

# Right-Turn-On-Red Pedestrian Accidents In Georgia

## The Quiet Intersection Failure That Hurts Walkers More Than Drivers Realize

A driver pulls up to a red light at the corner of a busy Atlanta intersection. The plan is simple. Turn right on red, ease into the cross-street traffic, and keep moving. The driver leans left, scanning oncoming cars in the lane that matters most. The pedestrian stepping off the curb to the driver's right is invisible until the bumper has already covered the crosswalk.

That sequence happens in Georgia every single day. Right-turn-on-red collisions account for a quiet but steady share of the urban pedestrian wrecks our firm investigates, and they often produce the same pattern of broken bones, head injuries, and shoulder damage no matter where the intersection sits. The driver almost always says the same thing afterward. They never saw the walker.

At the [Law Offices of Gary Martin Hays & Associates, P.C.](#), our [Georgia pedestrian accident lawyers](#) have handled right-turn-on-red wrecks at signalized intersections across Metro Atlanta, Gwinnett County, DeKalb County, and beyond. Since 1993, we've fought for Georgia's injured and recovered [over \\$1 billion](#) for our clients and their families. These cases have a recognizable evidentiary pattern, and they reward fast, careful investigation.

## The Specific Driver Behavior That Causes This Crash Pattern

Right-turn-on-red is legal in Georgia after a complete stop, when the driver yields to cross traffic and pedestrians. That's the rule on paper. In practice, drivers rarely come to a full stop, they rarely look right before turning, and they rarely confirm the crosswalk is clear. The maneuver becomes a rolling right turn with attention focused entirely on the cars coming from the left.

A pedestrian on the same side of the road who has the walk signal in their favor is in the worst possible position. They're entering the crosswalk legally, they have the right of way under Georgia law, and they're squarely in the driver's blind spot at the front-right corner of the vehicle. The crash typically happens at three to ten miles per hour, which is enough to cause life-changing harm.

## Why Right-Turn-On-Red Wrecks Hurt Pedestrians So Severely

A walker struck by a turning vehicle isn't simply pushed. They're knocked off balance, hit by the front bumper, and either rolled onto the hood or thrown to the pavement. The forces on the body are different from a high-speed wreck, but the injury list is still severe.

- **Broken Pelvis And Hip Fractures From Bumper Impact:** The front of a passenger vehicle strikes a walking adult at roughly the level of the hip or thigh, and the result is often a [broken pelvis after a pedestrian accident in Georgia](#).
- **Traumatic Brain Injuries From The Secondary Impact:** Walkers who hit their head on the pavement, the curb, or the hood of the car frequently sustain [traumatic brain injuries from pedestrian crashes](#) that take months or years to resolve.

- **Shoulder, Elbow, And Wrist Fractures From The Fall:** Walkers who try to break the fall with their hands often suffer rotator-cuff tears and distal radius fractures.
- **Lower-Leg And Ankle Trauma:** The bumper impact lands on the lower leg, and tibial plateau fractures and ankle injuries are common.
- **Internal Bleeding And Organ Damage:** Even low-speed bumper impacts can cause splenic or hepatic injury that doesn't appear in the first hour after the wreck.
- **Lasting Psychological Trauma:** Survivors often face anxiety, sleep disruption, and a lasting fear of street crossings that meets the diagnostic criteria for PTSD.

### What Georgia Law Says About The Driver's Duty

The rules that govern this kind of wreck are well established. Right-turn-on-red is a privilege, not a default. Under [O.C.G.A. § 40-6-21](#), a driver facing a steady red signal may turn right only after coming to a complete stop and only when the turn can be made safely. Under [O.C.G.A. § 40-6-91](#), a driver must yield the right of way to a pedestrian crossing within a crosswalk on the half of the roadway on which the vehicle is traveling.

When the wreck happens, the driver has almost always violated at least one of these statutes. Negligence per se applies in Georgia when a statute is violated and the violation causes the kind of harm the statute was designed to prevent, which is exactly the situation here.

### The Engineering Reasons These Crashes Keep Happening

Right-turn-on-red wrecks aren't random. They're produced by a combination of vehicle design, signal geometry, and driver behavior that can be traced and predicted.

