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What to do if Involved in an Automobile Accident

If you're involved in an automobile accident, you're faced with a thousand questions and concerns about your physical well being and property damage. Here are some general guidelines for what to do after an automobile accident:

1. Stay calm. Do not argue or yell with anyone at the scene.
2. Do not move any vehicles until after the police arrive.
3. Call the police; do not let anyone talk you out of it.
4. Do not dismiss your injuries, some internal injuries don't show up for days. Do not be too proud to ride in an ambulance to the hospital if police or paramedics suggest it. If there is any pain, seek follow-up treatment with a doctor.
5. Note any other causes of the accident, such as road hazards, etc.
6. If you have a camera in the car, take pictures of the scene and the vehicles (damage, defects, odd tags or bumper stickers, alcohol and drug containers, etc.)

Once the police arrive:

1. Be pleasant, cooperative and truthful.
2. Speak slowly and clearly in order to be understood.
3. Do not make guesses about time, speed, and distance.
4. Do not say it was your fault. That can be determined at a later date.
5. If you smell alcohol on another driver's breath, or saw a driver and passenger switch places after the accident, tell the police officer.
6. Give the police officer and the other driver information about your auto insurance, but do not tell anyone that your insurance will pay damages for anyone.
7. Promptly notify your own automobile insurance company and contact my office to discuss your legal options.
8. If you get a ticket, don't argue with the officer. You must sign it to acknowledge receipt.
9. From the other driver's license, copy the name, address, license number and date of birth. Write down the tag number. If a large truck is involved, also copy everything that is written on the side of the truck.
10. Do not talk to the other driver's insurance company until you talk to me.
11. Talk to an experienced lawyer before you sign anything, give written or tape recorded statements, go to traffic court, or settle with a claims adjuster.

If you have been involved in an automobile accident, call me at 410.288.2900 to discuss your legal options and schedule a free-initial consultation.

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