

When Commercial Trucks Strike Pedestrians in Unexpected Locations

Our Truck Accident Lawyers Explain What Makes These Cases So Complicated

A pedestrian does not have to be in a marked crosswalk for a [truck accident](#) to destroy someone's life. Some of the worst collisions happen in places people do not think of as traditional pedestrian zones, including gas stations, intersections, roadside shoulders, loading areas, and parking lots. One person may be walking back to a car, checking a tire, crossing in front of a store, or standing near a disabled vehicle. Then a commercial truck turns too wide, backs up without seeing them, or rolls forward before the driver realizes anyone is there.

These cases are often devastating because the human body has almost no protection against a tractor-trailer, straight truck, delivery truck, fuel tanker, or other commercial vehicle. According to the [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration \(NHTSA\)](#), thousands of pedestrians are killed each year in traffic crashes across the United States. Those numbers are alarming on their own, but they also show why truck-pedestrian crashes deserve serious attention, especially when a large vehicle's size, blind spots, and stopping distance turn an ordinary mistake into a fatal event.

At [Fried Goldberg LLC](#), we know these cases are rarely simple. A trucking company may claim the pedestrian came out of nowhere. The driver may say visibility was limited. The insurer may argue the location was unusual, as if that somehow excuses what happened. It does not. If a truck driver failed to look, turned without enough clearance, backed up carelessly, or moved through a crowded roadside space without proper attention, that can point to negligence. Negligence generally means carelessness that causes harm. And when that carelessness leaves a pedestrian with catastrophic injuries, the legal case needs to be built the right way from the start.

Why Do Trucks Hit Pedestrians in Places People Do Not Expect?

These crashes happen because commercial trucks move differently than passenger vehicles, and many drivers do not give enough attention to the spaces around them. The [Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration \(FMCSA\)](#) warns that large trucks and buses have huge blind spots, require wide turns, and need much more distance to stop than smaller vehicles. FMCSA also warns pedestrians to stay out of blind spots and to be careful around right turns and backing movements because truck drivers often cannot see directly behind the vehicle.

That matters in places like gas stations, truck stops, convenience store lots, warehouse entrances, and roadside shoulders because people and trucks are often sharing tight spaces that were not designed for error. A truck may swing left before turning right. A driver may focus on traffic in one direction and miss a person walking near the curb. A delivery driver may reverse toward a loading area without realizing a customer or worker has stepped behind the truck.

These are not random events. They are predictable risks that grow worse when the driver rushes, fails to scan mirrors, or assumes the area is clear.

Limited visibility also plays a major role. FMCSA tells truck and bus drivers to check mirrors regularly and scan ahead for developing hazards, including work zones and changing traffic conditions. When that does not happen, pedestrians can get hit in places where they assumed they would be seen. A person pumping gas, walking through a parking lot, or standing outside a disabled car should not have to guess whether a truck driver is paying attention.

What Makes Gas Stations and Parking Lots So Dangerous Around Commercial Trucks?

Gas stations and truck-accessible parking areas can become dangerous fast when a large commercial vehicle enters, exits, turns, or backs up in a crowded space. These locations often combine a tight turning radius, multiple curb cuts, foot traffic, parked vehicles, and drivers who are focused on fuel pumps, store entrances, or nearby traffic rather than the people walking nearby. A truck driver may be watching one hazard and miss another.

Several conditions often make these locations more dangerous:

- Commercial trucks may need to swing wide to clear the turn, which can place the trailer or cab much closer to pedestrians than expected.
- Drivers may have blind spots directly in front of the cab, along both sides of the truck, and behind the trailer, as explained in FMCSA's guidance on [large truck blind spots](#).
- Customers on foot may move unpredictably between parked vehicles, fuel islands, storefronts, and drive lanes.
- Backing collisions can happen when a driver assumes the area is clear without getting out to look or using a spotter.
- Tankers, box trucks, and delivery vehicles may move through these areas under time pressure, which can lead to rushed decisions.

For example, a person may leave a convenience store and walk toward a parked car just as a truck pulls away from a fuel island. If the driver is focused on clearing the turn and checking for other vehicles, the pedestrian may enter the truck's blind spot without the driver ever realizing it. That does not automatically make the crash unavoidable. It may mean the driver moved before confirming the area was clear, or that the company failed to train the driver to handle pedestrian-heavy locations safely.

These cases also raise important evidence questions. Security cameras at gas stations and businesses may capture the approach, the turn, the backing movement, or the moment of impact. Tire marks, fueling receipts, dispatch records, and driver logs may help explain why the truck was there and what happened in the minutes before the crash. That's why a detailed investigation matters so much when dealing with [truck accident cases](#) involving pedestrians.

Why Are Intersections So Dangerous When Trucks Turn?

Intersections are dangerous because pedestrians and turning trucks are often forced into the same space at the same time. FMCSA warns that large trucks need extra space to make wide turns and may first move left before turning right. FMCSA also advises pedestrians to wait for the truck to complete the turn and step back from the curb because trucks can run close to the sidewalk during the maneuver. The FMCSA provides these safety tips and other warnings about the dangers people face when [driving around large trucks and buses](#).

A truck driver approaching an intersection may be watching the signal, looking for oncoming traffic, checking mirrors, managing speed, and trying to clear the turn without hitting another vehicle or curb. If the driver fails to check the crosswalk area carefully, a pedestrian can be struck even when that pedestrian is doing exactly what they are supposed to do. These crashes often happen during right turns, but they can also happen during left turns when the driver focuses on gaps in traffic and misses a person already in the crossing area.