- **A-Pillar Blind Spots At The Right-Front Corner:** The structural pillar between the windshield and the right door blocks the driver's view of the exact corner the pedestrian is crossing. Larger vehicles produce larger pillars.
- **Hood Height Of Modern SUVs And Trucks:** A taller front end raises the strike zone on the pedestrian's body and increases the severity of the bumper impact.
- **Concurrent Walk Signals With Permissive Right Turns:** Many Georgia intersections show a walk signal at the same time drivers see a green right-turn arrow or a permitted right on red, which puts both users in motion at once.
- **Wide Curb Radius At Suburban Corners:** A gentle curb radius lets the driver take the turn at higher speed, while a tight urban corner forces a slower turn that gives the pedestrian time to react.
- **Driver Attention Focused Left:** Every driver-education resource teaches the driver to look left for cross traffic. Few resources adequately teach the driver to look right twice for walkers.

The [Federal Highway Administration](#) and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) both publish research showing that right-turn-on-red collisions disproportionately injure older adults and children. Survivors carry those injuries for years.

### When The Driver Claims The Walker Was Outside The Crosswalk

The most common defense in a right-turn-on-red case is the argument that the pedestrian was outside the painted lines, distracted, or jaywalking. Our firm answers each of those theories with the physical evidence at the scene. Crosswalk paint, curb cuts, signal head angles, and surveillance video from nearby businesses all confirm where the walker actually was at the moment of impact.

The [fault analysis for pedestrians hit outside a crosswalk](#) applies just as directly when the walker was inside the crosswalk and the insurer tries to claim otherwise. Georgia's [comparative-negligence rule](#) gives that argument real bite, because any fault assigned to the pedestrian reduces the recovery.

## The Evidence Our Firm Builds Into These Cases

A right-turn-on-red case isn't won by repeating the rule. It's won by proving each element of fault with physical evidence the insurer can't dismiss.

- **Surveillance And Traffic Camera Footage:** Many signalized intersections in Metro Atlanta carry GDOT cameras or municipal cameras, and nearby business cameras frequently catch the moments before impact. [Dashcam footage from nearby drivers](#) often fills in any gaps the fixed cameras leave.
- **Signal Timing And Walk-Phase Data:** GDOT and local transportation departments hold the timing plans that show when the walk signal was active and when the driver had a permissive right turn.
- **Vehicle Event-Data Recorder Output:** Modern vehicles record speed, throttle, brake, and steering inputs in the seconds before impact.
- **Driver Phone Records And Telematics:** A driver who was looking at a phone when the crash happened leaves a digital footprint that subpoenas can reach.
- **Witness Statements And Body-Worn Camera Footage:** Officers responding to the scene record the driver's first statements, which often differ from later versions.

## A Real Example Of How These Cases Develop

Imagine this scenario. There's an older adult crossing on a green walk signal at a corner in Decatur. A driver in a midsize SUV slows for the red light, looks left for cross traffic, and rolls forward into the crosswalk. The bumper strikes the pedestrian at roughly the level of the hip. The walker rotates onto the hood, then falls to the pavement. EMS arrives within minutes.

In the days that follow, the insurer for the driver opens with a low offer and a defense theory built around the claim that the walker stepped out unexpectedly. Our investigators pull intersection camera footage, the signal timing log, and the driver's phone records. The video shows a complete walk signal in the walker's favor. The phone records show the driver was on a hands-free call but had glanced at the screen seconds before the turn. The case becomes a clean negligence-per-se claim and the recovery scales to the actual injuries.

## Damages Available After A Right-Turn-On-Red Wreck

Compensation in a Georgia pedestrian case typically includes past and future medical expenses, lost wages and lost earning capacity, pain and suffering, loss of enjoyment of life, and where the conduct rises to the level of conscious disregard for safety, [punitive damages under Georgia law](#). Walkers with permanent disability also face long-term care costs, and we use the kind of [life-care-planning approach we've described before](#) to make those projections clear to a jury.

When a fatal wreck takes a pedestrian's life, the family's wrongful death claim falls under Georgia's statutory framework, and the survival action recovers what the victim suffered before death. Right-turn-on-red wrecks turn fatal more often than the public realizes, particularly for older walkers, and we treat those cases with the urgency they deserve.

### **Steps To Take After A Crosswalk Collision in Georgia**

After EMS care, the most important step is preserving the scene before the painted lines, the signal heads, and the surrounding cameras forget what happened. Photograph the corner, the crosswalk, the curb, and the front-right corner of the vehicle. Ask responding officers for the badge numbers and any body-worn camera footage. Decline to give a recorded statement to the driver's insurer until you've talked with a lawyer who handles Georgia pedestrian cases.

Then, [contact us](#) for a free, no-pressure consultation. We're paid only when the people we represent are paid. There are no out-of-pocket charges, no flat-rate fees, and no obligation if our work does not produce a recovery for your family.