IMPACT LEGAL
Car Accident Attorneys

T-SHIRT LAWYER

01 ARIZONA FIELD GUIDES

AFTER A TRUCK CRASH.

What to save. Who to contact.
What to ask next.



A clear place to start

For injured people and the family helping them.

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01 · First things first

Start with what matters

Start with safety and care. Then take the next useful step.

Five places to start

01

Get help

Emergency response and safety first.

02

Follow up on care

Keep instructions; raise concerns.

03

Find your vehicle

Ask who has it, what storage costs and whether it's being moved.

04

Save the originals

Back up photos, messages and paperwork without editing them.

05

Notify your insurer

Follow your policy; keep injury and vehicle contacts separate.

On worksheet 1, write down who will help with the next step and when you'll follow up.

Take care of yourself first

Call 911 for injuries or immediate danger. Stay out of traffic and follow responders' directions. Arizona requires immediate notice to law enforcement after an injury or death crash. A.R.S. § 28-666

Tell a qualified clinician about the crash and your symptoms. Follow their care instructions and report new or worsening concerns. Your health should guide treatment decisions, not a claim target.

If you left by ambulance

Someone you trust can help with your permission. Start with discharge papers, an officer's card, your vehicle's location and other occupants' contacts. Your helper should explain their role and get required authorizations. Being family doesn't automatically authorize signing legal or medical documents for you.

No scene photos? Use the records pages that follow. Don't recreate the crash or reconnect damaged electronics to look for data.

Disclaimer

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WRITE DOWN WHAT YOU REMEMBER

Separate what you saw from what someone told you. If you're unsure about a detail, say so. You don't need to fill every gap.

02 · Who's who

Get the names straight

The driver, trucking company, trailer owner and insurer may all be different.



Illustrated examples; identifier locations vary. Gather details only when it is safe and you have permission.

The details to write down

Driver	Operating carrier	Tractor	Trailer	Claim handler
Name and contact details	Company name · USDOT · MC, if shown	Plate/state · powered-unit number	Its own plate/state · trailer-unit number	Insurer · adjuster · claim number · whom they represent

These details help you find people. They don't prove ownership, employment, coverage or fault.

Copy the details exactly

Write names and numbers exactly; note the photo, report page or document they came from. A logo alone doesn't tell you who's legally responsible. Gather scene details only when safe. Mark missing information unknown.

ASK WHO THE ADJUSTER REPRESENTS

Keep that name beside the claim number. Our guide to potentially liable parties explains why several companies may need a closer look.

A LOGO ISN'T AN ORGANIZATIONAL CHART.

Next: check the company lookup.

Company lookup / Check the match

Find the company. Check the match.

Keep the name, number, search result and date together. A similar name is a reason to check again.

Search. Compare. Save.

Search the identifier

Use the company name, USDOT number or MC number from your records.

Compare the result

Check the name and address against the records you already have.

Save the result and date

Flag a mismatch for your lawyer instead of choosing the nearest name.

A company snapshot is one part of the record, not a decision about responsibility or insurance.

The USDOT number can help

FMCSA's company-records page links to the free SAFER Company Snapshot. Search by name, USDOT number or MC number. Compare the name and address with your records; save the result and the date. If they don't match, flag that for your lawyer instead of picking the closest name.

The snapshot provides selected company and safety information. A crash count doesn't mean the company caused those crashes, and a missing safety rating doesn't decide your claim. The search won't necessarily find everyone who may be responsible or tell you whether insurance covers this crash.

Your lookup record

Name or number searched

Name and address in the result

Source record used for comparison

Search date / saved result location

Mismatch or question to raise

KEEP THE RESULT WITH YOUR RECORDS

Save the search result and date. If the details do not match, flag that for your lawyer.

03 · Finding the missing pieces

Start with the records

No scene photos? There may still be plenty to follow up on.

Who handled the crash?

Arizona DPS
Use DPS's instructions for crashes it investigated.

DPS records requests

City police / county sheriff
Ask that agency for its records and request instructions.

You're not sure
Check an officer's card or insurer records. Have the crash date and location ready.

You don't have to wait for a finished report to ask a lawyer for advice.

Ask the agency that investigated

Give the crash date, location, report number and names. Ask about photos, dispatch records and video too. Access, availability, cost and timing vary. Save your request confirmation and the files you receive.

Spot an error? Note the page and the specific detail, then ask how to request a correction or add information. Keep the original report too. It can help explain the crash, but it doesn't settle every question about civil responsibility.

Follow these leads

- **Care records:** treatment locations, discharge papers and ambulance information.
- **Tow records:** ask the agency or insurer, then confirm the location with whoever has your vehicle.
- **Other people:** ask for original photos or video. Keep each person's account in their own words.
- **Cameras:** note nearby businesses, homes or vehicles that might have recorded the crash.

