Crush Injuries After a Maryland Car or Truck Accident

Being Freed From the Wreckage Can Be Just the Beginning of Recovery

Crush injuries after a Maryland car or truck accident often begin when a collapsed dashboard traps a driver's leg or a side impact pins a passenger against a door. Emergency crews may free them from the wreckage, but the damage can require multiple operations and months of rehabilitation, and some victims never regain the strength, movement, or independence they had before the collision.

Crush injuries occur when substantial force compresses part of the body. The damage can extend beyond broken bones to muscles, nerves, blood vessels, and other tissues. Saving an injured limb does not necessarily mean restoring its function, and surviving the initial medical emergency does not mean the financial consequences are over.

A Silver Spring car accident lawyer can handle the investigation and insurance claim while the injured person concentrates on treatment. For someone facing repeated surgeries or permanent disability, the case must account for both the immediate losses and the care they may need years after the crash.

What Types of Crashes Cause Serious Crush Injuries?

The way a vehicle collapses during a collision can determine where an occupant becomes trapped and which body parts absorb the force. Crush injuries can occur in passenger cars, SUVs, pickups, and commercial vehicles, particularly when the collision compromises the space surrounding an occupant.

Several crash scenarios can produce these injuries:

- **Truck Underride Crashes:** A smaller vehicle travels beneath a truck or trailer, allowing the larger vehicle to intrude into the passenger compartment.
- **Side-Impact Collisions:** A striking vehicle forces a door or side structure inward, compressing an occupant’s arm, leg, pelvis, or torso.
- **Head-On Crashes:** Damage to the front of the vehicle can push the dashboard, steering assembly, or footwell into the occupants.
- **Rollover Accidents:** A collapsing roof or partial ejection can leave a person trapped beneath the vehicle or between damaged structures.
- **Vehicles Crushed Between Larger Objects:** A car caught between trucks or pushed against a fixed barrier can sustain extensive damage to its passenger compartment.

The force, location, and duration of compression help explain the resulting injuries. Rescue records and photographs of the vehicle can provide important evidence of what happened before the injured person reached the hospital.

Why a Crush Injury Can Be More Serious Than a Broken Bone

A fracture may be only one part of a crush injury. The same force that breaks a bone can damage the surrounding muscles and blood vessels, impair circulation, and injure nerves. With severe open fractures, extensive soft tissue damage and contamination can also complicate treatment.

Doctors may need to address several injuries or complications:

- **Complex Fractures:** Bones may break into multiple pieces, sometimes with open wounds and substantial surrounding tissue damage.
- **Muscle and Soft Tissue Destruction:** Severely damaged tissue may require surgical removal, leaving wounds that need reconstruction.
- **Nerve and Blood Vessel Injuries:** Damage can interfere with circulation, sensation, and the ability to move the affected body part.
- **Acute Compartment Syndrome:** Swelling or bleeding can create dangerous pressure inside a muscle compartment, reducing blood flow and threatening muscles and nerves.
- **Rhabdomyolysis and Crush Syndrome:** Severe muscle breakdown can release substances into the bloodstream that damage the kidneys and disrupt the body's electrolyte balance.

Acute compartment syndrome is a surgical emergency. Without prompt treatment, it can cause permanent damage or loss of a limb. Severe muscle breakdown can also create life-threatening problems beyond the injured area, including kidney failure and abnormal heart rhythms. These complications do not occur in every crush injury, but they explain why a patient may remain critically ill after being freed from the vehicle.

Why Treatment May Require Multiple Surgeries

The first operation may focus on controlling immediate threats, stabilizing fractures, and removing damaged or contaminated tissue. When acute compartment syndrome develops, surgeons may perform a fasciotomy, opening the tissue enclosing the muscle compartment to relieve pressure. That wound may require later closure or skin grafting.

Severe open fractures may need treatment in stages. An external frame can hold bones in place while doctors treat the surrounding wounds. Later procedures may involve internal hardware, further removal of damaged tissue, or skin and tissue grafts. Infection can require additional operations, and in the most severe cases, amputation may become necessary.

Recovery can therefore involve repeated hospital stays rather than one operation followed by a predictable return to work. The medical records should explain why each procedure was necessary and whether further treatment is expected. Those details help establish the full consequences of the crash when an insurance company evaluates the claim.

What Long-Term Problems Can Remain After a Crush Injury?

A limb can survive without returning to its previous level of function. Persistent weakness, nerve damage, pain, or restricted movement may interfere with walking, standing, gripping, or lifting. The practical question is often whether the person can use the injured body part reliably throughout an ordinary day.

