

The Unique Risks Motorcyclists Face Around Commercial Trucks

Our Truck Accident Lawyers Explain Why These Collisions Are Often So Severe

Motorcycles give riders freedom, maneuverability, and a personal connection to the road. They also leave riders dangerously exposed when a commercial truck makes a sudden move, turns without enough clearance, or drifts into a motorcycle's path. When a fully loaded tractor-trailer, box truck, tanker, or delivery vehicle collides with a motorcycle, the size difference alone can be catastrophic for motorcyclists.

These motorcycle accidents are often devastating because a motorcyclist has almost no physical protection against the force of a large commercial truck. There's no steel frame around the rider. There are no airbags. There's no buffer between the human body and the truck, the pavement, or nearby traffic. In many cases, the rider is not only struck but thrown, crushed, or pushed into other traffic. As the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) points out, fatal motor vehicle accidents include a large number of motorcycle crashes, which helps explain why motorcycle collisions involving heavy trucks deserve serious attention.

At Fried Goldberg LLC, we know these cases are rarely simple. A truck driver may claim the motorcycle came out of nowhere. The trucking company may argue the rider was hard to see. The insurer may try to focus on the motorcyclist's speed or reaction time instead of the truck driver's decisions. But those defenses do not erase the central question – did the truck driver obey the rules of the road? Often, truck driver negligence causes these collisions. And when that carelessness results in serious motorcycle accident injuries, it's our job to hold the at-fault truck driver responsible.

Why Are Motorcycles So Vulnerable Around Commercial Trucks?

Motorcycles are vulnerable around commercial trucks because the rider is smaller, less protected, and much easier to lose in a truck's blind spots. A commercial truck sits high off the ground, takes longer to stop, needs extra room to turn, and creates serious wind and space pressure around smaller vehicles. A motorcyclist riding next to that truck may have very little margin for error, even before something goes wrong.

The danger becomes worse because motorcycles do not occupy space the way passenger vehicles do. A rider may be visible in one mirror for a moment and then disappear as the truck continues a turn or drift. A driver who looks quickly and assumes the area is clear may miss the motorcycle entirely. That risk increases in traffic, at intersections, near highway exits, in construction zones, and anywhere drivers are making fast decisions.

The size mismatch matters too. In a crash between two passenger vehicles, both drivers have at least some protection from the vehicle structure. In a crash between a motorcycle and a heavy truck, the rider absorbs the violence of the impact directly. Even what might look like a low-speed sideswipe can cause fatal injuries when the rider is knocked down and pulled under the truck or thrown into surrounding traffic.

These collisions are not dangerous simply because motorcycles are smaller. They are dangerous because truck drivers are supposed to understand that smaller vehicles require extra attention, especially when those vehicles offer almost no protection to the people on them.

Why Do Turning Trucks Create Such Serious Dangers for Motorcyclists?

Turning trucks create serious dangers because large commercial vehicles do not turn like ordinary cars. As the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) explains, trucks have large no-zones, need wide turning space and move differently from passenger vehicles. A truck may swing wide before completing a right turn. The trailer may track differently than the cab. The driver may focus on clearing a curb, watching traffic, or avoiding another vehicle while losing sight of a motorcycle traveling nearby. In that moment, the rider can be trapped in exactly the wrong place.

Right turns are especially dangerous. A motorcyclist may be traveling beside or just behind a truck approaching an intersection, driveway, loading entrance or fuel station. The truck may drift left slightly to set up the turn, making it look like there is space to continue forward. Then the truck suddenly turns right across the rider's path. If the motorcycle is next to the cab or near the trailer line, the rider may have almost no time or room to escape.

Left turns can be just as deadly. A truck driver looking for a gap in oncoming traffic may notice larger vehicles but fail to register a motorcycle approaching from the opposite direction. The result is a turn directly into the rider's lane. In many of these crashes, the defense claims the motorcycle was hard to judge because of its smaller profile. That should be examined carefully, not accepted as an excuse. Difficulty seeing a motorcycle is one reason drivers of large commercial vehicles must act with greater caution, not less.

