

# Sharing OUR Recovery

A quarterly newsletter dedicated to support victims, survivors, caregivers and loved ones of motor vehicle collisions.

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Editor in Chief - Dawne McKay

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Supporting Crash Survivors  
One Step at a Time

## Finding Warmth and Strength in the Winter of Recovery

As winter settles in, this time of year can feel like holding both heaviness and hope at once. You may notice your energy shifting with the shorter days, your body responding more intensely to the cold, or your emotions rising to the surface in ways you did not expect. These experiences are part of the complex, human response to trauma, stress, and change. And within this season, there are still moments of comfort to be found. Moments that can nourish you through the harder days such as a warm drink between your palms. A supportive conversation with someone who understands. A gentle walk, a quiet pause, a deep breath that reminds you of your own strength. These small acts of care are reminders that healing is made up of many tiny, persistent steps.

This winter, we are excited to introduce a new member of our team: **Jim Woo - Volunteer Support Group Moderator & Crash Connections Coordinator**. Jim brings warmth, empathy, and lived experience to his role, and we are grateful for the compassionate presence he brings to our community. He will be leading and supporting *Crash Connections*—our monthly, free online support gatherings designed for anyone impacted by motor vehicle crashes. Crash Connections offers a welcoming space to share, listen, learn, and feel understood by others who truly “get it.” Whether you are attending for the first time or you’ve joined us before, everyone is welcome.

We also introduced a holiday campaign entitled “**12 Days of Christmas: Survivor Support & Road Safety Edition**.” Each day, we will post on our socials and share a small but powerful action we can take to uplift crash survivors, strengthen community support, and promote safer roads for all. We encourage you to follow along. Join us on X, Instagram, and Facebook and share the messages that resonate, and help us spread hope, healing, and road safety awareness this holiday season.

In this issue, we explore the questions every crash survivor should ask before hiring a lawyer, we also highlight how the Crash Support Network can help you navigate the season safely, and we reflect on why this time of year calls us to remember those recovering from a crash. We also share the story of a crash, a song, and the journey of rebuilding a crash survivor’s sense of safety. Lastly, one of our volunteers, an incoming medical student and future physician, reflects on how his own healing shaped his commitment to supporting crash survivors with compassion.

And as the holiday season approaches, we hope you are able to create moments of warmth and connection—whether through cherished traditions, quiet reflections, or simply giving yourself permission to rest. May this time bring gentle reminders of hope, togetherness, and the resilience that carries you forward. We remain dedicated and steadfast in supporting crash survivors in 2026 and are excited for new ways to provide care, guidance, and hope in the year ahead. Wishing everyone a safe and joyful New Year!

With care and compassion,

- Dawne



# A Crash, a Song, and How I Rebuilt My Sense of Safety

Submitted by Malikah Hug



When the crash happened, it didn't just damage my car, it changed how I moved through the world. Before, driving was automatic. Afterward, it became a place where my body reacted before I had time to think. For months, something as simple as merging onto the freeway or sitting in the passenger seat triggered a full body response (jaw tight, breath shallow, shoulders locked, eyes scanning everything). It wasn't dramatic, it was natural instinct. My nervous system learned a lesson my mind hadn't caught up to yet. Something dangerous happened, and it could happen again.

## It Forced Me to Slow Down

That shift affected me more deeply than I expected. I didn't feel like the version of myself I was before the crash. It forced

me to slow down and pay attention to the parts of my body holding onto fear. I began writing affirmation-based music not just for comfort, but as medicine for myself and others navigating trauma. I needed something that grounded me, something I could lean on when driving felt overwhelming. The music became a tool. It helped me regulate my breath, settle my mind, and interrupt the tension that showed up every time I buckled my seatbelt.

One moment that stays with me happened after I recorded an affirmation song specifically for drivers. I sat behind the wheel, anxiety already climbing. Instead of forcing myself to "be brave," I put the song on. I focused on the words, the rhythm, and my breath. I didn't suddenly feel fearless, but I

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did feel more present and more aware of my body. That was enough for me to take the drive. Presence became the goal, not perfection.

