

## **Rear-End Collisions: Common Injuries and Who's at Fault**

### **Our Pittsburgh car accident lawyers fight for fair compensation for our clients**

You're driving through Pittsburgh. Maybe you're headed down Liberty Avenue, stopped at a red light, or slowing in traffic on the Parkway East. Everything seems routine, until a sharp jolt sends your body forward, your seatbelt snaps tight, and you realize you've just been rear-ended.

[Rear-end collisions](#) are among the most common [car accidents](#), and often, they're brushed off as no big deal. But there's nothing minor about the aftermath of a rear-end crash. A stiff neck can become a lingering injury. A sore back might keep you out of work for weeks. And what looks like a straightforward case can quickly turn very complicated.

If you were hurt in a rear-end collision, it's important to know how fault is determined in Pennsylvania, especially in Pittsburgh, where traffic and terrain can turn split-second mistakes into long-term problems.

### **How common are rear-end collisions in Pennsylvania?**

Pennsylvania reports thousands of rear-end crashes every year, and they're especially frequent in Pittsburgh and other urban areas. The city's combination of hills, narrow streets, and stop-and-go traffic creates a perfect storm for this type of accident. I-376, the Fort Pitt Tunnel, and the Squirrel Hill interchange are all hotspots where drivers need to be extra cautious.

Considering weather conditions, impatient drivers, or a single distracted moment behind the wheel, and it's not hard to see why rear-end accidents are so common in Pittsburgh and across Pennsylvania.

### **What injuries can happen in a rear-end collision?**

The injuries from a rear-end crash aren't always obvious right away. Some people walk away from the scene thinking they're fine, only to wake up the next morning with sharp pain or limited mobility. Others deal with symptoms that creep up gradually over several days. They typically include the following:

#### **Whiplash and soft tissue strain**

This is one of the most common rear-end accident injuries. When your head snaps forward and then backward, it can stretch or tear the soft tissue in your neck and upper back. Whiplash might not sound serious, but it can lead to weeks or months of pain, headaches, and stiffness that disrupt daily life.

#### **Back and spinal injuries**

Even at moderate speeds, a rear-end impact can compress the spine or herniate a disc. Lower back pain, numbness, and reduced range of motion often follow. In severe cases, these injuries may require physical therapy, injections, or surgery.

### **Head injuries and concussions**

Your head doesn't need to hit the steering wheel or window to sustain a concussion. The force of the impact alone can be enough to jostle the brain. Victims may experience fogginess, memory problems, or sensitivity to light and sound. These symptoms can appear weeks after the accident.

### **Facial injuries and airbag trauma**

While airbags save lives, they can also cause burns, bruises, or broken bones in the face mainly due to the force and speed of an airbag deploying. If you're not wearing a seatbelt, or if the airbag malfunctions, the results can be much worse.

### **Emotional distress**

Rear-end crashes can leave more than physical scars. Many people report anxiety while driving, sleep disruption, or even post-traumatic stress. Emotional trauma is just as valid as physical pain when it comes to accident recovery.

### **Who is usually at fault in a rear-end collision?**

In most cases, the driver who hits another vehicle from behind is at fault. Pennsylvania traffic laws require drivers to maintain enough distance to stop safely if the car ahead slows down or stops.

This is often referred to as the "[assured clear distance ahead](#)" rule, which falls under Title 75, Chapter 33, Section 61, Subchapter F of the Pennsylvania State Statutes. If a driver fails to maintain that distance, they're usually found to be legally responsible for causing the crash.

That said, every situation is different, and the presumption of fault isn't always final. Insurance companies might try to argue otherwise, especially if there's evidence that the front driver contributed to the collision.

### **Can the front driver ever be responsible?**

While it's rare, there are situations where the lead driver can be found partially or even fully at fault. For example:

- The front vehicle reversed suddenly.
- Brake lights weren't working.
- The driver stopped abruptly without cause.

- They brake-checked the vehicle behind them in anger or frustration.
- The driver in front was under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Pennsylvania follows a modified comparative negligence rule. If you're less than 51 percent at fault, you can still pursue compensation, but your final award will be reduced by your share of the blame. If you're more than 50 percent responsible, you may be barred from recovering any financial compensation.

This is where getting legal help can make a real difference. A Pittsburgh car accident lawyer can help gather evidence such as dashcam footage, surveillance video, or witness testimony to illustrate why you didn't cause the collision.

### **What should you do after being rear-ended?**

In the moments after a crash, things can feel chaotic. But the steps you take at the scene and afterward can shape your recovery and your legal case.

- **Call 911.** Always report the rear-end collision, even if it seems minor. A police report is a key piece of evidence in your case.
- **Get medical attention.** Don't wait until symptoms appear. Go to the hospital or your doctor right away and get checked by a doctor. This can help link the crash to your injury.
- **Take photos.** Document vehicle damage, street signs, skid marks, and any visible injuries. Evidence builds strong legal cases.
- **Exchange information.** Get the other driver's contact and insurance details.
- **Speak to witnesses.** If someone saw what happened, ask for their name and number.
- **Avoid admitting fault.** Even saying "I'm fine" can be used against you later.
- **Get legal help.** Before speaking to insurance adjusters, speak to a Pittsburgh car accident attorney who understands how rear-end claims work.

### **How does insurance work after a rear-end crash in Pennsylvania?**

Pennsylvania has a choice no-fault system. This means drivers can choose between two types of auto insurance coverage:

- **Limited tort:** This restricts your ability to sue for pain and suffering unless you suffer a serious injury.
- **Full tort:** This allows you to recover damages (legal term for financial compensation) for all injuries, regardless of severity.

No matter which option you chose, your personal injury protection (PIP) covers medical bills up to your policy limits. But if your injuries are severe, or if your policy allows it, you can step outside the no-fault system and pursue a full personal injury claim.

This is especially important in rear-end cases where pain and suffering, lost income, or long-term care costs add up quickly.

### **How can a Pittsburgh rear-end accident lawyer help?**

If you were hurt in a rear-end collision, the clock is ticking and the insurance company is already working to downplay your claim. Don't let them get away with it. The Pittsburgh car accident lawyers at [Romanow Law Group](#) understand the real impact these "minor" crashes can have on injury victims' lives. Whether you're dealing with lingering whiplash, back pain, or an injury that's keeping you from work, our team is ready to step in and fight for what you're owed.

The truth is, rear-end collisions can be more complicated than you think. Insurance adjusters are trained to downplay your pain, question your treatment, and delay your case until you give up. That's why our attorneys build powerful claims backed by evidence and the kind of courtroom readiness that makes the insurance companies pay attention. From the first phone call to the final settlement or verdict, we go all in.

One consultation with our law firm can make all the difference in how your case unfolds. We'll listen, we'll explain your options, and we'll take action. [Contact us online](#) or call us to schedule your free case evaluation. We're here to make sure your voice is heard and your recovery is taken seriously.

*"They represented me in my auto accident and they were professional they do not sugar coat anything and they work hard and go beyond."* – S.B., ★ ★ ★ ★ ★