

Pedestrian Accidents On Georgia Sidewalks

When The Space Built For Safety Becomes The Site Of A Crash

Sidewalks exist because roads are dangerous. They're the physical acknowledgment that pedestrians need a protected space, separate from traffic, where they can walk without calculating the probability of getting hit. When a driver leaves the road and enters that space, the law doesn't treat it as a freak accident. It treats it as a breach of the duty every driver owes to every person walking legally in a designated pedestrian zone. The injuries that follow are often catastrophic, and the legal accountability that attaches can be significant.

Sidewalk pedestrian crashes, where a vehicle mounts the curb or drifts from the road, produce some of the worst injuries imaginable because victims have no time to react and no protection at all. A person walking on a sidewalk has done everything right. The failure belongs entirely to the driver who crossed the boundary.

At the [Law Offices of Gary Martin Hays & Associates, P.C.](#), our [Georgia pedestrian accident lawyers](#) have seen the full range of what these crashes do to the people who survive them and to the families who lose someone who doesn't. Since 1993, we've built a record of accountability for Georgia injury victims that now exceeds [\\$1 billion in total recoveries](#), including cases involving pedestrians struck in spaces specifically designed for their protection.

The Driver Behaviors That Put Pedestrians On Sidewalks In Danger

Sidewalk pedestrian crashes aren't caused by random mechanical failures. They follow patterns of driver behavior that are identifiable, documentable, and legally actionable. Understanding those patterns matters because the evidence investigation that follows a sidewalk crash must connect the driver's specific behavior to the specific breach of duty that brought them into the pedestrian zone.

Georgia's Uniform Rules of the Road establish clear obligations for drivers operating near pedestrian pathways. [O.C.G.A. § 40-6-96](#) addresses driver conduct at crosswalks and in relation to pedestrian right-of-way. The obligation to yield to pedestrians lawfully present in designated spaces isn't discretionary, and when a driver's conduct results in contact with a pedestrian on a sidewalk, the violation is fundamental.

The behaviors most consistently responsible for sidewalk pedestrian crashes in Georgia cover a range of driver failures, each with its own evidence trail:

- **Distracted Driving Near Curb Lines:** [Distracted drivers](#) drifting toward a curb while looking at a phone, adjusting a radio, or reaching for something in the back seat cross into sidewalk space without any conscious decision to do so. The drift is gradual and invisible to the driver until contact occurs. Cellphone records and vehicle event data are the primary evidence sources in these cases.
- **Impairment And Loss Of Vehicle Control:** An impaired driver who loses steering control at low speed will often mount a curb before the vehicle stops. The low speed is deceptive. The weight of a passenger vehicle at even 15 mph transferred to a pedestrian

standing on a sidewalk produces forces that can cause fatal or permanently disabling injuries.

- **Overcorrection After A Near-Miss Or Swerve:** A driver who swerves to avoid another vehicle or a road hazard may overcorrect in a direction that carries them onto the sidewalk. The sequence, initial swerve, overcorrection, sidewalk entry, happens faster than any pedestrian can respond.
- **Left-Turn Execution Errors At Intersections:** [Left-turn accidents at intersections](#) are among the most common pedestrian crash patterns in Georgia. A driver who cuts the turn short or who misjudges the turn radius can bring the vehicle up onto the sidewalk at the corner, where pedestrians are often waiting to cross.
- **Parking Lot Entry And Exit Errors:** Drivers leaving parking lots or pulling into driveways at angles that cross sidewalks frequently misjudge the clearance needed. Pedestrians on the sidewalk are below the driver's natural line of sight and may not be detected until after contact.
- **Speed Approaching A Curve Or Turn:** A driver who enters a curve or turn too fast may be unable to maintain lane position. The vehicle tracks wide and either strikes the curb directly or crosses it. In urban areas where sidewalks run close to the road, this is a recurring crash pattern.

What Sidewalk Victims Face That Other Pedestrians Don't

A pedestrian struck in a crosswalk has documentation on their side from the moment of the crash: the crosswalk markings, the signal phase, the presence of other witnesses in a regulated crossing location. A pedestrian struck on a sidewalk has a different set of challenges.

Insurance adjusters responding to sidewalk crashes sometimes argue that the pedestrian was in some way positioned outside the designated path, was walking unpredictably, or was otherwise a contributing factor. These arguments don't survive close scrutiny when the evidence is assembled correctly, but they represent a real risk for unrepresented victims who don't understand how comparative fault arguments work in Georgia.

For instance, a pedestrian walking against traffic on a sidewalk parallel to a two-lane road is struck when a vehicle drifts onto the curb. The driver's insurer argues that the pedestrian's position contributed to the crash. The vehicle's event data recorder shows that the driver was decelerating only after the point of contact, not before. The cellphone carrier record shows a text message sent three seconds before the crash. That is the evidence chain that defeats the comparative fault argument, and assembling it requires moving quickly after the crash.