### My Own Music Grounds Me

The song is for anyone who knows what it's like to tense up on the road without meaning to. For people who grip the wheel a little too tight, or who feel their chest tighten at sudden braking. Trauma shows up in the body long after life goes back to "normal." There's nothing dramatic about it. It's just what happens when your system is still trying to protect you. Over time, I've learned that healing from a crash isn't linear. Some days I can drive calmly. Other days, the tension hits out of nowhere. Instead of judging myself, I've learned to work with what my body is communicating. Breathwork, cacao and other grounding practices, and my own music have been consistent tools in that process.

If you're early in your recovery, I want you to know that it's okay to take your time. There's no timeline for when you "should" feel comfortable again. Your body has its own pace, and forcing yourself to move faster usually makes things worse. Support helps. Patience helps. Small steps count. Being a survivor, to me, means recognizing how much the body holds and being willing to rebuild safety from the inside out. It's not about being fearless, it's about learning yourself in a new way after everything shifts.

"My healing is still unfolding, and I'm still learning. But I'm here, and I'm growing through it. If my story or my music can make someone else feel understood or less alone on the road back to normalcy, then sharing it matters."

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Please visit Malukah Hug's YouTube channel at: [Ride Wit Me \(The Journey\)](#) to listen to her song.

**FREE** **FREE**

## CRASH TOOL KITS

We understand how overwhelming the recovery journey can feel after being injured in a motor vehicle crash. To help you navigate this challenging time, we've created a series of downloadable forms available on our website to help you manage.

Download our free, helpful crash toolkits for tips, checklists and information that will help you on your recovery journey.

**CLICK HERE**

Navigating life after a motor vehicle crash can feel isolating, but it doesn't have to be. If our paths have crossed and you've found a beacon of hope in our support and resources that we continue to offer, your feedback can illuminate the way for others in similar situations.

Sharing a review with us could be the guiding light for someone in the darkness of post-crash turmoil. Your feedback not only encourages us but also helps others discover the variety of helpful resources that we continue to offer our crash survivor community.

**SHARE REVIEW** **click here**



# Transforming Pain into Lifelong Service

Submitted by Jim Woo – Volunteer Support Group Moderator & Crash Connections Coordinator

Resilience once meant pushing through everything on my own. However, my recovery taught me that real strength comes from knowing when to reach out for support. I began recognizing the signs in myself when my thoughts raced and doubt crept in. Rather than suppressing these emotions, I have learned to pause, reflect, and reach out for help.



## The Night Everything Changed

On August 3, 2024, at 12:50 am, my car was struck head-on by a drunk driver. In those first moments, my mind raced. Is everyone alive? What do I do next? My hands shook as I called 911 and checked on my friends. One could not move due to abdominal pain. Another screamed with shoulder pain. One sat frozen, staring ahead. Despite my fear, I held my friends' trembling hands to keep them conscious until help arrived.

I had minor injuries, but my friends needed surgery. In the days that followed, I pushed my own pain aside and focused

on the legal and insurance steps so they could rest. At night, I kept replaying the crash with a flash of light filling my eyes. I kept wondering if I could have done something different. That spiral led nowhere.

## Embracing Vulnerability

The turning point came when I finally stopped trying to carry everything on my own. I paused and looked inward. I thought about the times I had adapted to new places as an immigrant and the long training hours I put in for marathons. I realized that I had never made it through those challenges without some form of support.

I reached out to mentors, leaned on loved ones, and connected with fellow survivors. Talking about the crash felt uncomfortable in the beginning because it made me feel vulnerable. So, I began by reading the [survivor stories](#) on the [Crash Support Network](#). Those stories became a light when everything felt dark. They helped me understand my own emotions and slowly gave me the courage to share my pain with others. Each time I opened up, the weight lifted a little.

It was during this time that a line from a book, [The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse](#) by [Charlie Mackesy](#), finally made sense. The horse says, “Asking for help is not giving up. It is refusing to give up.” Those words stayed with me. They softened my fear of being seen. They helped me understand that vulnerability can be a bridge rather than a barrier. By embracing vulnerability and seeking [support](#), I returned to my work as a scribe with more awareness and compassion. Being present for patients gave my days renewed meaning. It reminded me to listen and show kindness because we never truly know what someone else is carrying.

