, a car accident lawyer can sort out who was at fault and what your options are for moving forward.

How to Avoid Roadside Accidents

Here are some tips for helping you avoid being involved in a roadside accident.

1. If you see someone stopped on the side of the road, give them space. Even though North Carolina's Move Over laws apply only to emergency, utility, and some municipal vehicles, moving into another lane or just giving them some extra space is good practice.
2. Do not pull onto the shoulder of the road unless it is an emergency.
3. If you have a flat tire, drive to the next exit.
4. If you have to pull onto the shoulder, pull as far off of the road as you can.
5. If you have to pull onto the shoulder, try to stop where there is good visibility and avoid blind curves or on the downhill side of a hill.
6. Do not stop on the left shoulder unless you absolutely cannot pull over to the right shoulder.
7. Make your car visible. Activate your hazard lights and use flares or reflective triangles.
8. Be extremely careful if you have to exit your vehicle and wait for a break in approaching traffic. If you have to wait outside of your vehicle, wait a safe distance away in case your vehicle is struck by another driver.

Drivers should plan ahead for the possibility that they may have to stop unexpectedly. First, make sure you have flares or other items to increase your visibility. Second, understand what options are available to you for help. NCDOT does have a safety patrol to assist disabled motorists. They can be reached by dialing *HP on your mobile phone. Otherwise, consider purchasing roadside assistance through your auto insurance or a standalone service such as AAA .

What to Do if You Are Involved in a Roadside Accident

The moments following a roadside accident are critical to your safety. If you have been involved in an accident on the side of the road, you need to take the following steps.

- If no one is obviously injured, call the non-emergency number for the police to report the accident. The police will arrive on the scene, redirect traffic to keep you safe, and prepare an accident report.
- If there are injuries, you should call 911.
- If you believe you are injured, do not hesitate to go to the hospital via ambulance.
- Get the name, contact information, and insurance information of the other driver.
- Get the name and contact information for any witnesses.
- Make note of the make, model, and color of the other vehicle, and the license plate number.
- To the extent you are able to, take pictures of the scene of the accident, including damage to the vehicles and any injuries that you have suffered.

If you are injured, you should consider speaking with an experienced car accident lawyer to understand your options. The insurance company may try to settle your claim as soon as possible as a way to limit their liability exposure. A car accident lawyer can protect your rights and make sure you receive fair compensation for your claim so that you can make a full recovery.

Injured in an Accident on the Shoulder of the Road? Contact Martin & Jones Today

A roadside accident can change your life, but you do not have to face these challenges alone. A car accident lawyer from Martin & Jones can help you get fair compensation for your injuries, lost wages, and pain and suffering. Contact us today by calling 800-662-1234 to schedule a free consultation to discuss your case and your options.

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