[Why pedestrian accidents in Georgia often lead to high-value injury claims](#) has a direct answer: the injuries are severe, the liability is often clear, and the damages reflect the full economic and non-economic weight of what the victim lost. Sidewalk crashes sit at the most serious end of that spectrum.

Georgia SB 68, signed April 21, 2025, modified how medical damages are presented in jury trials. Under the phantom damages rule, juries now consider both the billed amount and the amount accepted by the plaintiff's health insurer. For pedestrian crash victims who have

accumulated substantial medical expenses across hospitalizations, surgeries, and rehabilitation, linking the [SB 68 phantom damages framework](#) to the full damages presentation is part of how we build each case.

The Injuries Sidewalk Crashes Deliver

There's no gradation to protect a pedestrian on a sidewalk. No vehicle structure. No protective equipment. The full energy of the collision transfers directly to the human body, and the resulting injuries reflect that transfer completely.

The [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration \(NHTSA\)](#) tracks pedestrian fatality and serious injury data, and the numbers consistently show that pedestrian crash outcomes are more severe than any other road user category. Sidewalk crashes, where the pedestrian is outside the vehicle's expected operating zone, produce outcomes that are among the worst within that already serious category.

The injury patterns these crashes produce are well-documented across Georgia trauma centers:

- **Traumatic Brain Injuries From Vehicle Contact And Secondary Fall:** [Traumatic brain injury in pedestrian crash victims](#) occurs in two phases. The vehicle contact produces one injury event. The fall and ground strike produce a second. The two-phase brain injury requires comprehensive neurological evaluation that emergency room protocols don't always capture at first presentation.
- **Pelvic And Lower Extremity Fractures:** The initial contact height for most passenger vehicles aligns with the lower extremity and pelvis of an adult pedestrian. [Fractured pelvises and leg injuries](#) from vehicle bumper contact are among the most commonly documented injuries in sidewalk crash cases, and they require surgical repair, extended immobilization, and lengthy rehabilitation.
- **Spinal Injuries From Impact And Fall Sequence:** The combination of vehicle contact force and subsequent fall creates spinal loading in multiple directions. Cervical and lumbar injuries are common, and the instability of post-crash spinal injuries is a reason why victim movement immediately after the crash can be medically significant.
- **Internal Organ Damage:** Vehicle contact at the torso level can produce internal organ injuries that are not immediately apparent. The adrenaline response following a crash can mask pain signals that would otherwise indicate serious internal bleeding. Emergency evaluation must be thorough even when the victim appears stable.
- **Psychological Trauma And Long-Term Disability:** Survivors of sidewalk pedestrian crashes frequently experience post-traumatic stress, anxiety about returning to walking outdoors, and psychological symptoms that are as disabling as the physical injuries. These are compensable under Georgia law and must be documented from the earliest clinical contacts.

Accountability For Drivers Who Mount The Curb

When a driver crosses from the roadway onto a sidewalk and strikes a pedestrian, the liability question is rarely subtle. The driver's duty to remain in the roadway is fundamental. The

violation is the act of crossing the curb line into a protected pedestrian zone. The injury follows directly from that violation.

What makes these cases legally complex isn't usually the liability question. It's the damages investigation and the coverage landscape.

[Insurance carrier tactics used against injured pedestrians](#) in sidewalk crash cases follow familiar patterns: delay, early low-value settlement offers made before the victim understands the full scope of their injuries, and requests for broad medical record releases that are designed to find pre-existing conditions to argue against damages. Our team manages all of that from the first contact and insulates clients from tactics designed to reduce what they recover.

In cases where the driver left the scene, the [options for hit-and-run pedestrian victims in Georgia](#) include pursuing uninsured motorist coverage under the victim's own policy. The UM/UIM investigation process in a hit-and-run sidewalk crash is complex, but it is a legitimate path to recovery for victims who would otherwise have no source of compensation.

Property owners adjacent to sidewalks may also bear responsibility when the sidewalk itself was in a dangerous condition that contributed to the crash scenario. If a deteriorating curb cut or damaged sidewalk panel played a role in the crash sequence, the municipality or property owner responsible for maintaining that section may be a defendant in the civil case.

Pursuing Every Source Of Accountability After A Sidewalk Crash

Sidewalk pedestrian crash victims in Georgia face some of the most serious medical situations in the entire personal injury landscape. If you were struck by a vehicle while walking on a Georgia sidewalk, [contact us](#) and let our team assess the full scope of accountability in your case. There's no upfront cost to work with our firm, and we don't get paid unless we recover compensation on your behalf.