## From Survivor to Supporter

Reading the stories and the [crash survivor blogs](#) on the Crash Support Network, I began to process my own fears and learned how others who were once in my shoes had moved forward. It helped me understand the emotional aftermath of a crash: not just the physical trauma, but the invisible pain survivors often carry. Most importantly, it reminded me that I do not have to go through this process alone.

Grateful for the support of the crash victim community, I began volunteering with the Crash Support Network, which soon became an essential part of my healing journey. I

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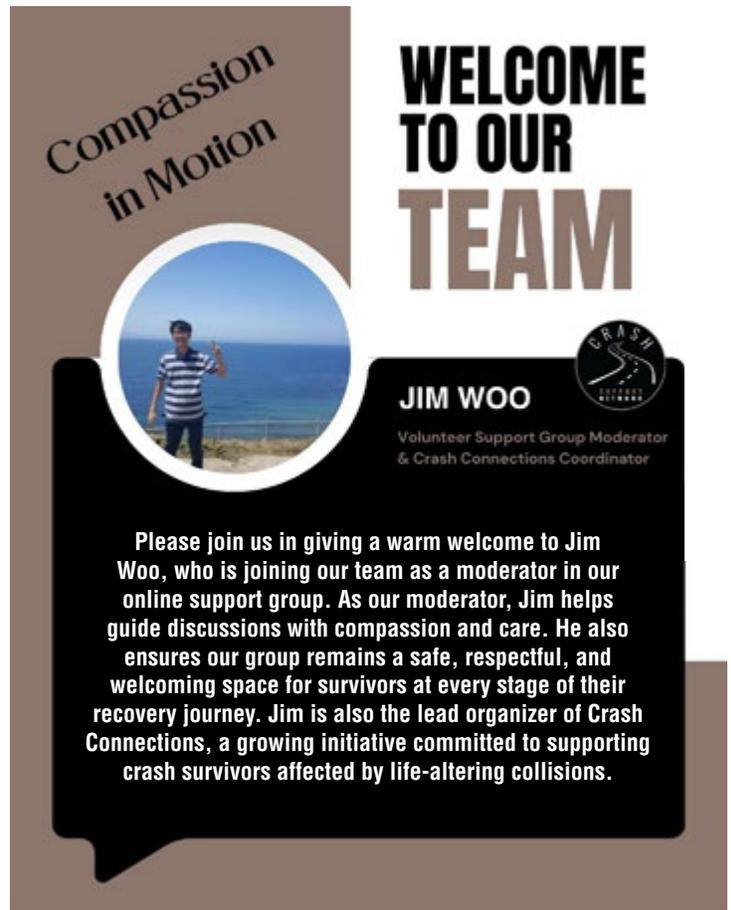


listen to survivors describe their pain and their fears, and I try to give them the same support I once needed. Each conversation reminds me that seeking help is not a sign of weakness. It is a sign that you are choosing to keep going. When faced with obstacles, I remind myself of the honest connections that fueled my healing journey.

### Holding Onto Hope

A crash comes with costs that people often cannot see. Sleepless nights. Chronic pain. Waves of doubt. For me, it also meant pausing my path to becoming a doctor. What helped me most was realizing that I was not alone. That reminder gave me the strength to believe in my own recovery again. I have learned that the hardest moments often come when hope feels distant. As an incoming medical student and future physician, I hope to continue supporting crash survivors with the same compassion that carried me through my own healing.

“You are not alone. You are stronger than you know. And it is never a sign of weakness to reach out when you need one. So, moving forward, I want you to remember that *Healing doesn't happen all at once, but every small step forward matters.*”



**Compassion in Motion**

**WELCOME TO OUR TEAM**

**JIM WOO**  
Volunteer Support Group Moderator  
& Crash Connections Coordinator

**CRASH**  
SUPPORT NETWORK

Please join us in giving a warm welcome to Jim Woo, who is joining our team as a moderator in our online support group. As our moderator, Jim helps guide discussions with compassion and care. He also ensures our group remains a safe, respectful, and welcoming space for survivors at every stage of their recovery journey. Jim is also the lead organizer of Crash Connections, a growing initiative committed to supporting crash survivors affected by life-altering collisions.