Important liability factors in these cases often include whether:

- the truck driver checked the mirrors carefully before starting the turn
- the driver signaled early enough to warn nearby traffic
- the truck moved into the turn too aggressively for the conditions
- the rider had a safe lane position before the truck cut across it
- surveillance video, onboard data or witnesses confirm how the turn happened

A turning truck can leave a motorcyclist with nowhere to go. That is one reason these cases often involve severe trauma, multiple impacts and fatal outcomes.

What Happens When a Truck Makes a Sudden Maneuver Near a Motorcycle?

A sudden maneuver by a commercial truck can be catastrophic because motorcycles depend on balance, traction, and space. A rider can respond to danger quickly, but only if there is room to do so. When a truck changes lanes abruptly, jerks back into a lane, brakes hard without warning, or swerves to avoid another hazard, the motorcycle rider may be forced into an impossible choice. Brake hard and risk laying the bike down. Swerve and risk hitting another vehicle or barrier. Stay the course and risk being crushed by the truck.

These events often happen on highways and major surface roads where trucks are moving at significant speed. A truck driver may realize too late that traffic is slowing, an exit is approaching or a

turn is being missed. Instead of continuing safely, the driver makes a rushed decision. For a motorcyclist traveling nearby, that one careless move can become fatal within seconds.

Several conditions commonly make sudden truck maneuvers more dangerous:

- Heavy traffic that limits the rider's escape options.
- High speeds that reduce reaction time for everyone involved.
- Blind spots that hide the motorcycle during a lane change.
- Trailer movement that extends beyond the cab's path.
- Driver distraction, fatigue or route pressure that leads to rushed decisions.

A motorcycle does not need to be hit head-on for the crash to be devastating. Sometimes the truck clips the bike. Sometimes the rider crashes while trying to avoid contact. Sometimes the truck forces the motorcycle off the road or into another vehicle. Those facts matter because trucking companies often try to defend these cases by focusing only on direct impact. But if the truck driver's movement created the emergency that caused the rider to crash, that still deserves serious legal scrutiny.

Why Do Blind Spots and Visibility Problems Matter So Much in These Cases?

Blind spots and visibility problems matter because they are predictable, well-known hazards in truck operation. The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) warns that large trucks have significant areas around the front, sides and rear where smaller vehicles can disappear from view. Motorcycles are especially vulnerable because they are narrower, lower and easier to overlook during quick mirror checks or rushed traffic decisions.

That does not mean a motorcycle in a blind spot is automatically at fault. It may mean the truck driver moved before confirming the space was clear. A driver who knows large blind zones exist must account for them. That may require a longer mirror check, a slower lane change, more turn clearance or simply waiting until the movement can be made safely.

Visibility problems become even more serious in conditions like:

- Dawn, dusk or nighttime travel
- Rain or fog that affects sight lines
- Dense urban traffic with repeated turns and stops
- Construction zones with lane shifts
- Intersections where the driver is trying to track multiple hazards at once

A trucking company may try to frame the crash as an unfortunate visibility problem. But visibility limits do not excuse unsafe driving. In many cases, they make caution more important. If the driver knew a motorcycle might be nearby, knew the maneuver was tight or knew traffic conditions were changing quickly, the duty to move carefully only became stronger.

What Evidence Can Prove How the Truck and Motorcycle Collision Happened?

The strongest motorcycle-truck cases are usually built on evidence that shows what the driver should have seen, when the hazard became obvious and why the truck moved the way it did. These cases

often require more than a basic police report because the key issues involve truck operation, mirror use, lane position, braking, timing and reaction.

Important evidence often includes:

- Dash camera footage from the truck or nearby vehicles
- Traffic camera or business surveillance video showing the turn, merge or sudden maneuver
- Event data that may show speed, braking, throttle use and steering inputs before impact
- Driver logs, dispatch records and route information that may reveal fatigue or delivery pressure
- Cell phone records if distraction is suspected
- Post-crash vehicle inspections showing damage patterns, mirror condition and truck configuration
- Eyewitness statements from other drivers, passengers or bystanders who saw the truck's movement
- Scene evidence such as gouge marks, skid marks, debris, scrape patterns and final rest positions

These cases also require close attention to how the motorcycle was positioned before the crash. Was the rider in the lane properly? Was the truck already drifting? Did the driver begin the turn from an unsafe angle? Did the rider brake or try to evade before impact? Those details can make a major difference when the defense tries to shift blame onto the motorcyclist.

