

Car Accidents Caused by Tire Blowouts on Georgia Highways

How Tire Failures At Highway Speed Can Lead To Severe Injury Claims

A tire failure at 70 mph doesn't give a driver time to respond. The explosion of air, the sudden vibration through the steering wheel, and the vehicle's lurch toward the failed side can happen faster than any driver can process what's occurring. In the seconds that follow, the car is no longer under full control, and what happens next depends on traffic density, road geometry, and sheer luck.

Georgia's highways see tire-related crashes every year, and the resulting injuries are often severe because the drivers who lose control are typically moving at full highway speed when the failure occurs. According to the [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#), tire-related crashes killed 511 people across the country in 2024. Behind most of those crashes was a tire that either hadn't been maintained properly, had reached the end of its safe service life, or had a manufacturing defect that made it dangerous long before anyone knew it.

At the [Law Offices of Gary Martin Hays & Associates, P.C.](#), our [Georgia car accident lawyers](#) work with injury victims whose crashes traced back to tire failures. Some of those cases involve negligent drivers who were operating vehicles with dangerous tires. Others involve product liability claims against tire manufacturers. And some involve both.

The Mechanics Of A Blowout And What Causes Control To Vanish

A blowout isn't the same as a slow leak or even a rapid deflation. It's a sudden structural failure of the tire's sidewall or tread, releasing all pressure in a fraction of a second. The vehicle responds immediately and aggressively because one corner of the car has gone from rolling to dragging, which creates a rotational force that pulls the car toward the failed tire.

At highway speed, that pull is substantial. A driver who overcorrects, which is the instinctive response when the wheel suddenly wrenches sideways, can send the car across lanes or into a median barrier. A driver who doesn't react in time will simply follow the car's drift into adjacent traffic or off the road. Neither outcome is controlled.

Tread separation causes a different version of the same problem. Suppose a driver heading south on I-75 hits a patch of rough pavement and the tread on a rear tire peels away in large sections. The tread debris strikes vehicles behind the car before the driver even knows anything happened. The car itself may not immediately show the instability that a full blowout creates, but the sudden loss of tread affects handling, braking distance, and stability on curves. The driver behind, suddenly dealing with large rubber debris across their lane, faces their own emergency.

The underlying causes of these failures fall into a few recurring categories: tire age, improper inflation, overloading beyond the tire's weight rating, prior damage that was never repaired or assessed, and manufacturing defects in the tire's internal structure.

Tire Maintenance Requirements Under Georgia Law

Georgia has a clear statutory standard for tire condition. Under [O.C.G.A. § 40-8-74](#), every tire on a vehicle must have a tread depth of at least 2/32 of an inch, and tires with certain types of damage, including fabric exposed through the tread or sidewall, sidewall bulges, or knots indicating internal separation, are prohibited. A driver who operates a vehicle with a tire that violates these standards and causes a crash can be found negligent per se under Georgia law because the statute itself defines the standard of care.

The defense in tire blowout cases often comes down to what the driver knew, or should have known, about the condition of their tires before the failure. A tire with visible sidewall bulging or severely worn tread doesn't fail without warning signs. Insurance carriers argue that a sudden failure with no prior symptoms means the driver wasn't negligent. That argument gets harder to sustain when the physical evidence tells a different story, and the physical evidence usually does.

A driver operating a vehicle [without proper control after a sudden mechanical failure](#) may still bear liability if the underlying condition of the vehicle was negligent to begin with. The suddenness of the failure doesn't erase the prior failure to maintain.

When A Manufacturer Or Repair Shop Bears Responsibility

Not every tire failure traces back to driver neglect. Some trace back to [defects in the tire itself](#) that were present from the time the tire was manufactured. Tread separation due to inadequate bonding between the tire's layers, sidewall defects that make the tire structurally vulnerable under normal load conditions, and steel belt separations that weren't visible from outside the tire have all been the subject of product liability litigation.

When a manufacturing defect is involved, the legal question shifts from what the driver knew to what the manufacturer knew or should have known about the tire's design or production process. These cases require a different kind of investigation, one that looks at the tire's construction, any recall history associated with that product line, and whether similar failures had been reported before the one that injured your client.

Repair shops carry their own exposure when they incorrectly mount a tire, install a tire that they knew didn't match the vehicle's load rating, or fail to identify and flag a tire with visible damage. A shop that mounts a tire with a known sidewall bulge and sends the vehicle back out creates direct liability if that tire later fails.

Whether the responsible party is a driver, a manufacturer, or a repair facility, the investigation has to be thorough. Evidence from the failed tire itself, including the physical specimen if it can be recovered, is central to establishing what actually caused the failure.

Common Injuries When Blowout Crashes Reach The Serious End

Tire blowout crashes produce injury patterns driven by the crash type that follows, not by the blowout itself. Rollovers, median crossings, and high-speed sideswipes are among the most common sequences after a highway blowout, and each carries its own injury profile.

[Herniated discs](#) are among the most frequently reported injuries after the sudden jerking motion of a blowout-induced swerve, even when no subsequent impact occurs. The violence of

a rapid lane change or rollover produces [soft tissue injuries](#) that can be dismissed by insurance adjusters as minor even when they produce lasting pain and functional limitation. [Traumatic brain injuries](#) occur in rollover crashes when occupants' heads strike the vehicle's interior or when the roof compresses. [Long-term spinal injuries](#) that require surgery or long-term management are common in higher-speed impacts.

[Delayed injury symptoms](#) after these crashes can work against a victim's claim if they don't seek medical attention quickly. Adrenaline suppresses pain in the immediate aftermath of a crash. Injuries that weren't apparent at the scene can become significant within 24 to 72 hours. Waiting to be evaluated gives the insurance carrier an opening to argue the injury wasn't caused by the crash.

The Insurance Defense Argument After A Tire Failure Crash

Insurance carriers defending tire blowout cases commonly advance one of two arguments, and sometimes both simultaneously. The first is that the failure was a sudden and unforeseeable event that couldn't have been predicted, which absolves the driver of negligence. The second is that the at-fault driver's comparative negligence should be weighed against any recovery, which is where Georgia's modified comparative fault rules become relevant.

Georgia follows a modified [comparative fault](#) framework. An injured party who is 50 percent or more at fault cannot recover. Carriers frequently try to assign fault percentages to the injured driver, arguing they were speeding, following too closely, or failed to avoid the debris. How well those arguments are countered depends heavily on the evidence preserved in the immediate aftermath of the crash.

Georgia's Senate Bill 68, signed April 21, 2025, adds another layer. For causes of action arising on or after that date, the [phantom damages](#) reform means juries see both what was billed for medical care and what insurance actually paid. Carriers use that gap to argue that billed amounts overstated the injury's severity. Understanding how that argument works before settling is essential for getting to a fair number. The [Georgia Governor's Office of Highway Safety](#) tracks crash data across Georgia, and tire-related crashes show up as a consistent and preventable contributor to serious injuries statewide.

What Insurance Carriers Argue After A Tire Failure Crash

Before any settlement offer arrives, the carrier has already built a file around minimizing the claim. Whether that means challenging causation, arguing the driver couldn't have known the tire was unsafe, or invoking the phantom damages framework to push medical bill valuations down, the defense posture in these cases is well-rehearsed.

Injury victims who come to us face no out-of-pocket legal costs. Our firm receives its attorney's fee only if and when we recover compensation in your case. If you were hurt in a crash that started with a tire blowout on a Georgia road, [contact us](#) to talk through what your case involves and what it may be worth.