

What You Need to Know About Head-On Collisions on Arizona Highways

Browne Law Group is ready to fight for you. No bull. No nonsense.

If you've ever driven on Arizona's highways, you know the mix of breathtaking scenery and heart-pounding moments that come with sharing the road with speeding trucks, distracted tourists, and the occasional wrong-way driver. But there's one type of car accident that stands above the rest in terms of sheer terror and devastation: the head-on collision. These aren't just fender benders or sideswipes. They're the kind of accidents that change lives in an instant, leaving families shattered and survivors facing years of recovery.

If you've ever wondered why these crashes are so deadly, or what you can do to protect yourself and your loved ones, you're in the right place. Let's break down what makes head-on collisions so dangerous, where and why they happen, and what you can do if you find yourself in one.

What is a head-on collision and why is it so dangerous?

Imagine two cars, each traveling at 60 miles per hour, slamming into each other headfirst. The force isn't just 60 mph; it's 120 mph. That's the equivalent of driving off a ten-story building. Now, think about what happens to the people inside those cars. The front of a vehicle is designed to crumple and absorb some of the impact, but in a head-on collision, that crumple zone often isn't enough. Engines can be pushed back into the passenger compartment. Airbags deploy at around 200 mph, but even they can't always prevent catastrophic injuries when the forces are this extreme.

The injuries that result from these crashes are some of the most severe you can imagine. Traumatic brain injuries are common, as the brain slams against the skull and then rebounds, causing bleeding or swelling. Spinal cord injuries can leave survivors paralyzed, either partially or completely. Internal injuries (such as a ruptured aorta or damaged organs) can be fatal if not treated immediately.

Even if you walk away with "just" broken bones or whiplash, the psychological trauma can linger for years. Many survivors struggle with PTSD, anxiety, or even a fear of getting back behind the wheel.

What causes head-on collisions on Arizona highways?

Most head-on collisions don't just happen; they're the result of a chain of mistakes, bad decisions, or outright negligence. These crashes can be the result of:

- **Distracted driving**: You often see drivers glancing at their phones, adjusting their GPS, or even eating while driving at high speeds on highways like I-10. Despite being illegal in Arizona, distracted driving continues to be a widespread issue that can lead to drifting into oncoming traffic.
- **Fatigued driving**: Drowsy driving is another major problem, particularly among shift workers, truck drivers, and teenagers. Feeling your eyelids get heavy or experiencing micro-sleeps can be deadly when traveling at highway speeds.
- **Drunk and drugged driving**: Impaired driving, whether due to alcohol, drugs, or certain prescription medications, is one of the most destructive causes of head-on collisions. Arizona's legal blood alcohol limit is 0.08%, but even a single drink can impair judgment and reaction time.
- **Speeding and reckless driving**: Speeding and reckless driving are also major contributors to head-on collisions, especially on rural highways such as SR-87 or US-93. Driving at 70 or 80 mph can create a false sense of security, but a single mistake, such as swerving to avoid an animal, can result in a catastrophic crash.
- **Roadway infrastructure**: Road design plays a role, too, as many of Arizona's highways, particularly in rural areas, lack median barriers to prevent vehicles from crossing into oncoming traffic.

Where do head-on collisions most often happen in Arizona?

Arizona's highways offer stunning views and open roads, but some stretches are far riskier than others, especially when it comes to head-on crashes. These include:

- **I-10 corridor between Phoenix and Tucson**: This is one of the state's deadliest, with heavy traffic, distracted drivers, and a high number of wrong-way crashes.
- **I-17 (Black Canyon Freeway)**: This freeway is infamous for its steep grades, sharp curves near Cordes Junction, and unexpected wildlife crossings.
- **US-60 (Superstition Freeway)**: This is a hotspot for crashes in Chandler and Gilbert, where aggressive driving and congested intersections create a perfect storm for collisions.
- **Rural two-lane highways**: Highways such as SR-87 (Beeline Highway) lack median barriers, have high speed limits, and can leave crash victims waiting 30+ minutes for emergency help due to remote locations.
- **US-93 (Wickenburg to Kingman)**: This is another high-risk route, with long stretches of no cell service, meaning help could be far away if a crash occurs.

What should I do if I'm in a head-on collision?

If you're ever in a head-on collision, the first few minutes are critical. Your adrenaline will be pumping, but you need to stay as calm as possible. Start by turning on your hazard lights and, if you can, move your vehicle to the shoulder. But never move an injured person unless there's an immediate threat, like a fire or explosion.

Call 911 right away. Give the dispatcher your location and let them know if anyone is injured. Even if you feel fine, don't refuse medical attention. Some injuries, like internal bleeding or TBIs, might not show symptoms right away.

While you're waiting for help, document the scene. Take photos of the vehicles, skid marks, road conditions, and any visible injuries. Get contact information from witnesses; their statements could be important later. When the police arrive, make sure they file an official accident report. This document will be vital for insurance claims and any legal action you might take.

In the days and weeks that follow, keep track of all your medical visits, bills, and diagnoses. This paperwork will be important if you need to file a claim. Also, don't talk to the insurance company without a lawyer. Insurance companies are notorious for offering lowball settlements or trying to shift the blame onto you.

What are your legal rights after a head-on collision?

If you've been injured in a head-on collision, you have rights, but the insurance companies aren't going to make it easy for you. Arizona follows a rule called comparative negligence, which means that if you're found to be even 10% at fault, your compensation will be reduced by that percentage. That's why it's so important to gather evidence and build a strong case.

You may be entitled to compensation for a range of damages, including medical bills, lost wages, and pain and suffering. If you've lost a loved one, you might also be able to file a wrongful death claim, which can cover funeral costs and the loss of financial support.

Insurance companies will do everything they can to downplay your claim. They might argue that your injuries were pre-existing, or they'll offer you a quick settlement that doesn't come close to covering your long-term needs. That's why it's important to consult with an Arizona car accident attorney before you sign anything.

Injured in a head-on collision? Browne Law Group is ready to fight for you

If you or a loved one were injured in a head-on collision, don't try to take on the insurance company alone. Browne Law Group is ready to fight for you. Our firm knows how devastating these crashes can be, and we cut through the noise, stand up to the insurance companies, and

fight to get you the compensation and justice you deserve. With our team on your side, you'll have a powerful advocate who refuses to back down until you get results.

When you schedule a free consultation with Browne Law Group, you'll meet directly with an attorney who will take the time to listen to your story, explain your legal options, and answer every question you have about your claim. You'll get an honest, straightforward assessment.

Our firm works on a contingency fee basis, which means you pay nothing up front and owe us nothing unless we win your case. It's that simple. Browne Law Group proudly represents crash victims in Gilbert, Mesa, Chandler, Tempe, Phoenix, and throughout Maricopa County. After a serious head-on collision, you deserve more than an insurance company's low offer; you deserve a fighter who's all in for you. Contact us today to schedule your free consultation and start rebuilding your life with confidence.