For example, someone may walk across an examination room but remain unable to stand through a full work shift. A driver may struggle to operate pedals safely. A construction worker may be unable to climb, balance, or handle equipment. Medical findings become more useful to a claim when they explain these specific limitations.

Recovery can also change life at home. An injured person may need mobility equipment, help with bathing or dressing, transportation, or modifications to the home. Relatives may reduce their work hours to provide assistance. Anxiety about riding in a vehicle, disrupted sleep, and the emotional effects of disfigurement can create additional difficulties.

The claim should distinguish between temporary limitations and impairments expected to remain. That distinction affects future treatment planning, employment assessments, and the amount of compensation necessary to address lasting losses.

How Much Compensation Can a Crush Injury Claim Recover in Maryland?

There is no standard settlement amount for a crush injury in Maryland. A case involving repeated surgeries, permanent disability, and loss of a career may involve substantial compensation. However, a dollar range based only on the injury's name would ignore the medical outlook, financial losses, evidence of responsibility, and available sources of payment.

A lawyer evaluates several categories of loss when determining what compensation to pursue:

- **Medical Expenses and Future Care:** Emergency treatment, hospitalization, surgery, rehabilitation, medication, and reasonably anticipated future procedures.
- **Lost Income and Earning Capacity:** Earnings missed during recovery and the long-term consequences of being unable to resume the same work.
- **Equipment and Personal Assistance:** Necessary mobility aids, home modifications, transportation, and help with daily activities.

- **Permanent Impairment and Disfigurement:** Lasting restrictions, extensive scarring, and limb loss when applicable.
- **Pain and Suffering:** Physical pain, emotional distress, inconvenience, and diminished enjoyment of life.

These losses require support. A surgeon's explanation of a likely future procedure, a vocational assessment of work limitations, and a detailed care plan can provide a stronger basis for compensation than a demand based only on current bills.

Maryland limits noneconomic damages, including pain, suffering, physical impairment, and disfigurement. The cap increases by $15,000 every October 1, so the exact limit depends on when the claim arises. It does not cap the entire claim; proven economic losses, such as medical expenses and lost earnings, are evaluated separately.

Available coverage also matters. A person's losses may exceed one driver's insurance limits. A lawyer can investigate other applicable policies, potentially responsible parties, and available uninsured or underinsured motorist coverage. The full value of the harm and the amount that can actually be collected are separate questions.

How a Lawyer Handles the Case While the Injured Person Recovers

Someone undergoing surgery or learning to walk again should not have to coordinate a crash investigation or argue with insurance adjusters. A Maryland personal injury lawyer takes responsibility for the legal work needed to build and pursue the claim, including:

- **Preserving Evidence Before It Disappears:** Seek available video, photographs, electronic vehicle data, and relevant trucking records before they are overwritten, discarded, or lost.
- **Investigating How the Crushing Occurred:** Examine the collision sequence, vehicle damage, and rescue records, using appropriate experts when necessary.
- **Identifying Responsible Parties and Insurance:** Investigate the drivers and any businesses or other parties whose conduct may support a claim, along with applicable coverage.
- **Challenging Attempts to Shift Blame:** Compare the insurance company's allegations with the physical evidence and witness accounts. Maryland's contributory negligence rule can bar recovery if the injured person is found even slightly at fault, so these arguments must be answered with evidence.
- **Obtaining Medical and Financial Support:** Gather treatment records and coordinate expert assessments of future care, work limitations, and financial losses.

- **Handling Insurance Communications:** Respond to requests, present the claim, and challenge efforts to minimize the injury or overlook future expenses.
- **Managing Deadlines and Litigation:** Handle filings, negotiations, and preparation for trial when a fair settlement cannot be reached.

The lawyer keeps the client informed and involved in important decisions while managing the investigation, paperwork, and legal strategy. That allows the injured person to devote more attention to treatment and rehabilitation.

It's Not Just an Accident, It's Your Life

A serious crush injury can put someone's health, livelihood, and independence at risk. Our attorneys at Finnegan Cannon take that personally. We give clients direct access to their lawyers, honest advice, and the same consideration we would give our own families.

We have recovered more than $150 million for clients. Our team prepares serious injury cases for the demands of negotiation and litigation, and we are willing to take a case to court when that is what our client's interests require. Every case depends on its own facts, but our commitment to doing the work remains the same.

If a Maryland car or truck accident caused a crush injury, contact us for a free consultation. We can evaluate what happened, identify potential sources of compensation, and handle the legal fight while you focus on recovery.