

Why Left-Turning Drivers Cause So Many Pedestrian Accidents in Toronto

A Toronto Pedestrian Accident Lawyer Can Fight for Injured Pedestrians

A pedestrian can do everything right at a Toronto intersection and still get hit by a left-turning driver. The walk signal is in their favour. They're inside the crosswalk. But a driver might be looking past them, scanning oncoming traffic, so by the time the driver turns, a pedestrian is right in the vehicle's path. What should have been an ordinary crossing becomes a trip to the emergency room, weeks away from work, and a legal battle over something that never should have happened in the first place.

At [Smitiuch Injury Law](#), our Toronto pedestrian accident lawyers see this pattern over and over again. These crashes happen every day on wide suburban intersections and major downtown streets, including Yonge Street, Bloor Street, and Queen Street West. Often, the driver claims they never saw the pedestrian. But that's no excuse for causing a left-turn pedestrian accident. In such cases, the driver must be held responsible for their actions. And it's our job as [Toronto pedestrian accident lawyers](#) to hold aggressive drivers accountable for their actions.

Why Are Left Turns So Dangerous for Pedestrians in Toronto?

Left turns create a conflict between drivers and pedestrians. A driver preparing to turn left often spends most of their time at the intersection watching for oncoming traffic, searching for a gap, and feeling pressure from vehicles stacked up behind them. That means the driver's attention is not focused on what really matters – avoiding hitting a pedestrian lawfully crossing the street.

The City of Toronto realizes how dangerous these situations can be in the city. That's why Toronto's [Vision Zero Road Safety Plan](#) focuses on locations and behaviours linked to serious injuries and deaths, especially vulnerable road users such as pedestrians. In addition, Toronto has also introduced [left-turn calming](#) measures at intersections where these types of collisions often occur in the city.

Such steps matter since left-turn pedestrian accidents in Toronto can wreak havoc on people's lives in an instant. When a car hits a pedestrian while turning left, pedestrians often sustain life-changing injuries, from concussions to spinal cord injuries. And in many instances, those injuries turn into fatalities due to the large size and speed of many vehicles that hit pedestrians while turning left at intersections.

What Does Ontario Law Require from Left-Turning Drivers?

Ontario law does not treat left turns as a free-for-all. Under the [Ontario Highway Traffic Act](#), drivers must obey traffic signals and right-of-way rules. Ontario's [driver's handbook section on driving through intersections](#) says that if you are turning left, you must wait for approaching

traffic to pass or turn and for pedestrians in or approaching your path to cross. The province's [guidance on changing directions](#) says the same thing.

That legal duty is important because it gives your case structure. Duty simply means the responsibility the driver had under the law. In a left-turn pedestrian accident, that duty usually includes watching the crosswalk, yielding the right of way, and not turning until it is safe. If the driver cuts across a pedestrian's path instead, that failure can become one of the strongest parts of the claim.

These crashes also overlap with other Ontario pedestrian protections. The province's [pedestrian safety guidance](#) and its rules on [pedestrian crossovers and school crossings](#) reinforce the same basic point. Drivers are expected to watch for pedestrians and yield where the law requires it. When they do not, the collision is often not a mystery. It is a right-of-way failure that injured pedestrians may need a lawyer to prove clearly before an insurer starts telling a different story.

Why Do Drivers Miss Pedestrians While Turning Left?

Many drivers insist they never saw a pedestrian while turning left. That statement often sounds like a defence, but in many cases it actually describes the negligence. A careful driver is supposed to see the pedestrian. If they do not, the question becomes why.

Several recurring factors explain why left-turning drivers miss pedestrians:

- The driver is looking at oncoming traffic instead of the crosswalk.
- The driver accelerates to "make the turn" before the gap closes.
- The vehicle's A-pillar blocks part of the driver's view.
- The intersection is wide, busy, or visually cluttered.
- The driver assumes the crosswalk will be clear by the time they reach it.
- The driver is distracted by a phone, navigation screen, or passengers.

Toronto's own left-turn calming materials point directly to several of these problems, including high driver workload and blind spots created by vehicle design. At a large intersection near Scarborough Town Centre or along The Queensway, a driver can pick up more speed during the turn and enter a bigger pedestrian conflict zone. That gives the pedestrian less time to react and makes the impact more violent if a crash happens.

For example, imagine a driver turning left from Bay Street onto an east-west street at the same time a pedestrian begins crossing with the signal. The driver watches the line of southbound traffic, sees an opening, and starts the turn. By the time the driver looks back toward the crosswalk, the pedestrian is already there. That is how many of these crashes happen. Not

because the pedestrian did something unexpected, but because the driver treated the turn like a race against traffic instead of a movement that required them to yield.

