

How Seasonal Tourism Increases Car Accident Risks in Coastal Maine Towns

An experienced Maine car accident lawyer can fight for your rights

There's something magical about Maine in the summertime. The coastal breeze carries the scent of salt and pine. Lobster rolls and lighthouses charm their way into visitors' memories. Little harbor towns like Bar Harbor, Kennebunkport, and Camden swell with life, filling streets that are otherwise quiet for most of the year.

But under that postcard-perfect surface, there's a sharp, seasonal reality that few talk about: the summer surge in car accidents. When towns built for a few thousand people suddenly try to carry the weight of tens of thousands of visitors, it doesn't take long before fender benders, traffic jams, and serious collisions become part of the landscape, too.

If you find yourself in a [car accident](#) during the tourist season, an experienced Maine [car accident lawyer](#) can help you understand your rights and take the next steps.

Why do car accidents spike during tourist season?

It's no secret that Maine's coastal towns are beloved summer destinations. Every June through August, people flock in from Massachusetts, New York, and beyond. These aren't just a few extra folks. We're talking about populations multiplying four or five times over in a matter of weeks.

That means more vehicles, more pedestrians, more distractions, and much less room to move. Many of these visitors are driving unfamiliar rental cars or towing RVs through narrow colonial-era streets designed for horse-drawn carriages, not oversized SUVs.

Local infrastructure just isn't built to absorb that kind of volume. Side streets become parking lots. Roundabouts confuse newcomers. One-lane roads back up for miles. Combine all that with vacation brain and it's a recipe for trouble.

What are the biggest dangers behind the wheel in tourist towns?

The most common car accident dangers linked to tourism include:

Congestion and limited parking

Summer congestion is intense. Whether it's downtown Boothbay Harbor or the entrance to Acadia National Park, the crush of cars is constant. People cruise in circles looking for parking, slam their brakes for open spots, and sometimes park illegally just to get out of the mess.

Locals know where not to go at 2 p.m. on a Saturday. Visitors don't, and they often make sudden turns or block traffic trying to squeeze into lots that have been full since breakfast.

Unfamiliarity with local roads

Driving in Maine can be tricky if you're new to it. Coastal roads curve like ribbons, the signs are small, and the driveways appear out of nowhere. Tourists often miss turns, slam on the brakes, or stop in the middle of the road to check GPS.

Roundabouts are another point of confusion. Ellsworth and Wiscasset have added them in recent years to ease traffic, but when drivers don't know how to use them, the risk of a crash increases.

Distracted sightseeing

It's hard not to stare at a sailboat on the water or an eagle flying overhead. But when you're behind the wheel, rubbernecking becomes risky business. Drivers going 15 mph below the limit because they're snapping photos of the coastline create dangerous situations, especially on winding roads or Route 1.

Drinking and driving

Maine's breweries, wineries, and seaside bars are all part of the summer appeal. But alcohol plus unfamiliar roads is a dangerous mix. Tourists often assume they're fine to drive after a few drinks, especially if they don't see obvious alternatives like taxis or rideshare services.

The problem is many small towns don't have reliable late-night transportation. So buzzed driving becomes the fallback, and that's when late-night crashes tend to spike.

Which towns are hit the hardest each summer?

Bar Harbor is one of the biggest hotspots. With Acadia National Park drawing millions of visitors a year, the area becomes a high-density zone each summer. One-lane roads snake through town, often clogged with RVs, rental cars, and cyclists.

Old Orchard Beach is another. Its nightlife scene, amusement rides, and younger crowds make it a magnet for car accidents, particularly in the evening when pedestrian traffic surges.

Kennebunkport, Ogunquit, Rockland, and Camden may be smaller, but they draw steady streams of tourists all summer. With narrow bridges, tight corners, and heavy foot traffic, even a minor lapse in focus can turn into a collision.

How do emergency services handle the seasonal strain?

Most coastal towns operate with minimal year-round staff. This includes a handful of officers, one or two ambulances, and a small hospital if they're lucky. During the summer, they're suddenly responsible for the safety of five or ten times as many people. That means longer police response times, overwhelmed emergency rooms, and delays in crash cleanups.

