

**CHECKLIST · KEEP IN THE GLOVEBOX**

CRASH SCENE CHECKLIST

PHOTOS AND FACTS BEFORE YOU LEAVE.

Scene photographs taken in the first minutes settle fault arguments that would otherwise run for months. If you are hurt, call 911 first and let someone else hold the phone. If police tell you to move the cars, photograph them where they stopped before you do. Then work down this list.

PHOTOS FROM WIDE TO CLOSE

☐ **The whole scene from all four corners**

Stand back far enough to get both cars, the lanes, and the intersection in one frame. This is the photo that shows who was where.

☐ **Both cars where they stopped, with the lane markings**

Before anyone moves them. Include the gap between the cars and the nearest curb or line.

☐ **The debris field and any fluid trails**

Where the glass and plastic landed shows the point of impact, which is often not where the cars ended up.

☐ **Skid marks, with something for scale**

Your shoe next to the mark works. Length tells a reconstruction expert about speed.

☐ **The signal, the signs, and what they showed**

A red arrow, a stop sign hidden by a tree, a missing lane line. Photograph the control and the view the other driver had of it.

☐ **Road and weather conditions**

Wet pavement, sun glare, a pothole, construction cones, a broken streetlight. Take the photo in the direction each driver was traveling.

☐ **Damage close-ups on every vehicle, with the plate in frame**

The height and location of the damage tells the story of the impact. Get the other car's plate and the VIN plate inside the driver's door jamb.

☐ **Your visible injuries and the inside of your car**

Airbags, a bent steering wheel, a cracked windshield, blood. These fade or get cleaned.

FACTS TO CAPTURE BEFORE YOU LEAVE

☐ **The other driver's license, insurance card, and registration, photographed**

Vehicle Code 16025 requires every driver in a crash to exchange this information. A photo beats a scrap of paper.

☐ **One witness: first name and phone number**

A witness ends a fault argument faster than a diagram. Ask before they drive off.

☐ **Cameras nearby: storefronts, doorbells, the bus, the traffic pole**

Note the business name and address. Most footage overwrites itself within days, so a preservation letter has to go out fast.

☐ **The officer's name, badge number, and the report number**

The police report is the document the adjuster reads before anything you wrote.

☐ **Time, cross streets, and the direction each car was traveling**

Write it in your phone's notes while it is exact.

☐ **Your dashcam clip and the other driver's own words**

If they said "I didn't see you" or "I was looking at my phone," write down the words and who heard them.

DO NOT DISCUSS FAULT, AND DO NOT SAY YOU ARE FINE

An apology on its own is shielded by Evidence Code 1160, but a statement about what you did or did not see is an admission in the report. "I am being evaluated" is the answer to every question about how you feel. See a doctor the same day and name every part of your body that hurts.

Free case review: (424) 235-7879. No fee unless we recover. Case costs are disclosed in writing before we begin. Se habla español. The web version saves your progress: <https://www.wiseinjuryfirm.com/library/tools/crash-scene-checklist/>

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