



# TOP 7 QUESTIONS PEOPLE ASK WHEN INVOLVED IN A TRUCK ACCIDENT



Zehl & Associates PC  
Premier Truck Accident Lawyers

(888) 839-5444

[18wheeler-accident-lawyers.com](http://18wheeler-accident-lawyers.com)

**Houston Office:**

2700 Post Oak Blvd. Ste 1120

Houston, Texas 77056

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## What is the difference between a truck accident case and a car wreck case?

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The biggest difference between a truck accident case and a car wreck case is that truck accidents are usually much more severe. Trucks are generally larger and weigh more than the average car, therefore typically causing more damage. Large Trucks and 18-wheelers can cause more significant injuries because of the size and the weight of the truck.

The other significant difference between truck accidents and car accidents is that trucking companies are regulated heavily by state and federal governments. These companies have to follow certain rules regarding how they operate their companies. Because of this, when there is a truck accident case, there is a lot more analysis and investigation required into whether they have complied with those rules and regulations. The most comprehensive and detailed of these safety rules are contained in the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations. These regulations place a number of limitations on the truck driver and his or her company. It is imperative, when hiring a lawyer, that you make sure that he or she has experience working with these regulations and working on cases involving commercial trucks and 18-wheelers.

The final difference is that truck companies have a lot more resources, so they tend to fight cases very diligently. Truck companies are typically more aggressive in how they defend the case.

Because of this, you need **a law firm on your side** that has experience not just taking trucking companies to trial, but a track record of success in the courtroom.



## After an accident with a commercial truck, do I sue the company or the driver?

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In almost every case, you will be suing the driver because he or she will have done something to cause the crash. They will have been negligent in some way. Many times, you will also sue the trucking company because the trucking company may hold some liability for causing the crash. The company may have broken some federal or state regulation or other law that applies to it independent from the driver, and it may also hold liability simply because the driver was acting as an employee for the trucking company at the time. It depends on the case, but in many instances you will be suing not only the driver, but also the trucking company.

Trucking companies are governed by various state and federal regulations. If the trucking company caused or contributed to the negligence of the driver, you can actually sue not only the driver, but also the trucking company.

When a trucking or insurance company refuses to offer a settlement that fully compensates our clients and their families for all of their injuries and damages, we take the case to trial, where, as of this writing, our lawyers remain undefeated.

If your loved one was killed in a truck accident, whether or not you can sue will depend on your relationship to your loved one. In many states there are limitations on who can sue on behalf of a deceased person. In some places, you can only sue if you are a parent or a child of a deceased person. There are also time limitations on when you are able to sue. In some states, they limit the amount of time to as little as 3 months after the crash with a truck has occurred. After that time, there will be a lot of implications if you do not sue. It depends on the circumstances in the state, so check with **[an experienced law firm](#)** to see if you qualify to sue on behalf of a deceased loved one.

At **[Zehl and Associates](#)**, we can answer this question not just based on the applicable statutes, but because we have experience successfully taking trucking companies to court.

Our approach and experience has resulted in substantial victories in the courtroom and enabled our lawyers to negotiate unprecedented settlements outside of the courtroom.

Just recently, for example, [Ryan Zehl](#) and [Kevin Haynes](#) recovered over \$4.2 Million after a 5-week trial against R&L Carriers, the largest private trucking company in the US.

Our client was rear-ended by one of R&L's drivers while driving on I-20, just outside of Weatherford, Texas. The impact caused her vehicle to roll over, resulting in a head and lower back injury.

R&L Carriers denied responsibility for the collision, offered less than \$150,000 to settle the case, and called a team of over 15 experts—including neurologist, neuropsychologists, orthopedists, and accident reconstructionists—to dispute our client's injuries and attempt to prove that the collision was a "side swipe," rather than a rear-end collision.

After hearing the evidence, however, the jury disagreed with R&L Carriers and awarded punitive damages against the company for its negligence and gross negligence in failing to properly supervise and train the driver.

The verdict is the #1 Largest Verdict ever awarded against R&L, making [Zehl & Associates](#), as of this writing, one of the only law firms in the United States to recover both punitive damages and the largest verdict in a company's history in three consecutive trials.





## **I was just injured in a truck accident. What should I do?**

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First, if you haven't done this already, you should call the police. The police not only be able to help you get in touch with the ambulance who can provide you medical care, they will also be able to begin investigating what happened and why it happened, which will be very important down the road.

Secondly, you should seek medical treatment. If the ambulance does come to the scene, you should let them check you out. If you need to get a loved one or a friend to take you to the E.R., you should do that also.

Severe accidents can cause some traumatic brain or other injuries that many people don't feel the symptoms right away or feel injured at all. Many people don't understand how injured they truly are until later. That is why it is very important to get checked out by the doctors almost immediately after the incident happens so you can get the care that you need.

