Choosing a Truck Accident Lawyer: Questions to Ask

Choosing a truck accident lawyer is a different task from choosing a lawyer for a minor fender bender. Tractor-trailer claims often involve federal safety regulations, electronic evidence and several insurance policies, and the trucking company frequently has lawyers and investigators working on the crash from the first days. These questions can make a first consultation more productive.

Confirm the license and disciplinary record

Before meeting with a truck accident attorney, check the basics. Each state's bar or licensing agency provides a way to confirm that a lawyer is licensed and in good standing, and many also publish public discipline records. A directory listing or a badge from a rating publisher reflects that publisher's selection process, rather than a license check or a prediction of results. If the crash happened in another state, ask whether the lawyer is licensed there or will work with local counsel.

Questions about truck-specific experience

Ask how many tractor-trailer cases the lawyer has handled, and how recently. A truck accident attorney should be familiar with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations in 49 CFR Parts 390-399, including hours-of-service rules, driver qualification files and inspection and maintenance records. Ask how the firm handles electronic evidence, such as ELD records, engine control module (ECM) downloads and dash camera video, and whether it retains accident reconstructionists. Ask whether the lawyer has taken truck cases to trial, because trial experience can affect how a case is prepared, even though most claims settle without a trial.

Fees and the written agreement

Many injury lawyers work on a contingency fee, which is a percentage of any recovery. ABA Model Rule 1.5(c), which many states have adopted in some form, requires a contingent fee agreement to be in writing and signed by the client, and to state how the fee is calculated and whether expenses are deducted before or after the fee. https://atlantatruckaccidentlawyers.wiki/checking-a-firms-truck-practice/ Ask who pays case costs if there is no recovery, such as filing fees and the cost of depositions and reconstruction work. Ask whether the fee percentage changes if the case goes to trial, and ask for a written closing statement at the end.

Communication and staffing

Ask whether the truck accident attorney at the consultation will handle the case personally, who will manage it day to day and how often updates will come. Some firms refer truck cases to another firm or bring in co-counsel. ABA Model Rule 1.5(e) generally requires the client's agreement, confirmed in writing, before lawyers in different firms divide a fee, so the arrangement should be explained up front.

Documents worth bringing

A consultation goes further when the paperwork is on the table. Bring the police crash report or at least the report number, together with photos of the scene and contact details for witnesses. Letters from insurers,

claim numbers and any forms already signed also matter, since they show who has made contact and what has already been agreed. Medical bills and records, plus pay stubs or other proof of missed work, help document the losses so far. If anyone photographed the company name or USDOT number on the truck, bring that photo too.

What no lawyer can promise

Be cautious of anyone who promises a specific dollar amount at the first meeting. No lawyer can know the outcome of a claim in advance, and lawyer advertising rules prohibit false or misleading statements about a lawyer's services. A useful consultation focuses on the facts, the deadlines and the evidence that needs protecting. Ask about the statute of limitations in the state where the crash happened, because every state sets its own. A semi-truck accident attorney should be able to explain that deadline in plain terms. This article is general information and not *atlanta truck accident lawyer* legal advice.