

Pedestrian Accidents In Georgia Construction Zones

Contractor Negligence, GDOT Liability, and the Legal Path Forward for Injured Pedestrians

Georgia has been under construction for a decade. Major highway expansion projects, bridge replacements, utility corridors, and urban development have placed active work zones throughout the state's most heavily traveled corridors. For pedestrians who live, work, or commute through these areas, the combination of rerouted foot traffic, compromised sidewalks, heavy machinery, and reduced visibility creates a set of risks that are entirely preventable when contractors and government agencies do their jobs correctly.

What makes construction zone pedestrian injuries legally distinct from standard pedestrian crashes is the number of parties who may share responsibility. The motorist who struck a pedestrian may bear primary fault. But the contractor who failed to install proper temporary pedestrian paths, the subcontractor who left equipment blocking a sidewalk, and the government agency that approved a work zone plan without adequate pedestrian accommodation may all be liable as well.

At the [Law Offices of Gary Martin Hays & Associates, P.C.](#), our [Georgia pedestrian accident lawyers](#) have handled injury cases arising from conditions in and around active construction sites. The investigation looks different from a standard pedestrian crash, and so does the litigation.

The Specific Dangers Work Zones Create for Pedestrians

Active construction zones reduce or eliminate the infrastructure that pedestrians rely on. Temporary closures remove crosswalks. Construction equipment parks on the sidewalk. Detour signage is inadequate or absent. Night lighting is poor at a time when heavy equipment is still moving. Lane configurations shift in ways that confuse drivers who aren't paying careful attention to posted signage.

Here's how these cases typically unfold: a pedestrian following what appeared to be an active detour path through a construction area on a midtown Atlanta arterial street is struck by a vehicle that didn't realize the intersection configuration had been modified the day before.

The sign alerting drivers to the changed configuration was facing the wrong direction. The contractor responsible for traffic control setup was working off a two-week-old plan that hadn't been updated to reflect a new lane closure.

The result is a broken pelvis, three surgeries, and a permanent mobility impairment. The driver, who had no reason to expect a pedestrian at that location under those conditions, was barely over the posted zone speed. The contractor's inadequate traffic control is the primary cause of what happened.

Georgia's Heightened Speed Requirements in Work Zones

Under [O.C.G.A. § 40-6-188](#), drivers are required to observe posted speed limits in construction and maintenance zones, and those limits carry enhanced penalties when workers or active construction are present. The law also authorizes citations to be doubled in certain work zone circumstances.

When a driver fails to observe a posted work zone speed limit and strikes a pedestrian, that violation is powerful evidence of negligence. But the analysis doesn't stop with the driver. The contractor is also legally required to establish and maintain traffic control devices that meet minimum standards, and when those standards aren't met, the contractor shares in the liability for what happens to anyone in the zone.

The [Georgia Department of Transportation](#) publishes traffic engineering and work zone safety standards that contractors on state road projects must follow. Those standards cover the placement of temporary pedestrian paths, the installation of barriers separating pedestrians from active work areas, and the advance warning requirements for pedestrian detours. When a contractor deviates from those standards, the deviation becomes the evidentiary foundation for the negligence claim.

Who Is Liable When a Pedestrian Is Hurt in a Georgia Work Zone?

Construction zone pedestrian injuries often involve a chain of responsibility that runs from the driver who struck the victim back through the contractor who created the dangerous condition and, in some cases, to the government agency that approved or failed to monitor the work zone plan.

The investigation has to trace that chain carefully:

- **The At-Fault Driver:** A driver who was speeding, distracted, or failed to observe work zone traffic control is directly liable to the pedestrian under the same negligence standards that apply in any crash.
- **The General Contractor:** General contractors are responsible for the safety of the entire work zone, including the traffic control measures that protect both workers and members of the public passing through. A contractor whose traffic control plan was inadequate, outdated, or improperly implemented can be named as a defendant alongside the driver.
- **The Traffic Control Subcontractor:** Many general contractors outsource traffic control to specialized subcontractors. When inadequate cone placement, missing detour signs, or absent barriers contributed to the crash, that subcontractor can be named in the litigation.
- **The Government Entity:** When the construction is on a public roadway being improved under a state or municipal contract, the government agency that approved the work zone plan may have its own liability, particularly if the agency knew of deficiencies in the contractor's setup and failed to require corrections.
- **Equipment Or Material Owners:** Construction equipment left in a pedestrian path, improperly secured material that blocks sight lines, or temporary structures that created

the specific danger that caused the crash can lead to liability against whoever placed or owned that equipment.

[Proving negligence](#) in a construction zone case requires documentation that exists only briefly. Daily field reports, traffic control inspection logs, contractor communications about zone modifications, and photographs of conditions at the time of the crash are the foundation of the case. Our lawyers send preservation letters immediately and, when possible, visit the scene before it's reconstructed.

The Injuries Construction Zone Crashes Produce

Pedestrians struck in or near construction zones face the same catastrophic injury profile as pedestrians struck anywhere, amplified by the common presence of heavy vehicles, machinery, and hard surfaces that offer no forgiveness on impact.

[Traumatic brain injuries](#) from a ground strike or from a direct vehicle impact are among the most serious outcomes. [Broken pelvis injuries](#) are common when a pedestrian is struck at the hip or when the force of the impact drives the pedestrian to the ground. [Internal injuries](#) from blunt trauma can be life-threatening and are often not fully apparent until hours after the initial trauma.

When fatalities occur in construction zone crashes, the legal analysis moves into Georgia's wrongful death framework, which involves separate claims for the estate and for surviving family members. The [wrongful death liability determination](#) is more complex when multiple defendants are potentially at fault, but the framework exists to hold all responsible parties accountable.

With more than three decades of fighting for injury victims and [over \\$1 billion in recoveries](#) to show for it, our team understands exactly which records GDOT and general contractors try to limit access to, and how to compel their production.

Georgia Contractor And GDOT Liability When A Work Zone Claims A Pedestrian

A construction zone injury claim is not a simple case of one negligent driver. It's a case about an entire system of decisions made by contractors, project managers, and government administrators who had both the power and the obligation to build a work zone that didn't put pedestrians at risk.

If you or a family member was injured while walking through a Georgia work zone, [contact us online](#) or call 1-800-898-HAYS. The sooner we can get our team to the scene and into the documentation, the stronger the case becomes.

Injury victims hurt in Georgia work zones come to our firm at no upfront cost. We represent construction zone crash victims on a contingency basis, and our fee is paid from the recovery we obtain, not from your pocket before or during the case.