PASS CAMERA LEADS ALONG PROMPTLY

A camera may not have recorded or kept useful footage. Getting it may require permission, a records request, a subpoena or another legal process. Give your lawyer the lead; don't enter private property or access someone else's device.

04 · Keeping the evidence

Save it as you found it

Keep track of the original, who has it and what needs to happen next.



Different systems keep different records

ELD

Supports duty-status and hours-of-service records. It isn't required to capture speed, braking or steering. FMCSA ELD functions

Other vehicle / fleet systems

May hold dashcam footage, dispatch messages or vehicle-event data. What's recorded and available varies.

Keep originals. Make copies.

Save full photos, videos, emails, attachments and messages with their context. Keep devices or storage cards. Make notes on copies. Don't take apart, test or discard items that may matter.

Before vehicle changes that could destroy evidence, ask your lawyer about an inspection and what needs saving. Ask the insurer and vehicle holder about towing and storage costs.

Item	Original location	Who has it	Copy saved	Next step

Use these fields on the evidence worksheet. Don't assume one device contains everything.

Don't count on six months

If this federal rule applies, carriers must keep specified duty-status records and supporting documents for at least six months from receipt. That's no promise about camera footage or crash-event data. Exemptions and other preservation duties matter. **49 CFR § 395.8**

TELL YOUR LAWYER WHO HAS IT

Share who has the evidence and where it's kept. A preservation request asks that it be saved; it doesn't guarantee it exists or will be handed over. Keep requests and responses. See our preservation guide.

"BLACK BOX" IS A NICKNAME, NOT AN INVENTORY.

05 · When the phone rings

Who's on the other end?

Before you get into the details, find out who's calling and whom they represent.



Your insurer and theirs

Get the basics down

Note the caller's name, company, callback number, claim number and whom they represent. Ask whether it's recorded. Check unexpected callers through a known insurer contact before sharing sensitive information.

Be truthful about what you saw and what you're inferring. Say if you don't know or remember. Don't guess about speeds, distances or how your injury will develop.

Your own insurer

Your policy may require notice, cooperation, documents or statements. Handle those requirements promptly; ask for clarification in writing.

Ask what they're waiting for

If the insurer is investigating coverage, ask whose policy, what information is missing and when you should follow up. **Coverage** is whether the policy applies. **Fault** is who was responsible. An answer to one doesn't automatically answer the other.

Save messages with dates and senders. Separate injury and vehicle-damage contacts, even at the same insurer. Our truck-insurance guide explains more.

The truck company's insurer

Get advice before giving a recorded account, signing a broad medical authorization or accepting a release.

Advice about the other side's insurer doesn't automatically apply to your obligations under your own policy.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

Who do you represent? Is this recorded? What do you need, and by when? Can you send it in writing?

"WE'RE REVIEWING IT" ISN'T A FOLLOW-UP DATE.

06 • Care, bills and work

Keep the numbers straight

Give each injured person a separate folder. Add records as they arrive.

Give each amount its own column

Billed charges	Insurance payments	Remaining balances	Repayment demands
What the provider billed	What the records show was paid	What's still being claimed	Who wants reimbursement, and why

Don't treat every number as another valid deduction. Ask how the amounts connect and what still needs resolving.

Keep an honest record of recovery

Save treatment records, discharge instructions, bills, insurance explanations of benefits, receipts and written work restrictions. Note appointment dates and expenses. Keep the clinician's words as written.

A short dated note can describe a task you couldn't finish, help you needed or a symptom you discussed with a provider. Include improvement too. If emotional symptoms or driving anxiety are affecting you, talk with a qualified clinician. Your notes don't replace a diagnosis.

Show how work changed

Keep pay records, missed shifts, employer messages and restrictions on your duties. If you're self-employed, save records showing the affected work, expenses and income. Lost sales aren't automatically lost profit. Our **lost-income guide** lists helpful documents.

ASK HOW BILLS WILL BE HANDLED

Don't assume the truck insurer will pay providers as bills arrive, or that you'll receive the entire settlement amount. Use our medical-bill coverage guide to prepare questions about your coverage.

A STACK OF BILLS ISN'T A RUNNING TOTAL.

07 • Dates and decisions

Check the dates

An open claim doesn't handle lawsuit deadlines or evidence that needs saving.

Arizona deadlines to ask about

2 YEARS

General personal-injury lawsuit
Generally runs from accrual, when the legal clock starts. Exceptions may apply.
A.R.S. § 12-542

180 DAYS

Notice to a public entity
A qualifying notice may be required for claims involving a public entity or employee.
A.R.S. § 12-821.01

1 YEAR

Lawsuit against a public entity
A separate lawsuit period may apply. Sending notice isn't filing a lawsuit.
A.R.S. § 12-821

These aren't successive steps on one timeline. Ask which requirements apply to you and when each clock starts.