**NEW**

**CRASH CONNECTIONS**

*A place to connect with others who have shared experiences*

**How to register:**  
Attendees must send an email to:  
[info@crashsupportnetwork.com](mailto:info@crashsupportnetwork.com)

3rd Saturday of every month  
from: 1:00- 2:00 pm (EST)

Space is limited to 12

**Benefits:**

- Attend from the comfort of your own home by zoom.
- An invaluable opportunity for you to engage with others and learn tools, strategies and insights tailored to help you on your recovery journey.
- Our online connection is led by individuals who are on their own recovery journey.
- Crash Connections will allow you to gain first hand knowledge and become part of a supportive community.

**CRASH**  
SUPPORT NETWORK



# Tis the Season to Remember Those Recovering from a Crash

The holiday season is a time filled with sparkle, noise, celebration, and togetherness. But for many people recovering from a motor vehicle crash, this time of year can feel very different. Instead of gatherings, they may be spending their days in doctor's offices or hospital rooms. Instead of excitement, they may be navigating pain, loss, or uncertainty. And instead of feeling surrounded by joy, they may feel forgotten.

This season, it's important to slow down and remember those who are healing physically, emotionally, financially, and spiritually. Our recovery journey is often far more complicated than what you can see from the outside. Here are 10 struggles many crash survivors quietly face during the holidays:

## 1. Physical Pain and Limited Mobility

Simple movements can become daily battles. Holiday activities that once brought joy may now feel impossible.

## 2. Emotional Distress and Trauma

Fear, anxiety, or flashbacks do not disappear just because the season is merry. Healing the mind takes time and patience.

## 3. Loneliness and Isolation

While others gather for dinners and celebrations, those recovering might be stuck at home or in a hospital, feeling left out of the world unfolding without them.

## 4. Financial Stress

Medical bills, lost wages, and changes in work can create tremendous strain during the holiday season.

## 5. Fatigue and Slow Healing

Recovery is rarely linear. Progress can be slow and discouraging, and exhaustion often becomes a companion.

## 6. Coping With Loss

Some survivors face the heartbreaking reality of losing loved ones. Others mourn the loss of independence, routines, or a sense of normalcy. These wounds grow heavier during the holidays.

## 7. Missing Holiday Moments

From family gatherings to simple traditions, being unable to participate can deepen feelings of sadness or grief.

## 8. Uncertainty About the Future

Questions about mobility, work, driving, or long-term health often weigh heavily on our mind.

## 9. Relying on Others for Care

Needing assistance whether from caregivers, nurses, or family can stir feelings of frustration or vulnerability.

## 10. Holidays in a Hospital Environment

For those spending the season in a hospital, the sterile lights, unfamiliar routines, and emotional distance can feel especially cold during a time meant for warmth and connection.

### How Can You Show Up For Them?

*"A simple message, a short visit, a meal delivered, or a small act of kindness can remind a crash survivor that they are not forgotten."*

A simple message, a short visit, a meal delivered, or a small act of kindness can remind a crash survivor that they are not forgotten. Even a few gentle words "I'm thinking of you" can bring comfort. Tell them about the Crash Support Network! Healing takes time, and it often happens in the quiet corners of our life. May we never forget that understanding and support are year-round gifts that never take a holiday.



# Post-Crash Holiday Survival

Submitted by S. Dawne McKay

Post  
Crash  
Tip

The holidays can be overwhelming, but your recovery comes first. Always prioritize your health, peace of mind, and safety over festive obligations.

Don't push yourself to travel, attend gatherings, or rush treatments. Keep your medical appointments, follow your therapy plan and document any ongoing symptoms.

The holidays are meant to be a time of care, connection, and reflection. Give yourself the grace to rest, heal, and celebrate even the smallest victories.

With patience, organization, and support, you can navigate this season safely, and emerge healthier and more resilient.



## ASK A PERSONAL INJURY LAWYER

After a motor vehicle crash, it's natural to feel unsure about speaking with a lawyer and it can feel both overwhelming and intimidating. That's why we created Ask a Personal Injury Lawyer to offer you a safe space to ask all your legal questions which is a simple and practical way for you to get the answers you need, stress-free. The Crash Support Network is here to support you and will help you can get the legal answers you need without any pressure.

