What to Expect From the Insurance Adjuster After an 18-Wheeler Crash

After a tractor-trailer crash, the injured person usually deals with an insurance company long before any courtroom. Trucking companies and their insurers tend to act quickly, and their early steps can shape the claim. Knowing what to expect is one reason people *semi truck accident lawyers* contact a truck accident lawyer before giving a statement or signing anything.

How much insurance a trucking company must carry

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) sets minimum levels of financial responsibility in 49 CFR Part 387. For-hire trucking companies operating vehicles with a gross vehicle weight rating of 10,001 pounds or more must carry at least $750,000 in public liability coverage when they haul nonhazardous property in interstate commerce. Certain hazardous materials require $1,000,000 or $5,000,000, depending on the cargo. Those amounts are minimums, and some trucking companies carry more coverage through excess or umbrella policies. The MCS-90 endorsement may also come into play in certain claims, so a truck crash attorney usually asks for every policy that could apply.

Rapid response after a crash

Many trucking companies and insurers have procedures for sending investigators, adjusters or defense lawyers to a serious crash quickly. They may photograph the scene, download the engine control module (ECM), interview witnesses and document the damage. That work is lawful, but the information goes to the trucking company first. A truck accident lawyer can send a preservation letter asking the company to keep the truck, the ECM and ELD data, camera footage and the driver's records.

What to expect from the insurance adjuster

An insurance adjuster may call soon after the crash and ask for a recorded statement. There is usually no obligation to give one to the other driver's insurer, although a person's own policy may require cooperation with their own insurer. Comments made while in pain or on medication can later be used to dispute the claim. Adjusters may also request broad medical authorizations that open records unrelated to the crash.

Early settlement offers are another common practice. An offer can come before the full extent of an injury is known, and accepting it generally means signing a release that ends the claim. Insurers often argue comparative negligence, pointing to the injured driver's speed or lane position to lower the payment. They may also dispute injuries by citing preexisting conditions or gaps in medical treatment.

Social media and surveillance

Insurers sometimes review public social media posts after a crash, looking for photos or comments that seem to conflict with a reported injury. In some claims they also hire investigators to film the injured person in public places. A single photo can be misread without context, and a short clip rarely shows what happened before or after it. Many people limit what they post while a claim is open, and keep a simple record of their symptoms, missed work and medical appointments.

What goes into the value of a truck claim

A truck injury claim can include damages for medical expenses, lost wages, reduced earning capacity, property damage, and pain and suffering. In a wrongful death case, the available claims and who may bring them depend on state law. A commercial vehicle accident attorney will usually collect medical records and bills, plus wage documents, before making a demand. Health plans, Medicare or Medicaid may hold liens truck accident lawyers or reimbursement claims that must be resolved from a settlement.

A note on fees and outcomes

Many truck accident attorneys work on a contingency fee, meaning the fee is a percentage of any recovery and is spelled out in a written agreement. No lawyer, insurer or article can promise a particular result, and this page is general information, not legal advice.