

Why Right-Turning Trucks Are So Dangerous for Georgia Pedestrians

Off-Tracking Trailers, Hard-to-See Corners, and Georgia's Crosswalk Rules Put People at Intersections at Risk

A pedestrian waiting at a corner or stepping into a crosswalk faces a particular danger from a [tractor-trailer turning right](#). The trailer's wheels cut inside the path the cab took, and the driver may never see the person standing near the passenger side.

At [Gary Martin Hays & Associates](#), our Georgia truck accident attorneys look closely at how the turn was set up, what the driver could have seen, and whether the trucking company prepared the driver for tight city corners. Those answers often decide who pays for a pedestrian's injuries.

Key Findings

- **Trailer Wheels Cut the Corner** – A tractor-trailer's rear wheels follow a tighter path than its front wheels, so the trailer can roll across a corner the cab already cleared.
- **Trucks Can Mount the Sidewalk** – Federal safety officials warn pedestrians that trucks making wide right turns sometimes run up onto the corner of the sidewalk.
- **Turning Drivers Must Stop for Crosswalks** – Georgia law requires a turning driver to stop and remain stopped for a pedestrian in the crosswalk, including one within a lane of the half of the road the truck is turning onto.
- **Unmarked Crosswalks Count** – A pedestrian crossing at an intersection can have crosswalk protection even where no lines are painted.
- **Side Impacts Are Common** – Federal research found that more than a quarter of pedestrians killed by large trucks first hit the side of the truck, where the wheels can pull a person under.

How Off-Tracking Turns a Street Corner Into a Danger Zone

Georgia's commercial driver's license study guide explains that long vehicles "offtrack" in turns, meaning the rear wheels follow a different path than the front. The guide notes that [the trailer's rear wheels offtrack even more](#) than the tractor's.

In a right turn, that tighter path pulls the trailer toward the inside of the corner. A pedestrian on a curb ramp or at the edge of the crosswalk can be struck by the trailer's wheels even after the cab has passed safely.

Drivers are taught to handle a tight right turn by [turning wide as they complete it](#) while keeping the rear of the truck close to the curb. That technique helps prevent the [wide-turn squeeze-play crashes](#) that catch cars on the right, but it also keeps the trailer near the corner where people wait to cross.

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's [safety tips for pedestrians](#) put it plainly, warning that trucks making wide right turns occasionally run up onto the corner of the sidewalk.

Why Truck Drivers Lose Sight of People on the Right

A truck driver sits high on the left side of the cab, so the area along the passenger door and just ahead of the right front fender is hard to watch. A pedestrian standing close to the cab can drop out of the mirrors entirely, which is a common factor in [blind spot truck accidents](#).

Federal rules require every truck and truck tractor to carry [two rear-vision mirrors, one on each side](#). That rule doesn't separately require cameras or cross-view mirrors that show the space directly beside and in front of the cab.

The mirrors only help if the driver uses them. The FMCSA attributes 14% of large-truck crashes to [inadequate surveillance by commercial drivers](#), and it tells drivers to check their mirrors before every turn.

What Georgia Law Requires of a Truck Driver Turning Right

Georgia's turning statute, [O.C.G.A. § 40-6-120](#), requires a right turn to be made as close as practicable to the right-hand curb or edge of the road. The statute has no separate exception for large vehicles, so a truck that swings wide still has to complete the turn safely.

The crosswalk statute, [O.C.G.A. § 40-6-91](#), is aimed squarely at turning vehicles. A driver must stop and remain stopped for a pedestrian in a crosswalk on the driver's half of the road, or one approaching within one lane of the half of the road "onto which it is turning."

Signal rules add to that duty. Under [O.C.G.A. § 40-6-21](#), a driver turning on a green light must stop for a pedestrian lawfully in an adjacent crosswalk, and a driver turning right on red must stop first and then wait for pedestrians in the same way.

Georgia also requires every driver to [exercise due care to avoid any pedestrian](#), to sound the horn when necessary, and to take extra precautions around children and anyone who appears confused or impaired.