[CLICK HERE](#) 

## BEYOND THE CRASH, CONNECTION IS EVERYTHING



OUR PRIVATE DISCUSSION GROUP

If you're looking for understanding, resources, and a community that truly gets it, we are here for you. Together, we share experiences, encourage each other, and navigate recovery with strength and resilience. Don't go through it alone - join us and be part of a compassionate community on the road to recovery.



CRASHSUPPORTNETWORK.COM



# Winter Road Safety & Slip-and-Fall Tips for Crash Survivors

## How the Crash Support Network Can Help You Navigate the Season Safely

When temperatures drop, hazards rise especially for anyone recovering from injuries caused by a motor vehicle crash. Winter weather brings new risks both on the road and on foot, and even a minor setback can delay healing. The Crash Support Network is here to help survivors stay informed, supported, and safe throughout the winter months. With the right precautions and a community that understands what you are going through, you can protect your progress and move confidently through the season.

## Winter Road Safety for Crash Survivors

Driving in the winter where snow is a factor can be stressful for anyone, but if you're dealing with lingering pain, stiffness, or limited mobility after a crash, it can feel overwhelming. Here are some tips to keep safe this winter season:

### **Slow down and increase following distance**

Snow and ice reduce traction, and restricted mobility can make quick reactions harder. Giving yourself extra space helps prevent sudden movements that could aggravate injuries.



### **Keep your vehicle winter-ready**

Proper tire tread, correct tire pressure, and functional wipers, defrosters, and lights are essential.

### **Plan your routes ahead of time**

Stick to well-plowed, familiar roads and avoid steep hills or rural shortcuts.

### **Stay visible**

Remove snow and ice from all windows, mirrors, headlights, and brake lights. Being easily seen can help prevent further motor vehicle crashes.

### **Take breaks if discomfort increases**

Long drives can aggravate injuries. Stretch, rest, and listen to your body. Take breaks when necessary.

## Slip-and-Fall Safety While You Heal

Winter walking hazards like ice and slush can be especially dangerous when you are already recovering from injuries. Even one slip can undo weeks of progress. Here are some tips to keep in mind.

### **Wear proper footwear**

Choose shoes with non-slip soles for better traction on icy walkways

### **Walk like a penguin**

Take small steps, bend your knees slightly, and keep your weight forward. This technique is widely shared among crash survivors as a simple but effective balance helper.

### **Use handrails when available**

Handrails provide extra stability which is especially useful if you're experiencing balance issues or residual pain.

### **Keep your hands free**

Carrying heavy items can throw off your balance. Opt for a backpack so you can use your hands for support.



### Watch out for black ice

Shiny or wet-looking pavement may be a sheet of nearly invisible ice. Many survivors in the Crash Support Network report slipping in parking lots at medical buildings. Stay alert in these areas.

### You are Not Navigating Winter Alone

Recovering from a motor vehicle crash is challenging enough, and winter conditions should not make it harder. With extra precautions, you can stay safer on the road and on foot while protecting your recovery this season.



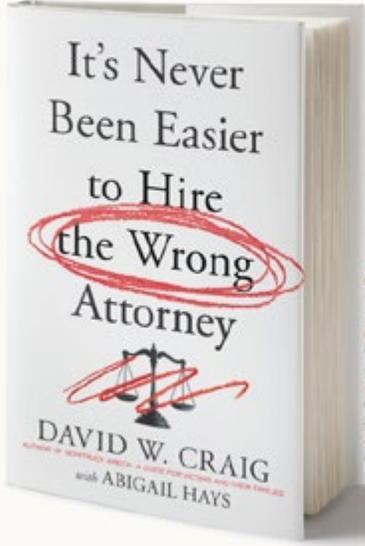
## DONATE AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE TODAY

We believe in the power of making a difference in crash survivor's lives. But, to achieve our goals we need your support.

By donating, you will be supporting the continued efforts of our much-needed resources that we continue to offer to improve the lives of crash survivors.



