

Losing a loved one in a fatal car accident is a horrific tragedy. In addition to the grief associated with your loss, you may also have to face an uncertain future caused by the loss of your loved one's companionship and support. If the accident was caused by someone's negligence, you may be entitled to compensation. You do not have to pursue your claim alone - a [Durham car accident lawyer](#) can handle your case for you while you heal from your sudden loss.

Fatal Car Accidents Are More Common Than We Realize

According to the data available from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), 36,096 people died in fatal car accidents across the country in 2019. Even though this reflects an overall decrease, the number of people killed in car accidents is still shocking.

To bring this number closer to home, statistics available from the North Carolina Department of Transportation suggest that there are approximately 1,400 fatal car accidents every year, with an increase in 2020 of 1,659. Regardless of whether the numbers are increasing or decreasing, the bottom line is that every day at least three people are killed in car accidents every day in North Carolina.

Fatal Car Accidents and Wrongful Death Claims

Many fatal car accidents are caused by negligence - the failure of at least one of the other drivers to drive safely. When someone's negligence results in another person's death, the surviving family members can pursue a [wrongful death claim](#). If successful, a wrongful death claim enables the victim's loved ones to receive compensation for the following losses:

- Funeral and burial expenses

- Medical expenses incurred prior to the victim's death
- Pain and suffering
- Loss of financial support and future income
- Loss of companionship

Wrongful death claims are complicated and difficult for non-lawyers to pursue. A Durham car accident attorney with experience in handling wrongful death cases can make sure your family receives the compensation they need.

Common Causes of Fatal Car Accidents

While almost any car accident can result in death, certain factors increase the likelihood of a fatal car accident. Some of these causes may be obvious while others may be more surprising.

Driving While Intoxicated

According to the NHTSA, alcohol-related fatalities account for almost one quarter of all fatal accidents in North Carolina. Driving while under the influence of alcohol or drugs are one of the most often-cited causes of fatal car accidents. In 2019, for example, driving while under the influence of drugs or alcohol accounted for 240 fatal car accidents across North Carolina.

Driving while intoxicated can slow the driver's reflexes and impair their vision and judgment - impairments that can quickly lead to a car accident. Not only do drunk drivers have a difficult time avoiding road hazards and other potential accidents, but they are also more likely to cross into oncoming traffic, run stop signs and traffic lights, and speed excessively.

Even if the other driver is being prosecuted for DWI, you can still pursue a claim for damages if you have lost a loved one in a fatal drunk driving accident. A Durham car accident attorney can help you gather the evidence you need to prove your case.

Distracted Driving

With the proliferation of smartphones and other portable electronic devices, we have seen an increase in the number of fatal car accidents caused by distracted driving. The NHTSA reported that in 2019 there were 2,895 fatal car accidents involving distracted drivers. Of these fatal accidents, 422 involved the use of a mobile phone. Drivers can be distracted by more than their phones. Fatal accidents were reportedly caused by additional distractions such as

the following:

- Moving objects in the vehicle such as cargo or pets
- Adjusting the radio or climate controls
- Eating or drinking
- Daydreaming
- Distracted by passenger

The 2019 statistics available through the North Carolina Department of Transportation reflect the following:

- 1,384 accidents were caused by mobile phone-related distractions, resulting in 6 fatalities
- 591 accidents were caused by distractions caused by other electronic devices (e.g. navigation devices, DVD players), resulting in 7 fatalities
- External distractions caused 462 accidents and resulted in 2 fatalities
- Distractions inside the vehicle caused 1,419 accidents and resulted in 5 fatalities

In 2019 there were 20 fatal car accidents across North Carolina as a result of distracted driving. If you have lost a loved one due to distracted driving, a Durham fatal car accident lawyer can help you prove your case so that you can get the compensation you deserve.

Aggressive or Reckless Driving

Aggressive driving is another common cause of fatal car accidents that is often overlooked. Aggressive driving can include tailgating, stopping short, improper lane changes, or any behavior intended to aggravate the other driver. Reckless or careless driving can involve driving aggressively, as well as driving erratically and failing to follow basic traffic laws and rules of the road.

According to the Department of Transportation, aggressive and reckless driving contributed to more than 12,000 accidents in 2019 in North Carolina. Of those accidents, 288 resulted in fatalities.

Reckless or aggressive driving can be somewhat difficult to prove, even in situations that result in fatal car accidents. An experienced Durham car accident attorney will know what evidence you need to prove your case.

Speeding

Perhaps the most common cause of fatal car accidents is speeding. The 2019 statistics from the North Carolina Department of Transportation reveals the following:

- 252 fatal crashes were caused by exceeding the posted speed limit
- 108 fatal crashes were due to driving too fast for conditions
- 110 fatal crashes were due to failing to reduce speed

Speed is a factor in more fatal car accidents than any other cause. Exceeding the speed limit is proof of negligence. If you have lost a loved one in a car accident caused by speeding, a Durham car accident attorney can review your case and determine whether you may be entitled to compensation.

If You Have Lost a Loved One in a Fatal Car Accident, Contact A Durham Car Accident Attorney at Martin & Jones

The Durham car accident attorneys at Martin & Jones understand the challenges you face when you have lost a family member in a fatal car accident. Compassionate and dedicated, we work with you every step of the way until you recover the compensation you deserve. To learn more about how we can help, [contact us](#) today at 800-662-1234 to schedule a free consultation.