Have a lawyer check the dates

Do this early, especially if a government vehicle or road condition may be involved. The claim type, exceptions and when the legal clock starts need review. These periods can't calculate your deadline.

Evidence may need attention well before a lawsuit is due. You can focus on care while someone helps with records and your lawyer works out what needs saving.

Read what the payment settles

Before accepting payment, check which people or businesses the agreement covers and whether you're releasing vehicle-damage, injury or other claims. Discuss unanswered questions about care, expenses, insurance and repayments.

Vehicle damage and injuries may be handled on different schedules. What matters is the document you're signing. Ask for an explanation if its terms don't match what you thought the payment was for.

WAITING DOESN'T NECESSARILY BUY TIME

Don't count on an open claim, ongoing treatment or a records request to extend a deadline. Know who will take the next required step.

08 · Your next conversation

Bring what you have

Bring your records and questions. You can work through missing pieces together.

Four pages to keep beside your records

Worksheet 1
Crash details and first steps
Where it happened · investigating agency · vehicle location · what to do next

Worksheet 2
Truck details and claim contacts
Driver · operating carrier · tractor and trailer · adjusters

Worksheet 3
Evidence and leads
What exists · where originals are · witnesses and cameras

Worksheet 4
Care, work and questions
Records to gather · questions for your lawyer · follow-up steps

General Arizona information. Advice for your claim depends on your facts, the law and your policy terms.

Ask these six questions

1. Which people or companies should we look into?
2. What evidence could be lost, and who has it?
3. Which policies might apply, and what don't we know?
4. What are my deadlines, including government notice requirements?
5. Can you explain fees, expenses and possible repayments in writing?
6. Who will update me, and what should I bring next?

A few answers before you call

Can I ask for help before the report is ready? Yes. Bring the date, location, agency and report number, if known. Other evidence may need attention while you wait.

Does a big policy mean a big settlement? No. The policy or its limit doesn't prove fault, show your losses or establish coverage for this crash. Someone else's settlement won't answer those questions.

What do I do with these worksheets? Keep them private. Mark unknowns, attach copies and secure originals. They aren't legal filings, preservation notices or deadline calculators.

If you'd like more detail

Read about how fault is investigated, what affects the timing and why settlement averages can mislead.

LET'S TALK THROUGH THE NEXT STEP

Bring the organizer and whatever records you have to an Impact Legal free case review. Call (602) 345-1818.

WORKSHEET 01 / KEEP WITH YOUR RECORDS

Start with what you know

Fill in what you know and mark what you don't. Keep this with your private records.

Crash date / approximate time

Rider, driver or passenger name

Road / direction / cross street or milepost

Investigating agency / report number

Officer / agency contact

Your vehicle location / custodian / phone

Storage charges / planned move, repair or disposal

01 First actions

- ☐ Follow care instructions; raise new concerns with a clinician.
- ☐ Request available records from the investigating agency.
- ☐ Save original files and record witness/camera leads.
- ☐ Notify your own insurer under your policy.
- ☐ Ask about evidence preservation before vehicle changes.
- ☐ Ask counsel about evidence needs and legal deadlines.

02 Next action and who will help

Next action / person responsible

Follow-up date / contact

WORKSHEET 02 / KEEP WITH YOUR RECORDS

Who is who? Write it down.

Copy names and numbers exactly, and note where you found them. A logo alone doesn't tell you who's legally responsible.

01 Truck and company identifiers

Identifier	Exactly as shown	Source / photo / person
Driver name		
Carrier / operating name		
USDOT / MC number, if shown		
Tractor plate / state / unit		
Trailer plate / state / unit		

02 Claim contacts

Company / adjuster / represented party	Claim number / contact	Next action / follow-up date

The trucking company, vehicle owners and insurer may be different organizations. Ask each contact who they represent. Write 'unknown' instead of guessing.

WORKSHEET 03 / KEEP WITH YOUR RECORDS

What you have. Where it is.

Note where the originals are, who's holding them and what you're allowed to do next.

01 Evidence and current custody

Item / date / source	Original location / holder	Copy saved / next action
Photos or video		
Report / agency records		
Vehicle / physical item		
Messages / documents		
Other		

02 Witness and camera leads

Person / camera location	Contact / what may be available	Request / response / follow-up

Keep what you saw separate from what someone told you. Don't alter, test or throw away possible evidence. A camera nearby doesn't guarantee a recording exists.

WORKSHEET 04 / KEEP WITH YOUR RECORDS

Care, work and open questions

Give each injured person a separate folder. Track what's missing and who's helping you find it.

01 Records to locate

Provider / employer / record	Date range / contact	Requested / received / still needed

02 Questions for counsel

Evidence needing attention now

Companies, coverage or documents still unknown

Deadlines counsel identified / required action

Next person responsible

Next follow-up date

Check legal deadlines even if the insurance claim or records request is still open. Keep originals safe and use a trusted channel for sensitive records.