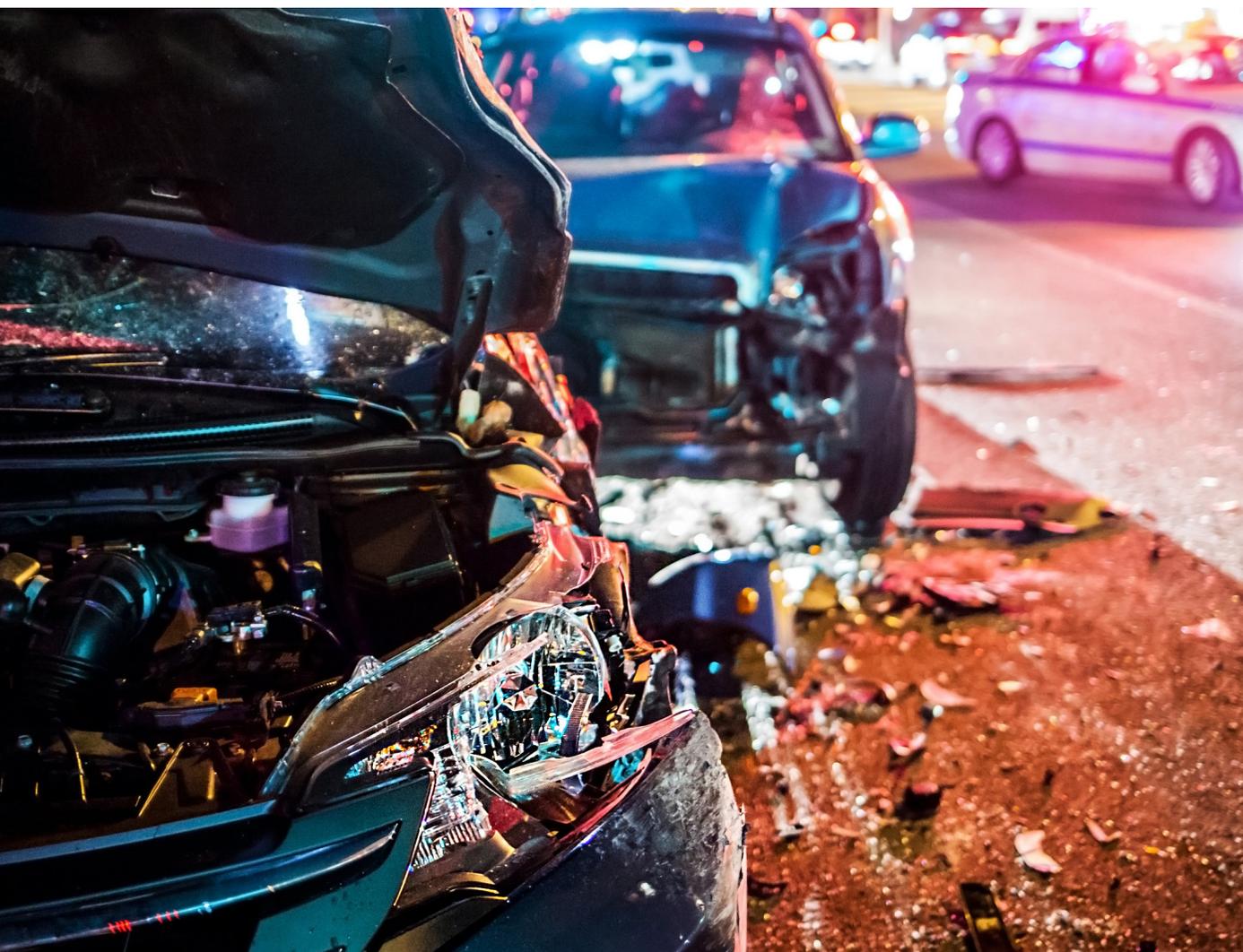




**I've Been in An Accident –
Now What?**

Sadly, it's an all-too-common scenario: you've just had a car accident caused by another driver, and you're injured, scared, and feeling lost. Since you want to be smart about handling the aftermath of your accident, you wonder whether there's a step-by-step guide for what to do after a car accident to keep yourself safe and demonstrate that you were not responsible for the crash.

