How to Choose a Car Accident Attorney

Choosing a car accident lawyer is easier with a short list of questions. Some crashes involve a single insurer and a modest property claim, while others involve serious injuries, several policies and disputed fault. These questions can make a first meeting more productive, regardless of the size of the claim.

Start with the license

Before any meeting, confirm the basics. Each state bar or licensing agency provides a way to confirm that a lawyer is licensed and in good standing, and many also publish disciplinary history. A listing in a directory or a badge from a rating publisher reflects that publisher's selection, rather than a license check or a prediction of results. If the crash happened in another state, ask whether the lawyer is licensed there or will work with local counsel.

Questions about experience

Ask how many car crash claims the lawyer handles, and of what kind. An auto accident lawyer should be comfortable with coverage questions, such as uninsured motorist (UM) claims, PIP and MedPay, and liens from health plans or Medicare. Ask how the firm gathers evidence such as crash reports, dashcam video and event data recorder (EDR) downloads. Ask whether the lawyer has taken car crash cases to trial, because trial experience can shape how a case is prepared, even though most claims settle.

Understand the fee agreement

Injury lawyers often handle these claims on a contingency fee, a percentage of any recovery. ABA Model Rule 1.5(c), which many states https://caraccidentlawyers.wiki/topics/claims/ follow in some form, requires a contingent fee agreement to be in writing and signed by the client, and to state how the fee is calculated and whether expenses are deducted before or after the fee. Ask who pays case costs if there is no recovery, including filing fees, record charges and deposition costs. Ask whether the percentage changes if a lawsuit is filed, and ask about the written closing statement at the end of the case.

Communication and staffing

Ask whether the car crash attorney at the consultation will handle the case personally, and how often to expect updates. Ask who will answer questions when the lawyer is unavailable, and whether updates come by phone, email or a client portal. If the firm plans to refer the case or bring in co-counsel, ABA Model Rule 1.5(e) generally requires the client's agreement, confirmed in writing, before lawyers in different firms divide a fee.

car accident lawyer

Preparing for the consultation

A first meeting goes further when the paperwork is on the table. Bring the police report, or at least the report number, along with photos of the scene and the vehicles. Letters from insurers and any forms already signed are worth bringing too, because they show what has already been said and signed. Medical bills and pay stubs help show the losses so far.

Red flags and realistic expectations

Be wary of anyone who promises a specific dollar amount at a first meeting. No lawyer can know the outcome of a claim in advance. Unsolicited calls or visits after a crash are another warning sign, because ABA Model Rule 7.3 generally restricts lawyers from soliciting clients through live person-to-person contact. A motor vehicle accident attorney can explain which statute of limitations applies. This is general information, not legal advice.