Insurance Tactics After a Tractor-Trailer Crash

After a tractor-trailer crash, an injured person usually hears from an insurance company long before any court is involved. Trucking companies and their insurers tend to act quickly, and their early steps can shape the claim. Understanding these practices is one reason people talk with a truck accident attorney before giving a statement or signing anything.

Federal insurance minimums for trucking companies

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) sets minimum levels of financial responsibility in 49 CFR Part 387. A for-hire trucking company operating vehicles with a gross vehicle weight rating of 10,001 pounds or more needs at least $750,000 in public liability coverage to 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 through excess or umbrella policies. An MCS-90 endorsement may also apply to certain claims, and a truck accident attorney will usually request every policy that could apply.

Early investigation by the trucking company

Many trucking companies and their insurers are prepared to send investigators, adjusters or defense counsel to a serious crash quickly. Their team **truck accident attorney** may photograph the scene, download the engine control module (ECM), talk to witnesses and record vehicle damage. That work is lawful, but the information goes to the trucking company first. A semi-truck accident lawyer may send a preservation letter requesting that the company 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. In many cases there is no obligation to give one to the other side's insurer, though a person's own policy may require cooperation with that 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.

Quick settlement offers are another common practice. An offer may arrive before the full extent of an injury is known, and accepting it usually 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 brief clip seldom shows what came before or after it. Many people limit what they post while a claim is open, truck accident lawyer 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 wrongful death cases, state law decides what claims exist and who may bring them. A commercial vehicle accident attorney will usually collect medical records and bills, plus wage documents, before making a demand. Health insurers, Medicare or Medicaid may have liens or reimbursement rights that have to be resolved from a settlement.

A note on fees and outcomes

Many truck accident lawyers work on a contingency fee, meaning the fee is a percentage of any recovery and is spelled out in a written agreement. No lawyer or article can promise a particular result, and this is general information rather than legal advice.