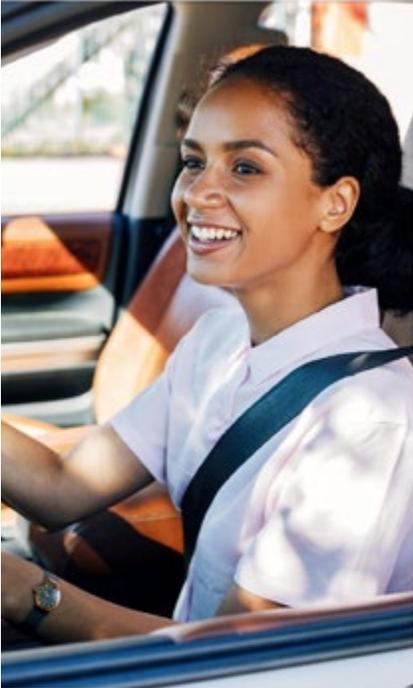
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We are Driving Towards Safety One Pledge at a Time!

Join us in making a difference.

**TAKE OUR PLEDGE**





# Questions Every Crash Survivor Should Ask Before Hiring a Lawyer

Submitted by David W. Craig, Personal Injury Attorney

When you have been involved in a serious crash, life can suddenly feel divided into “before” and “after.” In the “after,” you face decisions you never expected to make. You may be dealing with medical care, insurance communication, time away from work, and the uncertainty of what comes next. One of the most important decisions you will make is choosing the lawyer who will guide you through the process.

Throughout my career representing crash victims and families, I have seen how much the right lawyer can affect the outcome and the experience. I have also seen how easy it is for people to be influenced by advertising or familiar slogans that say nothing about a lawyer’s actual qualifications. This is a vulnerable time for crash victims and their families, and choosing the wrong representation can create problems that are difficult to fix later.

My intention with this article is to give crash victims clear, practical guidance at a time when the decisions you make can shape both your recovery and your future. These are the questions every crash victim should ask before deciding who to hire and why the answers matter.

## 1. “How much real trial experience do you have, and how many of those trials involved trucking cases?”

Many people assume that personal injury lawyers regularly try cases. The truth is that very few lawyers consistently appear in courtrooms, and an even smaller number have meaningful experience trying cases involving commercial motor vehicles. A trucking case is not the same as a car accident case. It requires knowledge of federal regulations, familiarity with industry practices, and a detailed understanding of how trucking companies and insurers operate.

Trial experience matters because it changes the way a case is built from day one. Lawyers who prepare cases for trial gather different evidence, hire different experts, and approach settlement negotiations from a position of strength. Insurance companies keep track of which lawyers are willing to try cases and which ones are not. When a lawyer has a history of taking cases to trial, insurers tend to take those cases more seriously. As a crash victim, you deserve to know whether the lawyer you are considering has the experience necessary to handle a complex case. Ask for specific examples, not general statements.

## 2. “Can you explain the difference between heavy advertising and actual experience?”

Advertising can be helpful for name recognition, but it does not tell you whether a lawyer has worked on cases similar to yours or whether they have a track record in serious injury or wrongful death litigation. Many victims assume that a well-known marketing presence means the lawyer has significant courtroom experience. That assumption can lead to disappointment and, in some cases, real harm to the case.

The focus should be on what the lawyer has done, not how often you see their advertisements. Ask questions such as: How often do you handle cases like mine? How many catastrophic injury or trucking cases have you handled in litigation? Who leads your investigations? These questions help you understand the lawyer’s actual experience and whether they have the background necessary to guide you. Crash victims deserve to know their lawyer’s experience and what qualifies them to take on a serious case.

## 3. “What is Board Certification in Truck Accident Law, and are you Board Certified?”

This is one of the most important questions to ask, especially in cases involving commercial motor vehicles.

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The National Board of Trial Advocacy created a Board Certification in Truck Accident Law to identify attorneys who have significant experience handling these complex cases. It is the only trucking-law certification recognized by the American Bar Association.

To become Board Certified, a lawyer must demonstrate substantial trial experience, provide documentation of successful work on trucking cases, receive strong peer and judicial evaluations, and pass a comprehensive written examination. It is a rigorous process designed to confirm that the attorney has the training and background required to handle complex trucking litigation.