Tow trucks may take hours to arrive. If a crash blocks a key intersection or a harbor entrance, the entire area can grind to a halt.

What can tourists do to stay safe on the road?

Here are some things you can do:

- **Plan your route ahead of time:** Don't wait until the last second to find a turn. Know where you're going and how you'll get there.
- **Avoid driving during peak hours:** Midday traffic (from about 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.) is the worst. Try early mornings or evenings instead.
- **Use local shuttles or park-and-walk lots:** Places such as Bar Harbor have free shuttles to reduce traffic. Take advantage of them.
- **Stay focused, not just relaxed:** Driving while on vacation requires full attention, especially in crowded or unfamiliar places.
- **Skip the second drink:** If you're going to enjoy a coastal cocktail, arrange your ride first. It's not worth the risk.

How can locals protect themselves from summer traffic hazards?

It can get frustrating to drive during tourist season, but locals can use a few tricks to stay safe and sane:

- **Use backroads whenever possible:** Avoid downtown and waterfront streets during weekends or holidays.
- **Adjust your schedule:** Grocery shop early, run errands during off-hours, and avoid beach roads between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- **Drive defensively:** Assume every out-of-state plate will stop suddenly or turn without signaling.
- **Be patient:** Tourists don't mean to cause problems; they're just unfamiliar. A little patience can go a long way.
- **Get involved locally:** Advocate for better traffic planning, improved signage, and seasonal law enforcement support.

Can Maine towns do anything to reduce these crashes?

Shuttle systems such as the Island Explorer in Bar Harbor have reduced car use significantly in Acadia. Some towns are redesigning intersections, installing better signage, and hiring seasonal officers to help manage traffic.

Others are exploring park-and-ride systems, pedestrian-only zones, and stricter parking enforcement to ease pressure on downtown areas. There's also room for better education. Rental car agencies, hotels, and Airbnb hosts could offer road safety tips, maps, and local driving rules to help newcomers avoid confusion.

What should I do if I get into a car accident?

Car accidents can happen during tourist season, even when you're being careful. But when the unexpected occurs, it's important to know what to do next. First, move your vehicle to a safe spot and check for injuries. If anyone is hurt, call 911 right away and request medical help.

You should also call the police right away, especially if the damage is over \$1,000. Wait for an officer to arrive and assess the crash scene. While waiting, get names, contact details, insurance information, and license plates of any parties involved. Also, document the crash scene, take photos, and get witness information.

If you don't require emergency medical care at the crash scene, be sure to see a doctor as soon as possible. Even if you walk away feeling fine, some injuries can produce symptoms days later and can worsen if left untreated.

You'll also need to report the crash to your insurance company. But be careful about what you say and stick only to the basic facts. Also, avoid giving a recorded statement to the other driver's insurance company without having a lawyer present. Anything you say to them can be used to downplay or deny your claim. A Maine car accident lawyer can communicate with insurance adjusters and negotiate for fair compensation on your behalf.

In the meantime, keep all medical receipts, records, bills, appointment logs, and prescriptions to help document your commitment to recovery and medical costs.

Injured in a car accident during tourist season? Let us fight for the compensation you deserve

The roads in Maine may be chaotic during tourist season, but your path to justice doesn't have to be. [Romanow Law Group](#) can step in quickly, investigate thoroughly, and fight relentlessly for the compensation you deserve.

From Portland to Bar Harbor and throughout coastal Maine, our attorneys serve locals and visitors with the same dedication. We'll gather the evidence, build a powerful case, and deal directly with the insurance companies so you don't have to.

Your initial consultation is free, and you pay nothing unless we win. If you've been injured in a car accident during Maine's busy tourist season, [contact us](#) today and let us fight for the compensation you deserve.

"This was my first time using a personal injury lawyer and there wouldn't be anybody else I would choose if I ever had to do it again. Truly good people." – B.C., ★ ★ ★ ★ ★