

Bicycle Accidents Caused By Bus And Transit Vehicles In Georgia

Georgia Cyclists Face A Specific Set Of Hazards Every Time A Bus Passes

What does it look like when a transit bus and a [bicycle](#) occupy the same lane through downtown Atlanta, and the bus driver makes a left turn without checking the bike lane first? It looks like a crash that a cyclist absorbs with no protective barrier between them and a vehicle that can weigh more than 40,000 pounds when fully loaded. The forces involved aren't comparable to a typical car-bicycle collision, and the injuries that result rarely are either.

Bus and transit vehicle crashes involving cyclists are a distinct category of bicycle accident, and they carry a procedural complication that standard motor vehicle crashes don't: when the bus belongs to a government transit authority, the claim must be handled under rules that standard personal injury cases don't require. Those rules include notice deadlines that can permanently bar a claim if they're missed.

At the [Law Offices of Gary Martin Hays & Associates, P.C.](#), our Georgia bicycle accident attorneys handle bus and transit crash claims by identifying every failure in the driver's conduct and the agency's operations, and by moving immediately to secure the records that transit authorities control and may not preserve without a formal demand.

What Georgia's Bicycle Statute Says About Road Position And When It Matters

[O.C.G.A. § 40-6-294](#) governs how bicycles must be operated on Georgia roadways and contains exceptions that directly affect how fault is analyzed in bus crash cases. Under the statute, cyclists must ride as far right as practicable, but that requirement yields to specific conditions that commonly exist in bus-bicycle crash scenarios:

- **When The Lane Is Too Narrow For Safe Side-By-Side Sharing:** A cyclist who is occupying the center or left portion of a lane that's too narrow to safely share with a bus is often riding exactly where the statute allows them to be. The bus driver's assumption that a cyclist "doesn't belong there" isn't supported by the law, and an attorney can use the statute to push back on that framing directly.
- **When Road Conditions On The Right Side Create A Hazard:** Debris, potholes, parked vehicles, or drainage grating that makes the far right of a lane dangerous gives a cyclist the statutory right to use more of the lane. A bus driver who merges into a cyclist using the lane under these conditions can't claim the rider was in the wrong position.
- **When The Cyclist Is Preparing To Turn Left:** A cyclist signaling and moving toward the center of the lane to execute a left turn is following the traffic law, not violating it. A bus that strikes a cyclist making that movement has hit someone who was operating exactly as the statute requires.
- **When The Cyclist Is Passing Another Vehicle Or Obstacle:** Cyclists have the right to move out of the right-side position to pass a slower vehicle, a double-parked car, a pedestrian, or any other obstruction. A bus driver who makes contact during that maneuver bears responsibility for not yielding.

Understanding these exceptions matters because [comparative negligence](#) arguments are the first line of defense in every bus-cyclist crash claim. Transit agency insurers and their attorneys will assert that the rider shouldn't have been where they were; the statute often answers that argument before it starts.

How Federal Data Describes The Scope Of Bus-To-Cyclist Collisions

The [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](#) reports that 1,103 bicyclists were killed in traffic crashes in 2024, and transit bus collisions represent a particularly dangerous subset of those incidents. The forces involved in a bus-bicycle contact at even modest speeds are categorically different from what cyclists face in most other vehicle crashes.

The Federal Transit Administration's [Bus-to-Person Collisions Safety Advisory](#) documents the scope of the problem nationally: from 2008 to 2023, bus modes reported 8,230 bus-to-person collisions to the National Transit Database, resulting in 596 fatalities and 8,259 injuries. In mid-block collisions specifically, 33 percent of injuries involved bicyclists, and bicyclists in those crashes were predominantly struck in side-impact collisions, representing 59 percent of bicyclist injury and fatality outcomes.

Side-impact crashes are common in bus-cyclist encounters precisely because buses turning, merging, or pulling out of stops frequently do so without completely clearing the bike lane first. The cyclist caught alongside a turning bus has almost no reaction time and nothing between them and the bus's body panels.