Important liability factors in these intersection cases often include whether:

- the pedestrian had the walk signal or the right of way
- the truck driver checked mirrors and crosswalk space before turning
- the truck's speed made the turn unsafe for the conditions
- the driver's view was blocked by equipment, cargo, or trailer position
- nearby cameras, event data, or eyewitnesses confirm how the turn happened

When a trucking company or insurer tries to frame the crash as a simple visibility problem, that should be examined closely. Visibility issues do not excuse careless driving. In many cases, they make extra caution even more important. If the driver knew the turn was tight, the crosswalk was active, or pedestrians were likely to be nearby, the duty to move carefully only becomes stronger.

What Happens When a Truck Hits Someone In a Roadside Area?

Roadside pedestrian crashes are some of the most disturbing because the victim is often already dealing with an emergency. The person may have pulled over with a flat tire, stepped out after a minor collision, or stopped to check damage. In other cases, the pedestrian may be a tow operator, road worker, utility worker, or another person who has a reason to be near the shoulder or edge of the roadway. When a commercial truck drifts, follows traffic poorly, or fails to move over, the result can be fatal.

These cases often involve:

- Limited shoulder space that leaves almost no room for error.
- Nighttime or low-light conditions that make visibility more challenging.
- Driver fatigue, distraction, or poor awareness near stopped traffic.
- Failure to slow down or change lanes when a roadside hazard is visible.
- Work zone or emergency scene conditions that require extra caution.

For example, a person may be standing near the rear of a disabled vehicle waiting for assistance while a commercial truck passes too close to the shoulder. Another common scenario involves a person who has stepped out after a non-truck crash and is then hit by a passing tractor-trailer before help arrives. These facts matter because they often show that the pedestrian was visible long enough for a careful driver to react.

Roadside cases also raise serious questions about stopping distance and hazard recognition. FMCSA explains in its guidance about [sharing the road with large trucks and buses](#) that large trucks need much more distance to stop safely. If the driver was not watching the shoulder, did not respond to slowing traffic, or failed to recognize a clear hazard ahead, that can become powerful evidence of fault.

What Evidence Can Prove Why the Truck Driver Failed to See the Pedestrian?

The strongest cases usually come down to evidence that shows what the driver should have seen, when the danger became obvious, and why the truck kept moving anyway. In truck-pedestrian cases, that evidence can come from more than one place, and the sooner it is preserved, the better.

Important evidence often includes:

- Surveillance video from gas stations, convenience stores, warehouses, intersections, or nearby businesses showing the truck's path and the pedestrian's position.
- Dash camera footage, if the truck or another vehicle captured the incident.
- Event data and onboard systems that may show speed, braking, throttle use, and driver response before impact.
- Driver logs, dispatch records, and route information that may reveal time pressure, fatigue, or unrealistic delivery expectations.
- Post-crash inspection records, mirror placement information, and truck configuration details that may help explain visibility limitations.
- Eyewitness statements from customers, workers, bystanders, or first responders who saw how the truck moved.
- Scene photographs that show skid marks, body position, curb geometry, sight lines, pump layout, trailer angle, or shoulder width.

This is where trucking cases are different from ordinary car accident claims. The legal question is not just whether a driver hit someone. It's whether the driver and trucking company followed the safety rules that should have prevented the crash. Our work often involves looking beyond the police report and into the training, supervision, truck movement, and company practices that allowed the collision to happen. That's why [truck accident litigation](#) requires a focused, detailed investigation.

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

A pedestrian struck by a commercial truck is often facing catastrophic harm from the start. The injuries may include traumatic brain injuries, crush injuries, spinal cord damage, fractures, internal bleeding, or death. These are not cases where people can safely assume the insurer will do the right thing on its own. Trucking companies and their insurance carriers often move fast after a serious crash. They start gathering information early, and they do not wait around to protect their own interests.

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. That commitment reflects who we are and why we're so passionate about helping truck accident injury victims.

If you or someone you love was hit by a commercial truck while walking in a place where no one expected a pedestrian crash to happen, do not assume the location makes the case weaker. In many situations, it does the opposite. It raises serious questions about awareness, blind spots, training, speed, route pressure, and whether the truck driver ever made sure the space was clear before moving. [Contact us](#) to talk through what happened, get answers to your questions and learn how we can help protect your claim.

For Plaintiff's Attorneys: Our Lawyers Can Help You

Truck-pedestrian cases often look simple at first, but they rarely stay that way. A trucking company may argue that the pedestrian stepped into a blind spot. The driver may claim the location was unusual or visibility was limited. The defense may try to treat the crash like an ordinary vehicle case when the real issues involve truck movement, mirror use, route pressure, and what the driver should have seen 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 sharpen the trucking issues that may otherwise get overlooked. That may include preserving onboard data, identifying regulatory violations, analyzing truck movement in tight spaces, or developing the liability theory in a way that reflects 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 truck-pedestrian case is about more than one moment of impact. It's about what that crash says about the way the truck was operated, the way the company trained the driver, and the safety choices that put someone on foot in danger in the first place. That's one reason our work has always been about more than resolving individual claims. We're 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 pedestrian cases like these. When a commercial truck strikes someone in a gas station, roadside area, or other place where a pedestrian should have been protected, the legal case should do more than answer what happened. It should also push for accountability and help expose the safety failure that allowed it to happen. That is what it means to be a force of good in your case.