How https://caraccidentlawyers.wiki/directory/metro-atlanta-law-firms/ Crash Reports and Dashcam Video Shape an Auto Accident Claim

Evidence from a car crash starts to disappear within hours. Cars are towed and repaired, video gets recorded over and witnesses become harder to find. An auto accident lawyer typically starts with the police report and any photos or video, then the data stored in the vehicles. This article explains how each source fits into a claim.

The crash report

When officers respond to a crash, they usually prepare a crash report, sometimes called a police report. It typically lists the drivers and vehicles involved, with insurance details for each, and it often includes a diagram, a short narrative and any citations. Many states also require drivers to report crashes that involve injury, death or property damage above a set amount. Copies usually come from the responding agency, whether that is a city police department, a sheriff's office or the state highway patrol, sometimes for a fee.

A crash report is influential in insurance claims, but it is not the final word on fault. Rules on using an officer's opinions at trial vary by state. When a report has a factual error, such as a wrong plate number, the agency may accept a request to correct or supplement it. An auto accident attorney will compare the report with the photos and statements.

Video and photo evidence

Dashcam footage can capture the seconds before a crash more clearly than any witness. Keep the original file with its timestamp, rather than a phone recording of the screen, and store a backup copy. Nearby businesses, buses and traffic cameras may have recorded the crash too, but many systems overwrite footage within days or weeks. Scene photos can show where the vehicles stopped and the debris and skid marks around them, and photos of injuries taken over several weeks can show how they changed.

The event data recorder

Many passenger vehicles have an event data recorder (EDR). NHTSA describes an EDR as a device that records technical vehicle and occupant information for a brief period, seconds rather than minutes, surrounding a crash. Depending on the vehicle, it may record speed and braking, along with seat belt use. NHTSA's rule in 49 CFR Part 563 sets requirements for EDRs in light vehicles that have them. Under the Driver Privacy Act of 2015, EDR data generally belongs to the vehicle owner or lessee, and access by others is limited to situations such as owner consent or a court order.

EDR data can be lost if the car is repaired or crushed. Insurers often move a total loss vehicle to a salvage auction quickly, so a car accident attorney may send a preservation letter asking that the vehicle be held until the data can be downloaded.

Witnesses and medical records

Independent witnesses carry weight because they have no stake in the claim. Collect their names and phone numbers at the scene when it is safe. Medical records link the injuries to the crash, and gaps in treatment are often used by insurers to dispute a claim. A simple file with the claim number and a log of every call with

the adjuster makes later questions easier to answer. Pain levels, missed work and appointments are worth noting in a journal while the details are fresh. This is general information rather than legal advice, and no result can be predicted from it.