Here's how those duties apply depending on where the pedestrian was:

Where the Pedestrian Was	What the Truck Driver Must Do	Georgia Statute
In a marked or unmarked crosswalk at the intersection, on the truck's half of the road or within one lane of the half it's turning onto	Stop and remain stopped until the pedestrian is clear	O.C.G.A. § 40-6-91(a)

Where the Pedestrian Was	What the Truck Driver Must Do	Georgia Statute
Crossing lawfully while the truck turns on a green light	Stop and remain stopped for the pedestrian in the adjacent crosswalk	O.C.G.A. § 40-6-21(a)(1)(A)
Crossing while the truck turns right on red	Come to a full stop, then stop and remain stopped for the pedestrian	O.C.G.A. § 40-6-21(a)(3)(B)
Crossing away from any crosswalk	The pedestrian generally must yield, but the driver still has to use due care to avoid a collision	O.C.G.A. §§ 40-6-92(a) and 40-6-93

Can a Pedestrian Recover If the Trucking Company Blames Them?

Insurers for trucking companies may argue that the pedestrian stepped out too suddenly or crossed against the signal. Georgia law does bar pedestrians from leaving a curb into the path of a vehicle so close that it's impractical for the driver to yield, but that rule depends on the timing and distances involved.

Pedestrians crossing outside a crosswalk must generally [yield to vehicles on the road](#) unless they've already entered safely. Even then, the driver's duty of due care doesn't disappear.

Under Georgia's modified comparative fault rule, [O.C.G.A. § 51-12-33](#), a pedestrian's damages are reduced by their share of the fault, and recovery is barred only at 50% or more. A pedestrian who was partly at fault can still recover from a driver who never checked the right mirror, as long as the pedestrian's share stays under 50%.

Imagine a woman waiting at a downtown Atlanta corner with a walk signal. A tractor-trailer turning right on the green swings wide, then tracks back toward the curb, and the trailer's rear wheels strike her as she steps off the ramp into the crosswalk.

The trucking company's insurer might claim she stepped into the truck's path. The walk signal, the crosswalk location, and the driver's duty to stop for her under § 40-6-21 could support her claim against both the driver and the company. The steps taken right after being [hit in a crosswalk](#) can also help protect that claim.

What Evidence Shows How the Turn Happened?

Right-turn cases often come down to seconds and feet. The records that matter most include:

- **Truck Camera Footage** – Forward-facing, side, and driver-facing cameras, where the truck has them, can show where the pedestrian was and where the driver was looking.
- **Engine and Telematics Data** – Speed and braking data, where the truck's systems record it, can show whether the driver slowed and stopped before the crosswalk.
- **Signal Timing Records** – The city, county, or state agency that runs the signal can show whether the pedestrian had a walk signal when the truck turned.

- **Nearby Surveillance Video** – Business, transit, and traffic cameras often capture the turn from angles the truck's cameras miss.
- **Training and Route Records** – Records showing how the carrier trained the driver for urban turns can support a claim that the [trucking company is liable](#) too.

Much of this evidence is overwritten or discarded within days or weeks. A prompt preservation letter to the trucking company and to nearby property owners can keep it available.

These crashes tend to happen at busy urban corners, including some of [Atlanta's most dangerous intersections](#), where heavy foot traffic and delivery trucks share the same space.

How Serious These Injuries Tend to Be

A pedestrian has no protection against a loaded tractor-trailer. Victims of a [pedestrian truck accident](#) often suffer crush injuries, fractures, amputations, and [traumatic brain injuries](#).

Research compiled by the U.S. DOT's Volpe Center found that [more than a quarter of pedestrians killed by large trucks](#) first impact the side of the truck, where they can be pulled under the rear wheels. Several countries require side guards on trucks and trailers, but there's no federal requirement in the United States.

The overall numbers are sobering. [NHTSA reports](#) that 7,080 pedestrians were killed nationwide in 2024, and it lists a vehicle turning into a pedestrian's path without yielding as a common crash type. The [Insurance Institute for Highway Safety](#) found that 19% of the 5,340 people killed in large truck crashes in 2024 were pedestrians, bicyclists, or motorcyclists.

When a pedestrian doesn't survive, Georgia law determines [who can file a wrongful death claim](#), usually a spouse, children, or parents.

Getting Answers After a Turning Truck Strikes a Pedestrian

A right-turn crash can look simple from the outside, but the answers usually sit in camera footage, signal records, and the carrier's training files. Those records have to be secured before the trucking company's version of events becomes the only one.

Our team can investigate the turn, the intersection, and every company connected to the truck. [Contact us today](#) for a free case review and to learn what legal options may be open to you or your family. There's no fee unless we win.