How Do You Prove a Left-Turning Driver Was at Fault?

These cases are often won or lost on evidence gathered early. Left-turn drivers frequently say the pedestrian came out of nowhere, crossed too late, or stepped outside the crosswalk. Insurance companies know those arguments can muddy a strong claim. That is why proving the sequence of events matters so much.

Evidence in a strong Toronto pedestrian accident case often includes:

- The police report and any officer observations about the point of impact.
- Witness statements from other pedestrians, drivers, transit riders, or nearby workers.
- Surveillance video from stores, condos, office towers, or buses.
- Photos of the intersection, crosswalk markings, traffic lights, and final positions.
- Vehicle damage showing where and how the pedestrian was struck.
- Medical records that match the mechanics of the collision.
- Timing evidence showing the pedestrian had the signal and was already crossing lawfully.

For example, if a pedestrian is struck near the middle or far side of the crosswalk, that may strongly support the argument that they had already been crossing for several seconds before impact. If nearby video shows the driver turning quickly across the crosswalk without stopping, that can severely weaken any claim that the pedestrian “appeared suddenly.” Those details are one reason why [Ontario’s Right-of-Way Laws](#) are so important in these cases. Right of way means who had the legal right to proceed first, and in many left-turn collisions, that issue sits at the centre of the entire dispute.

This is also why delay can hurt your case. Video may be erased in days. Witnesses move on. Intersections change. The sooner a Toronto pedestrian accident lawyer begins investigating, the harder it becomes for the other side to rewrite what happened.

What Injuries Are Common When a Left-Turning Driver Hits a Pedestrian?

A left-turn crash may happen at lower speeds than a highway collision, but that does not make it minor. A pedestrian can be struck by the front corner of the vehicle, thrown onto the hood, knocked to the pavement, or dragged sideways during the turn. The human body absorbs that force directly.

Common injuries in these cases often include:

- Head injuries, including concussions and traumatic brain injuries.
- Fractures involving the leg, hip, arm, wrist, or pelvis.
- Knee and shoulder injuries from twisting or impact.
- Back and neck injuries.
- Facial injuries and dental trauma.
- Internal injuries that are not always obvious right away.

The seriousness of the injury often shapes the legal case just as much as fault does. A fractured hip can mean surgery and months of rehabilitation. A head injury can interfere with concentration, memory, work, and family life long after the bruises fade. That's why it's important to pursue compensation that reflects the real impact of the crash, not just the first wave of bills.

What Should You Do After a Toronto Pedestrian Accident Caused by a Left Turn?

The first steps after the crash matter. Your health comes first, but what happens in the hours and days afterward can also affect your legal claim. If the driver or insurer later disputes fault, the early record may become some of the strongest proof in the case.

Try to do the following if you are able:

- Call 911 and make sure Toronto police respond to the scene.
- Get medical attention right away, even if the full pain has not set in yet.
- Take photos of the crosswalk, signals, vehicle position, and your injuries.
- Get names and contact information for witnesses before they leave.
- Do not debate fault with the driver at the scene.
- Do not give a recorded statement to the insurer before getting legal advice.
- Contact a Toronto pedestrian accident lawyer while key evidence can still be preserved.

One thing injured pedestrians should not do is assume that the at-fault driver's insurance company will make a fair settlement offer just because the crash seems obvious. Instead, many insurance companies do the opposite – look for every excuse to avoid paying injured pedestrians the money they rightfully deserve.

Why Early Legal Help Matters in a Toronto Left-Turn Pedestrian Case

A serious Toronto pedestrian accident claim is not just about saying the driver should have looked. It is about proving why the crash happened, protecting the evidence before it

disappears, and connecting the injuries to the force and mechanics of the impact. That work often begins long before settlement talks start.

At Smitiuch Injury Law, we understand how quickly these cases become contested. We know how to investigate intersection crashes, secure available footage, speak with witnesses, review the roadway design, and show how the driver's turning movement created the collision. We also know how insurers try to shrink these cases by questioning visibility, timing, and the pedestrian's actions. That is why early legal help matters. It gives your case a stronger foundation before the other side defines the story for you.

If a left-turning driver hit you while you were crossing the street in Toronto, do not treat it like a misunderstanding that will sort itself out. These crashes often happen because a driver chose speed, impatience, or poor observation over safety. [Contact](#) our law firm and schedule a free consultation with a Toronto pedestrian accident lawyer who can move quickly to preserve evidence, challenge blame-shifting, and build a claim that reflects what really happened to you.