Finally, it is important to document what happened as best as you can, if it is safe do so. For example, if you are able to take a picture of what the damage to your vehicle looks like, what the damage to the truck looks like, those kinds of things can be very important later on, in terms of establishing exactly what did happen.

We recommend taking this information and reviewing with a **qualified truck accident law firm**, like Zehl and Associates.

After you have taken care of any medical issues, we recommend you **contact a law firm** as quickly as possible. Evidence tends to disappear with time and it is important that your lawyer have access to the evidence to prove your injuries and prove how the accident occurred. Also, defendants tend to destroy or discard evidence after a set period of time.

We want to make sure that all the evidence you need in your case is preserved, that we prove how the accident happened, and that we establish the severity of your injuries. We do that through collecting evidence and ensuring that you're seeing the right doctors who are providing you with the best medical care.

How long you have to file a lawsuit after a truck accident depends on the laws of the state in which the crash occurred. It can range from as little as one year following the crash to as long as three or four years. It is very important to make sure you take action as quickly as possible after the incident, because if that time frame runs out, you'll never be able to file a claim and stand up for yourself.

## **What does negligence mean?**

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Negligence is a term that refers to failing to do what an ordinary company (in the case of corporate defendants) or an individual (in the case of individual defendants) would have done under the same circumstances. In a bus crash or a truck crash for example, what the questions you should ask are: What would an ordinary driver have done under those circumstances? What would an ordinary bus or truck company that was employing the driver have done in those circumstances? When a driver or even a company acts dangerously or unsafely, and therefore unreasonably, they are negligent.





## What will it cost me to hire an attorney in a truck accident case?

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Typically, it will cost you nothing up front. Most firms work on what is called a “contingency fee basis.” That means they only recover a fee if they successfully obtain either a settlement for you or a paid judgment after a trial. The percentage of the fee is taken out of the gross amount of recovery that you receive. The contingency fee percentage will vary from firm to firm and from case to case.

Along with not costing you anything up front, the length of the case will depend primarily on two things. First, time will depend on how quickly the court will give us a trial setting because—in our experience—defendants don’t offer what they need to pay on the case until you are close to trial or at trial. Second, the length of the case depends on how cooperative or uncooperative the defendants are. Our goal is to get the case resolved as quickly as possible while insuring that our clients are getting the maximum recovery that is available to them.

At **Zehl and Associates**, we work on a contingent fee. That means you don’t pay us anything until we win; either through settlement or through a verdict at trial. We’ll front all the case costs. We finance all the experts and everything else associated with your case until we win. The amount of your expenses depends on the complexity of your case. Our goal is to limit our clients’ expenses as much as possible, but we also have to devote whatever time and resources are necessary to increasing your recovery.





## What sets Zehl & Associates apart from other truck accident injury firms?

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The number one thing that sets us apart from other truck accident law firms is our commitment to our clients and the results that we achieve for them. In the past five years, Zehl and Associates has **recovered over \$750 million** for clients across the country. When you **call our firm**, you speak directly to a lawyer and we are there for you the entire way from before we file your lawsuit to even after your lawsuit is settled. We make sure you get the best medical treatment and that you have the best doctors accessible to you. If you have any questions at any time, we're there as your friends, first and foremost, to help you. Our clients to us are our friends. They're our family. Everything we do is to ensure that they get the best recovery they possibly can get.

When we're hired in a trucking accident case, we immediately send an accident reconstruction team to inspect the scene and the vehicles involved in the crash.

Our inspection provides us with physical evidence (like the location and severity of the damage to the vehicles and the length and direction of skid marks on the road) that establishes how fast the truck was traveling at impact, if and when it braked, and whether the driver was fatigued or distracted at the time of impact.

We then consult with both our client's treating doctors and medical experts to determine the nature and severity of our client's injuries, how their injuries can be treated, and the cost of the medical treatment our client will need in the future.

After obtaining this information, we work with our client's doctors and medical experts to determine the damages that are needed to ensure that our client is fully compensated for both their physical injuries and past and future financial losses—such as lost wages and medical expenses.

If the trucking company or their insurance company tries to settle the case for anything less than the amount of damages that are necessary to fully compensate our client, we take the case to trial—where, as of this writing, we remain undefeated.



## If my case goes to trial, will we win?

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We do everything we possibly can to ensure that our clients win. At **Zehl and Associates**, all of our lawyers are experienced trial lawyers. Going to trial is what we do. So far, our record has been unparalleled. We have been undefeated at trial and our verdicts and settlements have been some of the largest in the country. We can't guarantee or promise a particular outcome in your case, but what we can promise you is that we will do whatever possible to ensure that you are fully compensated YES. We'll devote whatever resources and the time necessary to ensure that you get the best recovery that is available.

Don't just take our word for it, you can **[see our victories here](#)**, and hear **[directly from one of our very satisfied clients](#)**.



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