

DOCUMENTS TO SHOW YOUR ATTORNEY AFTER A CAR ACCIDENT

If you have been involved in a car accident, you may be thinking about hiring an attorney, or you may have already retained an attorney to represent you. In either case, there are certain documents your attorney is going to be interested in seeing in order to develop a full understanding of your case and your chance for a recovery. The following is a list of documents that your attorney may want to see during the course of your case.

_____ **Your Insurance Policy.** If you have an automobile insurance policy, your attorney will want to see a copy of it in order to review what type of an insurance recovery you may be entitled to. If you do not have an actual copy of your policy, do not panic. Your attorney will be able to obtain one, with your approval, from your insurance company.

_____ **Evidence of Premium Payments.** Your attorney will need proof that your automobile insurance policy premiums, if you have a policy, have been paid. You should periodically receive statements or bills from your insurance company notifying you that premiums are due. Being able to provide your attorney with that correspondence, as well as evidence of your payment (through cancelled checks or a receipt, for example), will help prove that the policy is in force and “paid up.”

_____ **Information Exchanged at the Accident Scene.** Often, names and telephone numbers are exchanged between the parties to an accident while they are still at the scene. If you have this information, even if you have already contacted the other parties, make sure to provide it to your attorney.

_____ **Information Provided by the Police at the Accident Scene.** In many cases, the police are called to a scene of an accident. In those situations, they are required to draft an accident report which often includes a diagram of where the various cars or pedestrians were at the time of the accident. The report will also include the on-scene officer’s initial impressions of the cause of the accident. This information is crucial in allowing your attorney to develop a total understanding of your case. Provide your attorney with a copy of the accident report or anything else drafted by the police. If you do not have a copy of the accident report, your attorney will be able to obtain one on your behalf.

_____ **Tickets Related to the Accident.** If you have been given a ticket in relation to the accident, make sure to let your attorney know. For example, if you were charged with “failure to yield,” your attorney will want to see a copy of your ticket.

_____ **Photographs.** If your car was damaged in an accident, it is a good idea to take pictures of the damage. If you did not take pictures, a representative of the insurance company may have. If you have pictures in your possession, provide them to your attorney. If you do not have pictures, but believe that the insurance company may have some, provide that information to your attorney as well.

_____ **Statements.** There is a chance, when you are involved in a car accident, that you may be contacted by a representative of your automobile insurance company. Often, the insurance company will want to obtain a statement from you about the accident. If you were contacted, you have a right to have a copy of any statement you gave. If you have a copy, give it to your attorney. If you do not have a copy, let your attorney know that you gave a statement so he or she can obtain a copy of it.

Note: Generally, you are not required to give a statement to the insurance company, particularly once you have hired an attorney to represent you. If you are contacted by the insurance company, make sure that you let your attorney know.

_____ **Medical Records.** If you are involved in a car accident, you may have sustained physical injuries for which you sought medical care and attention. If so, your attorney will need copies of your medical records so that he or she can see what your diagnosis is and obtain a feeling for how long it will take you to recover from your injuries. Provide your attorney with copies of any medical records that you have. If you do not have copies of your records, be able to provide your attorney with the name and address of any medical provider you have seen. Your attorney will be able to obtain the records, with your permission, on your behalf.

_____ **Psychological Records.** If your car accident has had an emotional or mental impact on you, which has required you to seek psychological or psychiatric care, your attorney will need to know about it and will need to see those treatment records. As with medical records, you should provide your attorney with a copy of any psychological records or the names and addresses of your mental health providers.

_____ **Pay Records.** If you have lost time from work as a result of a car accident, your attorney may be able to obtain compensation for your lost wages. In order to do so, your attorney will need to calculate how much money you have “lost” as a result of the car accident. Having evidence of your pre-accident earnings and your post-accident earnings will help your attorney make this calculation.