

Proving Fault in a Left-Turn Collision With a Motorcycle Under Texas Law

Our experienced attorneys build strong cases and fight for your rights

Picture a motorcyclist leaning slightly forward, watching the road ahead, holding a steady line through an intersection. In a split second, a car coming the opposite direction turns left across the rider's lane, almost as if the driver never saw the bike at all. The impact of a [motorcycle accident](#) is brutal and sudden, like running straight into a wall that materializes out of nowhere.

[Smith & Hassler](#) has worked with riders and families who replay that moment in slow motion, wondering how someone could look right at them and still make the choice to turn.

Left-turn collisions with motorcycles are some of the most devastating crashes we see in Texas. The rider is usually doing everything right, simply traveling straight, when a driver misjudges time and distance or gambles on a gap that isn't really there. The law gives motorcyclists protection in these situations, but fault still needs to be proven clearly and convincingly.

Why left-turn crashes are so dangerous for motorcyclists

A left-turn collision concentrates impact in a way that leaves riders extremely vulnerable. The turning vehicle often blocks the entire lane, leaving the motorcycle nowhere to go. There is rarely time or space to swerve. The rider either strikes the side of the vehicle or lays the bike down and slides into the path of other traffic.

In these crashes, riders often face:

- Traumatic brain injuries when the head strikes the car, ground, or another object.
- Broken legs, hips, and pelvis when the lower body hits solid metal.
- Spinal cord injuries that can lead to partial or total paralysis.
- Internal bleeding and organ damage that may not be obvious at the scene.

What Texas Law requires of drivers turning left

[Under Texas law](#), drivers turning left must yield the right of way to oncoming traffic that is close enough to be a hazard. That includes motorcycles. The duty to yield isn't flexible. If a driver has any doubt about whether they can complete the turn safely, they should wait.

This duty applies in several common settings:

- At intersections with solid green lights where oncoming traffic has the right of way.
- At intersections with flashing yellow arrows, where the turning driver must still yield to oncoming vehicles.

- When turning left from private driveways, parking lots, or side streets onto larger roads.

When a driver turns left directly into the path of a motorcycle that has a clear green light and the right of way, they've usually violated that duty. The law doesn't accept "I didn't see them" as a justification. It treats that phrase as a sign the driver wasn't looking properly in the first place.

Why drivers so often misjudge motorcycles during left turns

Even careful riders sometimes underestimate how quickly someone else can miscalculate. Several factors contribute to these crashes, including:

- **Size and profile:** Motorcycles are smaller than cars, so drivers' brains subconsciously discount them. The bike looks farther away than it really is.
- **Closing speed:** A motorcycle may be traveling at the speed limit, but drivers used to judging when it is safe to turn in front of larger vehicles may decide they have time when they don't.
- **Distraction:** Even a brief glance at a phone, a navigation screen, or a child in the back seat can be enough to miss an approaching bike.
- **Obstructed views:** Parked vehicles, large trucks, or road design can partially block sight lines, prompting a driver to "go for it" based on incomplete information.

How Texas comparative negligence works in left-turn motorcycle cases

In many left-turn motorcycle collisions, the driver who turned is primarily at fault. However, that doesn't stop insurance companies from trying to shift some blame onto the rider. They might allege the motorcyclist was speeding, running a light, or weaving through traffic.

Texas uses a [comparative negligence system](#). That means:

- Each person involved can be assigned a percentage of fault.
- As long as the rider's percentage stays at 50 or below, they can still recover compensation.
- Any award they receive is reduced by their percentage of fault.
- If the rider's fault is set at 51 or more, they recover nothing.

For example, imagine a collision where a car turns left in front of a motorcycle, and the jury decides the driver is 80% at fault while the rider is 20% at fault for slightly exceeding the speed limit. If total damages are \$500,000, the rider's net recovery would be \$400,000.

This is why arguments about speed, lane position, and reaction time become so intense in left-turn cases. Small shifts in perceived responsibility can have large consequences for an injured rider's future.

What evidence helps prove fault in a left-turn motorcycle collision

Proving fault in a left-turn crash is about more than telling your side of the story. It requires gathering and preserving evidence before memories fade and physical clues disappear.

Our firm focuses on several key categories of proof.

Important evidence often includes:

- **Scene photographs:** Images of vehicle positions, debris, skid marks, and surrounding traffic controls help reconstruct how the collision occurred.
- **Vehicle damage:** The location and severity of damage on both the motorcycle and the other vehicle can show impact angles and speeds.
- **Traffic signal information:** Knowing whether the rider had a steady green, a yellow, or some other signal at the time of the crash is central to fault.
- **Witness statements:** People who saw the collision unfold can clarify who had the light, how fast each vehicle was moving, and when the driver initiated the turn.
- **Surveillance video:** Nearby businesses, homes, traffic cameras, and [even dashcams](#), sometimes capture the moments before impact.
- **Police reports:** An officer's observations, diagrams, and citations provide a starting framework and often show immediate admissions at the scene. Our attorneys can help you get a copy of the [police report](#).

In more serious cases, our attorneys may work with crash reconstruction professionals who use physics, engineering, and the physical evidence to model how the crash happened. They can analyze distances, reaction times, and stopping capabilities for both vehicles.

Common arguments against riders in left-turn collisions

Insurance companies already have a bias against motorcyclists, with the belief that they're "reckless." Even when the fault seems obvious, riders often face claims that they somehow brought the crash on themselves. These arguments made by insurance adjusters are usually designed to [reduce your compensation](#).

Some that we see frequently include:

- **"The rider was speeding":** This claim may or may not be supported by actual evidence. Speed estimates from bystanders can be unreliable. We look for real physical indicators such as skid length, damage patterns, and, when available, video.
- **"The rider ran the light":** A driver might insist the light was yellow or red for the rider, even when witnesses or signal timing data say otherwise.

- **“The rider could have avoided the crash”**: People sometimes assume motorcycles can stop or dodge almost instantly. In reality, physics sets limits on how quickly any vehicle can respond once a driver has turned immediately in front of it.

How Smith & Hassler builds strong left-turn motorcycle cases

The Houston motorcycle accident lawyers at Smith & Hassler know that left-turn motorcycle collisions can reshape everything from your physical health to your financial plans. Our legal team approaches these cases with a combination of investigation, analysis, and human understanding.

When we take on a left-turn accident case, we tend to:

- **Move fast to preserve evidence**: We look for camera footage before it’s overwritten, obtain traffic signal timing, and document the scene.
- **Listen carefully to riders and families**: You know what your life looked like before the crash and how it has changed since.
- **Work with qualified professionals**: When needed, we involve accident reconstruction and medical professionals to strengthen the case.
- **Handle communications with insurance companies**: We stand between you and the pressure to accept less than the true value of your losses.

If a driver turned left in front of you or someone you love while you were riding in Texas, you shouldn’t have to shoulder the physical and financial consequences because of someone else’s negligence. Our law firm is ready to talk with you, answer your questions, and help you make informed choices about the road ahead.

To find out how we can help, [contact us online](#) or call for a free consultation. You’ll get an honest assessment, thoughtful guidance, and a legal team that understands what justice means for motorcyclists harmed by careless left turns.