What to do after you've been injured in a car accident varies greatly depending on the specifics of your case. This car accident guide applies to nearly any circumstances you could find yourself in, but keep in mind that it pays to discuss the details of your case with a personal injury attorney.



Seek Medical Treatment First

The very first thing you should do after a car accident is seek treatment for the injuries you've sustained. We recommend calling 911 directly after your accident, even if you think your injuries are minor. Law enforcement will respond and write up an accident report that can be very helpful in a future personal injury case. Additionally, emergency medical services will come to you right at the scene and help you determine whether you need immediate medical attention.

Too often, a lawyer for a "minor" car accident will find out that although their client has ongoing medical problems from the accident, they have very little evidence showing that they sought help for their injuries. Remember that what initially presents itself as stiff joints, mild whiplash, or soreness may end up being a significant injury that requires ongoing (and expensive) treatment.



Collect Documentation and Evidence for Your Case

As previously stated, a police report is a great way to start documenting your accident from the very beginning; you should always request a copy for your records. In addition, try to collect the following:

- **The other driver's address/phone number, license number, and insurance information**
- **Contact information for witnesses**
- **Photographs of the accident scene, all vehicles involved, and your injuries**
- **A record of the road conditions (improperly maintained icy streets, for example) that may have contributed to the accident**



When you notify your insurance company of the accident, do not give any recorded statement without first consulting an attorney. Otherwise, the information you provide may come back to hurt your case. When you're shaken up, you tend to have a harder time thinking clearly about the event that just transpired. Take your time remembering the details of your case to ensure you can offer an accurate account when you do speak to insurance.

Contact A Personal Injury Lawyer

Once you've received immediate treatment for your injuries, you can begin to think about hiring a car accident lawyer. If you are contacting an attorney on behalf of your injured or incapacitated family member, it's fine to wait until they are in stable condition before you give us a call. But this doesn't mean you should wait weeks or even months. If you can avoid prolonging your initial contact with a car accident attorney, you should.

Time is of the essence in personal injury cases. In fact, there is a statute of limitations for filing a personal injury claim in Minnesota. It can be as short as two years! Don't wait to see what happens with your health and medical bills before contacting a Minnesota personal injury attorney; it's not worth the risk. Involving us in the case from the beginning will make it easier for us to understand the full scope of your injuries, we will also be able to collect more compelling evidence, and we will be able to make sure your claims are set up appropriately with the insurance companies involved.



Decide to Pursue A Personal Injury Settlement

Many insurance companies will contact the victim right after the accident, offering them a settlement that they hope will make their problem go away. We urge accident victims not to accept the settlement – or even talk to the other party’s insurance – until after they’ve consulted a car accident attorney. It’s common for accident victims to be offered money, but the insurance company’s initial offer is rarely fair. It’s so important to work with a car accident attorney who can accurately estimate the value of your case. Take the time to consider the implications of choosing to pursue a fair settlement instead of just “taking what you can get.”



Don't Compromise – Get the Settlement You Deserve

When you have a black-and-white monetary figure presented to you in a nice little package, it can cause you to forget that you actually are entitled to so much more than you've been offered. You start to think that you could really use that money now, or that you're too busy to pursue more compensation. Don't let yourself fall into this thought process or the insurance company will have your right where they want you.

