Questions to Ask Before Hiring a Car Accident Lawyer

Picking a car accident attorney goes better with a few clear questions. Some crashes involve a single insurer and a modest property claim, while others involve serious injuries, several policies and disputed fault. The questions below can make a first consultation more useful, whatever the size of the claim.

Start with the license

Before any meeting, confirm 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, not a license check and not 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 what kinds. 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 *car accident lawyer* taken car crash cases to trial, because trial experience can shape how a case is prepared, even though most claims resolve without a trial.

Understand the fee agreement

Many injury lawyers work **caraccidentlawyers.wiki** on a contingency fee, a percentage of any recovery. ABA Model Rule 1.5(c), which many states follow in some form, requires a contingent fee agreement to be in writing and signed by the client, and to explain how the fee is calculated and whether expenses come out before or after it. Ask who pays case costs if there is no recovery, including filing fees, 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.

Communication and staffing

Ask whether the car crash attorney at the consultation will handle the case personally, and how often to expect updates. Ask who will answer questions when the lawyer is unavailable, and whether updates come by phone, email or a client portal. 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.

What to bring to the first meeting

A first meeting goes further when the paperwork is on the table. Bring the police report, or at least the report number, along with photos of the scene and the vehicles. Letters from insurers and any forms already signed are worth bringing too, because they show what has already been said and signed. Medical bills and pay stubs help show the losses so far.

What no lawyer can promise

Be cautious of anyone who promises a dollar figure at the first meeting. No lawyer can know the outcome of a claim in advance. Unsolicited calls or visits after a crash are another warning sign, because ABA Model Rule 7.3 generally restricts lawyers from soliciting clients through live person-to-person contact. A car accident lawyer should be able to explain the statute of limitations that applies. This is general information, not legal advice.