



Steps to Take if You are Involved in an Auto Accident



AS PRESENTED BY:
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Unfortunately, automobile accidents can happen to anyone. You should protect your legal rights by taking the proper steps after you are involved in an accident. Consult your attorney immediately if you are involved in an accident where you are issued a traffic summons, where there is personal injury or serious property damage.

Do I have to stop my car if I am involved in an automobile accident?

A Yes. If you are involved in a car accident and you do not stop, you most likely will be

charged with leaving the scene of an accident, a charge that has very serious consequences. Should you be involved in an accident, you should immediately stop your vehicle, leaving your car as close as possible to the point of impact without obstructing traffic.

If you suspect that either you or the other person involved in the accident is injured, make sure to call for medical assistance. Tell the dispatcher as much information as possible about your location, such as the name and number of the street, and a description of the vehicles involved in the accident.

Additionally, you should attempt to protect the scene of the accident to avoid additional collisions. If your car can be moved, do not allow your car to obstruct the roadway. Warn approaching vehicles by using your hazard warning lights. It is also a good idea to place flares or reflectors on the roadway if they are available.

Do I have to call the police if I am involved in an auto accident?

A Yes. If you are involved in an auto accident and you do not call the police, you can be charged with failure to report an accident. It is your duty to notify the police

that an accident has occurred.

Further, a police report of the accident will help your insurance claim and any future liability claims. Make sure to politely ask the officer at the scene how to obtain a copy of the police report, and take note of the officer's name and badge number.

Realize that if you receive a traffic summons, it does not mean you are guilty of a traffic offense or were responsible for the accident. If you are issued a traffic summons, I recommend you consult an experienced attorney before pleading guilty to any traffic offenses.

What information should I get from the other driver?

A You should get the following information from the driver of the other car:

- Other driver's—name, address, phone number, driver's license number, name of insurance company and policy number
- Passengers—name, address, and phone number
- Witnesses—name, address and phone number

Make notes about the time of day, weather conditions, road conditions, and street lights. If you can, make a diagram of the

accident noting the location of the vehicles, crosswalks, stop signs and traffic signals.

What should I do if I hit a parked car?

A If you hit a parked car, and cannot locate the owner, make sure to leave a note with your name, address, and telephone number, so that the owner of the vehicle can contact you regarding the accident.

Should I see a doctor if I am involved in an auto accident?

A Yes. Both you and your passengers should seriously consider consulting with your family physician after being involved in an auto accident. The doctor may recognize symptoms of injuries that may not be apparent to you. Whatever you do, do not settle any claims from the accident until you have consulted with a doctor about the extent and nature of your injuries.

Should I notify my insurance agent if I am involved in an auto accident?

A Yes. Contact your insurance agent as soon as possible after an accident. Your insurance company may have grounds to deny coverage if you fail to promptly notify them of the accident. Follow up your phone conversation with a written letter notifying your insurance company of your accident, and make sure to save a copy for your files. The written notice should contain information about the date, time and place of the accident, with names and addresses of the other drivers, injured persons, passengers, and witnesses.

Should I contact my attorney if I am involved in an auto accident?

A Yes. If you have been involved in an accident, or if you received a traffic ticket, your lawyer can advise you about your rights and responsibilities. The sooner you contact your lawyer, the better since witnesses may forget the details about the accident. Your lawyer can counsel you on how to respond to insurance adjusters and help you receive proper compensation for your personal injuries and property damage.

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When you choose Basile & Testa, PA to handle your legal needs, you have a promise that they will vigorously defend your rights, provide sound legal advice, and allow your voice to be heard. This philosophy has resulted in the settlement or successful litigation of thousands of cases. Although they represent each client with the same commitment, they have litigated some very challenging cases.

✳ Former New Jersey Governor Christine Todd Whitman sought experienced trial attorneys to represent the State in its historic lawsuit against the tobacco industry. Michael Testa and the firm were retained as co-counselors in the case, along with six other firms. A suit was filed against the tobacco industry seeking to recover billions of dollars that the State and its taxpayers paid through the Medicaid program for health care costs attributable to smoking related illnesses. Prior to going to trial, a 7.5 billion dollar settlement was reached for the State of New Jersey.

✳ In Vineland, an eight year old child was struck by a car while crossing the street to board her school bus. The child sustained severe injuries as the result of the accident. Michael Testa obtained a settlement worth over \$1.8 million plus attorney fees.

MICHAEL L. TESTA, Jr., was born and raised in Vineland, New Jersey. Michael was admitted to the New Jersey Bar in 2001. He was also admitted to practice before the United States District Court of New Jersey. After graduating from Villanova University, Villanova, PA 1998 he obtained his law degree from Villanova School of Law, Villanova, Pa. in 2001. He recently furthered his education at Temple University's nationally recognized Beasley School of Law, (LL.M. Trial Advocacy Degree 2006). His professional associations include Cumberland County Bar Association, Association of Trial Lawyers of America-NJ, Board of Governors; ATLA (National) for the Young Lawyers Division, Board of Governors. Other memberships include the Vineland Lions Club, Acting Parliamentarian; Vineland Downtown Improvement District/Main Street Organization, Chairman of the Board of Directors; The Vineland Regional Dance Company, Board Member; The Italian American Benevolent Association and The North Italy Beneficial Association.

Michael is a member of the firm of Basile & Testa, PA., Vineland, NJ. His areas of practice are Civil Litigation, Personal Injury, Criminal Defense and Municipal Court.

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