

Broken Bones (Fractures) in Car Accidents

The right attorney can fight for accountability and justice for your injury

During a [car crash](#), the bones take the brunt of the force of impact, and often, this leads to breaks (fractures). A broken bone can have significant short-term and long-term consequences for the victim. Broken bones can take months to heal, not to mention physical therapy and other treatment to restore loss of function. They can put you out of work for an extended period. And bone pain is one of the worst kinds of pain, leading to significant suffering.

Fortunately, if you suffered a broken bone in a car crash that wasn't your fault, you have legal recourse. The experienced car accident attorneys at [Romanow Law Group](#) know how to get significant results for victims. Here's what you need to know.

The most commonly broken bones in car accidents

There are 206 bones in the human skeleton, and any of them can be broken in a car crash. Some of the most common types of fractures in car crashes are:

- **Broken legs:** the femur (upper leg bone), tibia (shin bone) and fibula (calf bone) can all be broken in car crashes, often when the car crumples around a driver or passenger's legs.
- **Broken arms and wrists:** all the bones in the arm, including the humerus (upper arm bone) and the radius and ulna (forearm bones), are frequently broken in car crashes. If you're involved in a wreck with your hands on the wheel, your arms may take the majority of the force of impact.
- **Broken clavicle:** the clavicle (collarbone) is relatively thin and delicate, making it easily fractured. Broken collarbones in car wrecks often involve the seatbelt pressing against the clavicle.
- **Broken ribs:** any of the 24 ribs in the torso can be broken in a crash, again often due to pressure from the seatbelt. Broken ribs can cause damage to any of the internal organs inside the ribcage, including the lungs, liver, and more.
- **Fractured vertebrae:** the vertebrae are the bones that make up the spinal column (backbone). Because car accidents occur with occupants in a seated position, there is significant pressure from the seat onto the back.
- **Pelvic fracture:** the pelvic bone is frequently broken in car accidents because in most vehicles, it's closest to the force of impact as it travels through the center of the vehicle's frame. A broken pelvis can be a very dangerous injury because the pelvic bone provides protection to the intestines, bladder, and other internal organs.
- **Broken sternum:** The sternum (breastbone) can be broken due to the impact from airbags, steering wheels, and seat belts. Given its central location in the chest, this type

of fracture can cause severe pain and may also damage internal organs, such as the heart and lungs.

How broken bones are diagnosed

Usually, broken bones show some warning signs immediately. Symptoms that indicate you may have sustained a fracture include:

- A snap, grinding, or popping noise as the injury occurs.
- Swelling, bruising, or tenderness around the broken bone.
- Pain when you touch, press on, move, or put weight on the injured area.
- Visibly out-of-place or misshapen limb or joint.
- Intense pain.
- Numbness or tingling.

That said, some broken bones are not so obvious. Hairline fractures may go undiagnosed for days. It's not always easy to tell whether you have a fracture or a different injury such as a bone bruise. Furthermore, in the immediate aftermath of a crash, your adrenaline is high, and your "fight or flight" response is engaged, which can mask the symptoms of even a significant injury.

That's why it's critical that you go to urgent care, a doctor's office, or the emergency room as soon as possible after a car accident, even if you feel okay. A doctor can perform X-rays and other diagnostic tests (such as an MRI or CT scan) to locate the broken bone and confirm the diagnosis.

Treatment for broken bones sustained in car crashes

Once a broken bone is diagnosed, treatment will depend on the type and location of the fracture. Many fractures require orthopedic surgery to repair the bone and position it to heal properly. Often, metal plates and screws are needed to hold the bone in place until it heals – which then requires follow-up surgery to remove the hardware after the healing process is complete.

For most types of fractures, the bone must be immobilized using a cast or splint for several weeks or months until it can heal. Car accidents that cause numerous fractures and other injuries may require the use of traction, which uses pulleys and mechanisms to put gentle pressure on the bones and realign them into their proper positions.

After a broken bone heals, physical therapy is usually needed to rebuild strength and range of motion in the affected part of the body. In addition, because broken bones are highly painful injuries, pain management is an important part of fracture treatment. Depending on the situation, your doctor may recommend some combination of pain medication, RICE (rest, ice,

compression, and elevation), heat therapy, massage therapy, and other pain management techniques.

It's important to keep in mind that when a car crash causes a broken bone, it often also causes other injuries such as damage to the internal organs protected by that bone. Those other injuries can complicate treatment for the broken bone itself (and vice versa). Again, that's one reason it's so important to see a doctor who can diagnose all your injuries and create a comprehensive treatment plan.

The significant cost of fractures for car accident victims

While broken bones typically do heal in time, there are significant costs for car accident victims.

First, there's the cost of medical treatment, including X-rays and other medical tests, surgery, medication, follow-up visits, physical therapy, and more.

Some types of broken bones may increase the likelihood you will need future surgery; for instance, a broken hip today may increase the probability you will need a hip replacement a decade from now.

In addition, fractures have a long recovery period, and depending on the nature of your job, you may lose weeks or months of income during that time. These are all examples of *economic damages*; that is, objectively verifiable costs that can be tied to a specific dollar figure.

Fractures sustained in car accidents can also give rise to many *non-economic damages*, which are more subjective but no less real. Pain is a significant part of your case for non-economic damages, including both the pain of the injury itself and pain associated with surgery and other medical procedures. Other non-economic damages may include loss of quality and enjoyment of life.

Combined, these costs can add up to tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars, depending on the nature and extent of the injury. Insurance companies, of course, know this, which is why they act quickly to protect their interests whenever they see a suspected or confirmed fracture on a car accident report. They have teams of attorneys and adjusters protecting their interests. You need your own advocate to fight for the compensation you deserve.

What is the average settlement for a broken bone in a car accident?

Each case is unique, so settlements for broken bones in car accidents can cover a wide range, from thousands to hundreds of thousands or more. For instance, simple fractures with straightforward recoveries might fall on the lower end, while complex fractures requiring multiple surgeries and long-term treatment can reach higher amounts. This is why it's so important to consult an experienced car accident lawyer who can evaluate your specific

circumstances, including the severity of the injury, the impact on your daily life, and any long-term complications. This approach helps ensure that you receive a fair settlement that reflects the true extent of your damages and losses.

Talk to an experienced car accident attorney about your rights and options

After sustaining a broken bone in a car accident, you have a lot on your mind. You're in pain, possibly out of work, and dealing with an array of medical treatment and a long recovery process. The last thing you need is to *also* deal with the insurance company breathing down your neck. That's where we come in.

Our law firm has the experience and resources needed to get real results for people injured in car accidents. If you've been hurt in a car crash, make the Romanow Law Group your first call. [Contact us today](#) for a free consultation.