Board Certification cannot be purchased or obtained through marketing. It must be earned through proven experience. If you are dealing with a trucking crash, this credential can give you confidence that the lawyer truly understands the unique requirements of these cases.

#### 4. “Who will actually handle my case day to day?”

Some firms operate with very large teams, and the lawyer you meet at the beginning may not be the person who handles your case throughout the process. This is not necessarily a problem, but it is important to understand who will be responsible for your file. You should know who will communicate with you, who will gather evidence, and who will handle negotiations or trial preparation.

Consistency matters. Crash victims deserve to know the names of the people who will be involved, their roles, and how they will keep you informed. Lawyers should be clear about their approach and what you can expect. If you feel like your case will be passed from one person to another without explanation, that is worth noting.

#### 5. “How do you approach investigations in serious crash or trucking cases?”

A strong investigation is often the foundation of a successful case. Evidence can disappear quickly. Electronic data can be overwritten, vehicles can be repaired, and critical documents can be lost if they are not preserved immediately. In trucking cases, it is especially important to move fast because trucking companies often begin assembling their defense teams within hours of a crash.

Ask any prospective lawyer how they handle investigations. Do they send preservation letters immediately? Do they inspect the vehicles? Do they obtain electronic data, dash camera footage, and driver logs? Do they work with experienced experts? The answers to

these questions reveal whether the lawyer understands the urgency and complexity of serious crash cases.

An attorney who moves quickly and strategically can protect key evidence and strengthen the case from the start.

#### 6. “How will you communicate with me throughout the case?”

The legal process can feel overwhelming, especially while you are recovering. Clear communication is important. You should know how often you can expect updates, who will answer your questions, and what the process will look like at each stage. A lawyer who values communication will help you feel informed and supported. Ask about communication expectations before you decide who to hire. Crash victims deserve a lawyer who listens, explains, and stays connected throughout the case.

### Final Thoughts

The lawyer you choose after a crash can influence the outcome of your case and the experience you have along the way. Serious injury and trucking cases require skill, preparation, and an understanding of an industry that operates under its own set of rules. The right questions can help you identify an attorney who is equipped to protect your interests and guide you through a challenging time.

Crash victims deserve representation that is knowledgeable, prepared, and committed from the beginning to the end of the case. Taking the time to ask these questions can help ensure that you are choosing a lawyer who will stand with you and fight for the best possible outcome.

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[David W. Craig](#) is a board-certified truck accident lawyer and managing partner as well as one of the founding partners of the law firm of [Craig, Kelley & Faultless LLC](#). For more information please visit: [Craig, Kelley & Faultless LLC | Personal Injury Law Firm](#)

Don't miss their advertisement for [It's Never Been Easier to Hire the Wrong Attorney](#) a straight-forward guide to choosing the right lawyer and steering clear of costly mistakes.



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We couldn't have done it without your support!



By sponsoring the *Sharing our Recovery Newsletter*, you are supporting the continued growth of this valuable free resource for crash survivors.

## Would you like to be part of *Sharing Our Recovery*?

### Articles/Stories:

We are always looking for articles or stories, and we would love to hear from you! Want to share?

**Email:** [info@crashsupportnetwork.com](mailto:info@crashsupportnetwork.com)

### Sponsors:

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**Information:** [Crash Support Network Sponsorship](#)



## Meet Dawne McKay – Founder

S. Dawne McKay is the Founder of the Crash Support Network and continues to donate countless hours to her crash survivor community by sharing resources, highly informative articles, a quarterly newsletter and a blog that allows her to share her own personal journey as a crash survivor. Dawne works hard at bringing awareness to crash survivors through CSN's social media platforms and the online support group by sharing inspirational posts with survivors from all across the world. Dawne is also the author of the book, "Talk Crash to Me - What to Expect After Surviving a Motor Vehicle Collision and How to Manage Your Recovery" which is [available on Amazon](#).

**Our mission is to raise awareness about the recovery journey that many people face after being affected by a motor vehicle crash and to provide a compassionate online community to help survivors rebuild their lives while actively promoting road safety.**



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