

What to Know About T-Bone Accidents at Arizona Intersections

An Arizona lawyer can protect your rights after an intersection collision

Intersections are where vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists meet. Because multiple streams of traffic converge, the risk of side-impact collisions (commonly called T-bone or broadside crashes) is high.

A [T-bone crash](#) happens when the front of one vehicle strikes the side of another, forming the shape of a “T.” These collisions are especially dangerous because the side of a vehicle has less structure and protection than the front or rear.

Understanding why T-bone crashes occur, the injuries they cause and what to do after a crash can help Arizona drivers protect themselves and build a strong case if they are injured. Here’s what you should know.

Why Arizona intersections are so dangerous

Unlike long, straight stretches of highway where traffic flows in one direction, intersections bring together vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians moving in multiple directions, often with conflicting intentions. This convergence, combined with human error and split-second decisions, increases the risk of car accidents.

Here are some of the main reasons intersections are so dangerous:

- **Multiple conflict points:** Cars can collide when turning left, turning right, going straight, or merging. Add pedestrians and cyclists, and the number of potential collisions increases.
- **Driver misjudgment:** Many drivers miscalculate the speed or distance of oncoming vehicles, especially when turning left across traffic.
- **Signal violations:** Running red lights or failing to yield at stop signs are leading causes of severe intersection crashes.
- **Distracted driving:** Even a brief glance at a phone can be disastrous when navigating crossing traffic or pedestrians.
- **Limited visibility:** Parked cars, buildings, or poor lighting can obstruct a driver’s view of cross traffic or people in the crosswalk.
- **Difficult decision-making:** Intersections require quick judgments about when to go, stop, or yield, which leaves little room for hesitation or error.
- **Aggressive driving behaviors:** Speeding to “beat the light” or making sudden lane changes often leads to crashes at Arizona intersections.

Who is liable for a T-bone crash in Arizona?

Determining fault after a T-bone crash often involves evaluating traffic control devices, witness statements and physical evidence. Liability typically falls on the driver who failed to yield, ran a red light, turned improperly or was speeding or distracted.

However, there are scenarios where multiple parties share blame. For example, a municipality may be partially liable if a malfunctioning traffic light contributed to the crash, or a vehicle manufacturer may be responsible if a brake defect prevented a driver from stopping.

Police reports, witness statements, traffic-camera footage and crash-reconstruction experts can help clarify who violated traffic laws.

Additionally, Arizona follows pure comparative negligence rules, which means damages are apportioned based on each party's degree of fault. For example, if another driver ran a red light, but you were exceeding the speed limit, you could be found somewhat responsible for the crash, even if you had the right of way.

What are common injuries and long-term impacts of T-bone crashes?

Side-impact crashes are among the most severe because the side of a vehicle has a relatively thin barrier between occupants and the impacting vehicle. Injuries commonly include:

- **Head and traumatic brain injuries:** Even with side airbags, the force of a T-bone crash can cause passengers to hit the window or pillar. This can lead to concussions or severe traumatic brain injuries.
- **Spinal cord and back injuries:** The sudden lateral force can fracture vertebrae or damage disks, which can lead to chronic pain or paralysis.
- **Broken ribs and internal injuries:** The impact may crush the door into the passenger compartment, which might cause rib fractures and internal organ damage.
- **Broken arms and legs:** Occupants on the side of impact may suffer fractures when their limbs are trapped between the door and seat. Whiplash and soft tissue injuries are also common.

The emotional impact of a serious crash should also not be overlooked. Survivors often experience anxiety when driving through intersections, sleep disturbances, or symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. Physical therapy, counseling and time away from work can be expensive, which adds financial stress to recovery.

What steps should I take after a T-bone accident in Arizona?

If you are involved in a broadside collision, taking the right steps can protect your health and your legal claim. Here's what to do:

- **Move to a safe location, if possible:** Then check yourself and others for injuries. Call 911 if you or anyone else is hurt at the scene.
- **Call the police:** Call the police and wait for an officer to arrive at the crash scene. They'll create a report, which documents the other driver's statements, any citations issued, and other details showing how the crash occurred.
- **Exchange information and document the scene:** Get the other driver's name, contact information, insurance details and license plate number. Also, take photos of vehicle damage, skid marks, traffic signs and road conditions. Note the names of any witnesses.
- **Seek medical attention:** Even if you feel fine after leaving the crash scene, some injuries (such as traumatic brain injury or internal bleeding) may not show symptoms immediately. A prompt medical evaluation also ties your injuries to the crash event and addresses your condition before it worsens.
- **Notify your insurance company:** Arizona is an at-fault state, so insurance companies need to be notified quickly. Provide basic facts, but avoid speculating or admitting fault.
- **Avoid speaking to the other driver's insurance company:** Insurance companies are in the business of protecting their bottom line, not looking out for your rights. Avoid speaking to the other driver's insurance company and let an experienced Arizona attorney do the talking for you.

What are common challenges in T-bone accident cases?

While liability may seem clear at first glance, these cases can get very complicated. The common challenges in T-bone accident cases include:

- **Disputed fault:** Each driver may argue the other ran a red light, failed to yield, or entered the intersection improperly. Without clear evidence, fault can become a "he said, she said" battle.
- **Lack of witnesses:** Many intersections don't have neutral witnesses. If bystanders are unavailable, proving liability relies heavily on physical evidence, police reports, or camera footage.
- **Conflicting traffic signals:** Sometimes signals malfunction, or drivers interpret them differently (for example, mistaking a flashing yellow for a protected turn). This adds to the confusion over who had the right of way.
- **Severe injuries:** T-bone collisions often cause life-changing injuries that lead to high medical costs and long-term care needs. Proving the full extent of damages can be contested by insurance companies.
- **Insurance disputes:** Insurance companies may try to reduce your compensation by claiming shared fault, arguing your injuries aren't as severe as claimed, or suggesting pre-existing conditions are to blame.

- **Vehicle damage complexity:** While side damage can help reconstruct how the crash occurred, it's not always definitive in proving speed, angle, or which car had the right of way.

Should I get a lawyer for a T-bone accident in Arizona?

If you've been injured in a broadside collision in Arizona, having a lawyer on your side can make a night-and-day difference in the outcome of your case. Insurance companies will use every trick in the book to avoid paying you what your claim is worth. Attorney Byron Browne, the Anti-Lawyer Lawyer, knows how to stand up to them and demand full compensation on your behalf.

[Browne Law Group](#) represents clients throughout the state, including Phoenix, Tucson, Mesa, Chandler, Glendale and the surrounding communities. When you reach out to us, you'll receive a free, no-obligation consultation. We'll listen to your story, answer your questions and explain your legal options.

We work on a contingency fee basis, so you don't have to pay any money upfront. Attorney Browne only gets paid if he successfully recovers compensation for you. We'll handle all communication with insurance adjusters, gather police reports and witness statements, and consult accident-reconstruction experts to build a strong case for you.

If you or a loved one has been injured in a T-bone collision, [contact us](#) today to schedule your free consultation and learn how we can help you.