How to Choose a Car Accident Lawyer

Choosing a car accident lawyer goes better with a few clear questions. Some crashes involve one insurer and a modest property claim, while others bring serious injuries, several policies and disputed fault. These questions can make a first meeting more productive, whatever the size of the claim.

Start with the license

Before the first meeting, check the basics. Each state bar or licensing agency provides a way to confirm that a lawyer is licensed and in good standing, and many also publish disciplinary history. A listing in a directory or a badge from a rating publisher reflects that publisher's selection, rather than a license check or a prediction of results. If the crash happened in another state, ask whether the lawyer is licensed there or will work with local counsel.

Experience with car crash claims

Ask how many car crash claims the lawyer handles, and of what kind. An auto accident lawyer should be comfortable with coverage questions, including uninsured motorist (UM) claims, PIP, MedPay and Medicare or health plan liens. Ask how the firm gathers evidence such as crash reports, dashcam video and event data recorder (EDR) downloads. Ask whether the lawyer has tried car crash cases before a jury, because trial experience can shape how a case is prepared, even though most claims settle.

Understand the fee agreement

Injury lawyers often handle these claims on a contingency fee, a percentage of any recovery. ABA Model Rule 1.5(c), which many states have adopted in some form, requires a contingent fee agreement to be in writing and signed by the client, and to state how the fee is calculated and whether expenses are deducted before or after the fee. Ask who covers case costs if there is no recovery, such as filing fees, medical record charges and deposition costs. Ask whether the percentage changes if a lawsuit is filed, and ask about the written closing statement at the end of the case.

Who does the work

Ask whether the car crash attorney at the consultation will handle the case personally, and how often to expect updates. Ask who answers questions when the lawyer is in court, and how updates are usually sent. If the firm plans to refer the case or bring in co-counsel, ABA Model Rule 1.5(e) generally requires the client's agreement, confirmed in writing, before lawyers in different firms divide a fee.

Documents worth bringing

A consultation is more useful when the documents are available. Bring the police report, or at least the report number, together with photos of the vehicles and the scene. *caraccidentlawyers.wiki* Letters from insurers and any forms already signed are worth bringing too, since they show who has made contact and what has been *car accident lawyer* agreed. Medical bills and proof of missed work help document the losses so far.

Red flags and realistic expectations

Be wary of anyone who promises a specific dollar amount at a first meeting. No lawyer can predict the outcome of a claim with certainty. Unsolicited in-person or phone approaches after a crash are another warning sign, since ABA Model Rule 7.3 generally restricts live person-to-person solicitation by lawyers. A car accident lawyer can explain which statute of limitations applies. This is general information, not legal advice.