This is one reason a truck accident case is not the same as an ordinary car wreck claim. The legal issue is not just that a collision happened. It is whether the truck driver and the trucking company followed the safety practices that should have prevented it.

Why Do Trucking Companies Often Try to Blame the Motorcyclist?

Trucking companies often try to blame the motorcyclist because riders are frequently stereotyped as reckless, fast or hard to predict. That defense strategy appears in serious injury and fatal cases even when the actual problem was a truck driver who turned without enough clearance, changed lanes abruptly or failed to monitor blind spots.

The defense may say the rider was speeding. It may claim the motorcycle was weaving even when the evidence says otherwise. It may argue the rider should have anticipated the truck's movement. In fatal cases, that can be especially troubling because the person best able to explain what happened is no longer here to speak.

These arguments should be tested against real evidence, not assumptions. A motorcyclist has the same right to the roadway as any other driver. A trucking company does not get to excuse an unsafe maneuver by pointing to the fact that motorcycles are smaller or harder to see. If anything, that smaller size is exactly why a trained truck driver should use greater care.

When the trucking company begins building its defense early, the injured rider or grieving family should have someone doing the same on their side. That means preserving evidence quickly,

evaluating the truck's movement carefully and developing the liability story before important details are lost.

Why Should Someone Contact Fried Goldberg LLC After a Motorcycle-Truck Crash?

A motorcycle collision with a commercial truck often leaves devastation from the start. The rider may suffer traumatic brain injuries, spinal cord injuries, crush injuries, amputations, internal bleeding, complex fractures, severe road rash or death. These are not cases where people should assume the insurer will treat them fairly without pressure. Trucking companies and their insurance carriers usually begin protecting themselves almost immediately after a serious crash.

At Fried Goldberg LLC, we focus more than 95% of our practice on truck and commercial vehicle cases, and we have handled trucking litigation in courts across the country. We are also known for teaching other lawyers and training law enforcement on truck crash issues because these cases demand deeper knowledge than ordinary vehicle claims. Our hard work for truck accident victims reflects that focus.

If you or someone you love was hurt in a motorcycle crash involving a commercial truck, do not assume the rider's vulnerability makes the legal case harder to prove. In many situations, it raises urgent questions about blind spots, mirror checks, turning technique, lane changes, route pressure, speed and whether the truck driver ever made sure the movement could be made safely. [Contact us](#) to talk through what happened, get answers to your questions, and learn more about how we can help protect your claim.

For Plaintiff's Attorneys: Our Lawyers Can Help You

Motorcycle-truck cases can look straightforward at first, but they rarely stay that way. The trucking company may argue the rider was in a blind spot. The driver may claim the motorcycle approached too quickly to be seen. The defense may treat the case like an ordinary traffic collision when the real issues involve truck operation, trailer tracking, mirror use, surveillance, lane control and what the driver should have anticipated before moving. That is where working with a trucking-focused firm can make a real difference.

When lawyers from other firms bring us into a case, we help them develop the trucking issues that may otherwise go underexplored. That may include preserving onboard data, analyzing truck movement through the turn or lane change, identifying safety rule violations or building the liability theory around how commercial vehicles actually operate. If you handle injury cases and want experienced trucking counsel in your corner, visit our [plaintiff's attorneys](#) page to learn how our lawyers can help you build a stronger case for your client.

A Force of Good In Your Case

A motorcycle-truck case is about more than one violent moment on the road. It is about what that collision says about how the truck was operated, how the driver was trained and what safety failures allowed such a devastating event to happen. That is one reason our work has always been about more than resolving individual claims. Fried Goldberg sees that mission as being [a force for good](#) for

truck accident victims, for lawyers we teach, for law enforcement we train and for the trucking industry we work to make safer.

That perspective matters in cases like these. When a commercial truck turns across a rider's path or makes a sudden move that leaves a motorcyclist with no escape, the legal case should do more than explain what happened. It should also push for accountability and help expose the safety failure that caused the crash. That's what it means to be a force of good in your case.