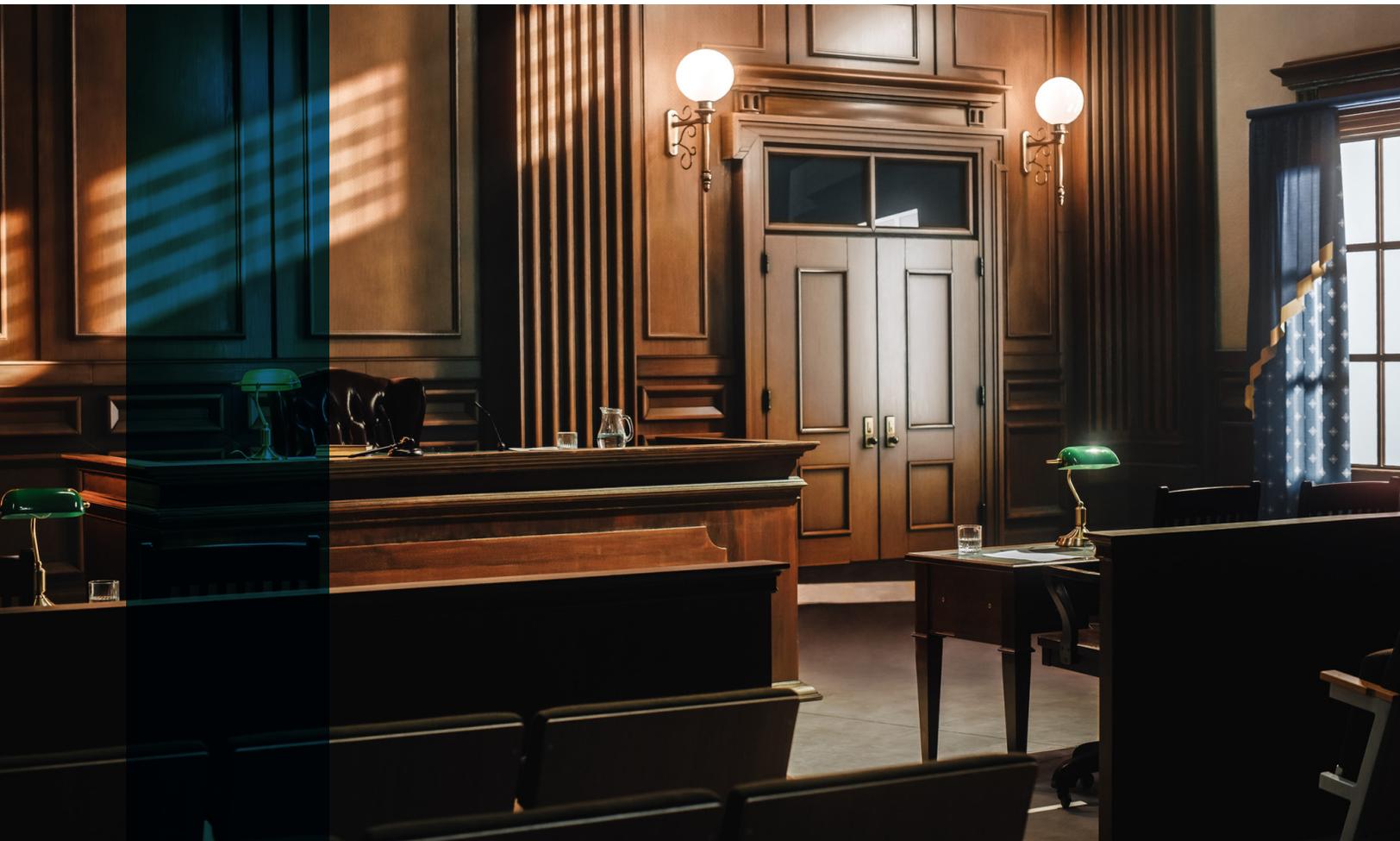
It's important to recognize the pain and hardships you've gone through as a result of your injury. Don't minimize the financial obligations you face – the bill collectors certainly won't. Your experienced and knowledgeable auto accident lawyer will be able to pinpoint the compensation you deserve based on many factors. Follow their advice and don't try to take a shortcut along the way.



Discuss The Pros and Cons of Settlement Vs. Court

Most personal injury cases end in a settlement because the victim and the insurance company are able to come to an agreement – with the help of a personal injury lawyer, of course. However, it's important to think about what you will do if the insurance company won't budge and refuses to pay you a reasonable amount to cover your injuries. It is possible to take a personal injury case to court, but it will certainly drag things out.

More than 90% of victims in car accident personal injury cases choose to settle, and some may not be getting the full amount they deserve. You'll have to decide whether you're willing to put yourself through the inconvenience of going to court to try to get a larger payout.



CONTACT A MINNESOTA PERSONAL INJURY ATTORNEY

When you contact the Minnesota personal injury lawyers at Sieben Edmunds Miller, we'll be able to provide you with quick answers to the questions you have about personal injury cases. If we determine you've got a solid personal injury case, we'll get started right away to ensure the statute of limitations doesn't expire. We'll work with the insurance company on your behalf, and we'll prepare your case for litigation if you aren't offered the settlement you truly deserve.



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