The Driver Decisions Behind Most Bus-Cyclist Crashes

Transit bus crashes involving cyclists cluster around specific driver decisions rather than random events. The Federal Transit Administration's own safety data and crash investigation reports consistently identify the same categories of failure:

- **Left Turns That Don't Account For Cyclists In The Through Lane Or Bike Lane:** Left-turning buses are the single most common scenario in bus-to-person collision data. A bus driver who initiates a left turn while a cyclist is traveling in an intersecting path has failed to yield the right of way in a situation the driver should have identified before starting the turn.
- **Bus Stop Pull-Outs That Cross The Bike Lane Without Yielding:** When a transit bus re-enters traffic from a stop, it crosses from the curb lane or shoulder into the travel lane. A driver who pulls out without checking whether a cyclist is already in that space has created the collision through that decision alone.
- **Merging Without Clearing Blind Spots Along The Side Of The Bus:** Transit buses have extended blind zones along both sides. A cyclist riding alongside a bus while the driver merges or turns may be completely invisible unless the driver uses mirrors and actively looks before every lateral movement.
- **Pulling Away From A Stop Without Signaling:** Cyclists approaching a stopped bus from behind can't predict when it will re-enter traffic. A driver who pulls out without a signal

removes the only warning a rider might have had to slow or change position before contact.

A [dashcam recording](#) from a vehicle following the bus, or footage from the cyclist's own handlebar camera, can place the driver's mirror checks and signaling decisions in direct evidence and effectively remove the "I didn't see the rider" defense from the transit agency's available arguments.

Claims Against A Georgia Transit Authority Follow Different Rules

When the bus that struck a cyclist belongs to MARTA, a county transit system, or another Georgia public transit authority, the claim involves a government entity rather than a private carrier. That changes the procedural timeline significantly and creates deadlines that don't apply to ordinary injury claims.

Georgia's ante litem notice requirements mean that a claim against a government entity must generally be presented within a specific window after the injury occurs, and the exact deadline varies depending on which transit authority owns and operates the system. Waiting to see how serious the injuries turn out to be before consulting an attorney is exactly the pattern that allows those deadlines to expire. A claim that would have been worth pursuing becomes permanently barred because the notice wasn't filed in time.

Georgia's Tort Claims Act and the liability provisions governing public transit authority operations generally waive sovereign immunity for crashes caused by the negligent operation of a transit vehicle. A bus driver who fails to yield to a cyclist or crosses a bike lane without checking isn't shielded by governmental immunity, and the agency that employs them typically faces the full range of liability for that failure. But navigating the procedural requirements to reach that liability takes immediate attention.

Compensation Available After A Georgia Bus-Cyclist Crash

A [personal injury](#) claim after a bus-cyclist crash can include medical expenses, lost income, future treatment costs, and compensation for pain and suffering. Bus crashes frequently produce [traumatic brain injuries](#), orthopedic fractures, and spinal injuries that make the future damages component the most significant part of the recovery. When the injuries are severe, a [life care planner](#) may be needed to document long-term medical costs, and that documentation becomes part of the damages case the transit authority's insurer works hardest to minimize.

The bicycle cases our firm has handled since 1993 are part of [more than \\$1 billion recovered for Georgia crash victims](#), and bus-involved wrecks like the ones described above are a category we work regularly. Georgia law also allows surviving family members to pursue [wrongful death](#) damages when a cyclist is killed in a bus crash, and the same ante litem notice deadlines that apply to injury claims apply to wrongful death claims when the defendant is a government entity.

Injured By A Bus In Georgia? A Bicycle Accident Attorney Can Help

If you were struck by a transit bus or other transit vehicle while riding in Georgia, [contact us](#) as soon as possible. The notice deadlines that apply to government transit authority claims are

strict, and the bus's onboard camera footage, driver logs, and maintenance records are documents the agency controls and may not preserve indefinitely without a formal preservation demand. We review these cases without charge, and you'll understand your legal options before any deadline has a chance to pass.

Our bicycle accident attorneys take these cases on a contingency fee arrangement, so there's no payment required from you unless and until we recover compensation on your behalf.