



A single moment is all it takes. A moment of distraction or fatigue for a long-haul trucker. The failure of a tire or brakes or safety equipment on a tractor trailer. Bad weather and high speed that a driver is unprepared for.

An 18-wheeler can jackknife into other traffic. It may veer into a different lane and strike oncoming vehicles head-on, or rear-end a vehicle going the same direction. Smaller cars, trucks and SUVs can go tumbling off the road or be slammed into concrete highway dividers by a speeding semi.

Catastrophic injury or wrongful death is, too often, the result. The impact can last a lifetime for survivors and family members, whether or not they are physically injured.

Tractor trailers and other large commercial vehicles travel the highways and our local roads every day. There are hundreds of thousands of truck accidents in the United States every year.

Nationwide, more than 80,000 people are injured annually in large truck (those weighing more than 10,000 pounds) accidents. In 2014, almost 4,000 people were killed. The medical, financial and emotional consequences can be devastating.

Innocent people can suffer catastrophic personal injuries, including traumatic brain injury (TBI), paralysis, head injury or other debilitating injuries.

Severe injuries can lead to hundreds of thousands of dollars in medical expenses. Accident victims and their families may be forced to take extended time off work, and in some cases victims may suffer from disabilities that could prevent them from ever working again.

Family members may be pressed into new roles as caretakers. Accident victims may face a lifetime of untreatable pain, lost mobility and even memory loss.

The emotional burden that follows an accident can be just as devastating.

You and your family shouldn't have to face this alone.

Fighting for the victims in 18-wheeler accidents

From a legal perspective, accidents involving professional drivers and commercial vehicles, such as tractor trailers, are different than other accidents.

It can be challenging to know who's legally and financially responsible. Truck drivers may be self-employed, they may be independent contractors working for another company, or they could be employees. They — and the companies they drive for — might be based just across town, or across the country.

The fact that truck drivers are employed in the business of driving can change the legal issues involved and drag other companies into the situation. Professional legal advice from experienced attorneys can help you navigate these difficult situations.

Ward and Smith's team of personal injury and traffic accident lawyers understand the complexities that come with 18-wheeler wrecks. They've handled more than 100 such cases across North Carolina.

Our legal team has a simple goal: Argue your case vigorously and get you what you're owed — whether that comes from a settlement or from taking your case all the way through trial to a final decision from a judge or jury.

Our accident attorneys take a team approach to every case. That means there's always a lawyer ready to move your case forward, backed by licensed paralegals, certified litigation technology specialists and other support staff.

Our personal injury lawyers are part of a large multi-disciplinary law firm, so they have access to lawyers in other areas, such as health care and workplace safety, ensuring you have all the legal skills and experience your case requires. And we have the resources to fully investigate your case — finding the truth, fighting for what's right.

Our lawyers will even travel to you to ensure they fully understand all the aspects of your case.

Accidents involving large commercial trucks can be devastating and lead to a lifetime of suffering. No one can turn back time. But an experienced attorney will fight to make sure you and your family receive the full compensation you are owed.

You don't have to face this alone.

Truck and 18-Wheeler Accident Representative Experience

Past results are no guarantee of future results. The summaries are not intended to indicate or guarantee that any of the same or similar results can be achieved in future matters; the outcome of a matter depends upon a number of factors. These summaries are intended only to provide general information about the experience of our attorneys. Summaries are drawn from 1992 through the present.

\$425,000 Settlement for Minor Passenger's Family

A 1-year-old girl was killed while riding in a car driven by her aunt along rural, two-lane Duplin County road at night. The car in front of their vehicle struck a deer and stopped suddenly. The girl's aunt veered left to go in the other lane, as did a truck which was following their car. The truck rear-ended the aunt's car, resulting in multiple injuries to the baby girl. She was taken to Duplin General Hospital and then to Pitt County Memorial Hospital, where she died. She never regained consciousness after the collision. The girl was born outside of wedlock and survived by her 21-year-old mother. The case was settled for \$425,000.

\$470,000 Settlement for Family of Head-on Collision Victim

A 53-year-old woman was killed when the vehicle she was in was struck head-on by a commercial truck near Bethel, North Carolina. She was unemployed at the time, but survived by her husband and five children. The Martin County case was settled for the remaining limits of liability coverage, \$470,000.

\$500,000 Awarded to Motorcycle Driver's Wife

A 34-year-old motorcyclist was killed instantly when he struck a truck broadside at night. The truck driver was attempting to back the vehicle, a rented moving truck, into a driveway. The truck was not properly lit, making

it difficult for victim to see. The motorcyclist was survived by his 33-year-old wife; he was an unemployed logger. The Onslow County jury returned a verdict of \$500,000.

\$600,000 Awarded to Back Seat Passenger's Siblings

A 70-year-old man, a retired construction worker, was a back seat passenger in a car struck head-on by a truck. The victim had never been married and had no children, but was survived by four siblings. The Martin County jury returned a verdict for \$600,000.

\$1.1 Million Awarded to Head-on Collision Victim's Family

A 41-year-old man was killed when he was struck by a van, which crossed the centerline of a two-lane roadway, striking his vehicle head-on. The victim worked as a delivery truck driver with an annual salary of \$25,000. The Duplin County jury awarded compensation to the victim's 40-year-old spouse and two children, ages 18 and 15, in the amount of \$1,100,000.

\$1.425 Million Settlement for Driver's Family

A 59-year-old man was killed in a motor vehicle collision when a grading truck ran a red light and struck his vehicle. He was survived by his wife and two adult children. The case was settled at mediation for \$1.425 million.

\$2.7 Million Awarded to Driver's Adult Children

A 54-year-old woman, survived by six grown children, was killed when she was struck broadside at a rural intersection by a truck that ran a stop sign. At the time, the victim was making approximately \$20,000 per year. The defense argued that the truck driver was not negligent, as he was driving through thick fog on unfamiliar road, preventing him from seeing the stop sign and he was faced with a sudden emergency when a pickup truck pulled out in front of him just before the intersection, causing him to lose control. Before trial, the defense's highest settlement offer was \$300,000. The case was tried before a Pitt County jury, which returned a verdict for the victim's children of \$2.7 million.

\$4.9 Million Settlement for Driver's Traumatic Brain Injury

A woman suffered a traumatic brain injury when she was struck broadside at an intersection in Pitt County. She entered the intersection on a green light and was hit by a truck driven that ran a red light. As a result, the victim was rendered paraplegic and needs around the clock assistance. A life care plan prepared for victim at the time of the settlement had a cost of \$2.7 million. The case was settled for \$4.9 million.