

## CLANCY & DIAZ, LLP

PERSONAL INJURY ATTORNEYS

# Severe Injuries Are Common in Stairway Accidents

Every year in the U.S., more than one million people are injured and thousands die in stairway falls. Staircase accidents are the second-leading cause of accidental injuries, behind only motor vehicle crashes, and they impact people of all ages, including children, adults, and senior citizens.

According to a study published by The American Journal of Emergency Medicine:

“An estimated 24,760,843 patients were treated in emergency departments for a stair-related injury during the 23-year study period (1990 to 2012) averaging 1,076,558 patients annually, or 37.8 injuries per 10,000 United States residents.”

In California and throughout the U.S., stairway accidents are the source of far too many injuries. Sadly, many of these accidents could have been prevented if not for a negligent property owner, manager, contractor, or manufacturer.

### Many Falls Are Caused by Negligence

Stairs and staircases can be found everywhere from homes, apartment complexes, and parking garages to hotels, restaurants, and workplaces. And while property owners and managers have a legal responsibility to ensure stairways are safe, some don't take that responsibility seriously.

In California, stairway accidents fall under the legal category of premises liability. That means a property owner or manager may be liable for injuries sustained by tenants and lawful visitors.

### Common causes of staircase accidents include:

- Damaged or defective steps or stairs
- Defects in the stairway or stairwell
- Inadequate lighting
- Hazardous stair risers
- Unsafe railings or loose handrails
- Slippery steps from water spills or other slick substances

Among the most common injuries sustained in stairway falls are traumatic brain injuries, concussions, broken bones, spinal cord injuries, deep cuts, lacerations, severe bruising, sprains, and strains.

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# Pedestrian Deaths Are a Problem in California

All drivers need to watch out for pedestrians, but in California, way too many motorists act like they own the road. The result is often a devastating pedestrian accident that causes severe injury or death.

Despite campaigns to promote walking as a way to get to work, school, or just get in some good exercise, too many drivers fail to realize they're sharing the road with pedestrians. As a result, people are getting hit by cars in California at an alarming rate.

## California Leads the Nation in Pedestrian Deaths

Crash data shows that no state has more pedestrian deaths than California. According to the California Office of Traffic Safety:

- Almost 900 pedestrians died on California roadways in 2018
- More than 14,000 people were injured in pedestrian accidents in 2018
- From 2014 to 2018, pedestrian deaths increased by 26%
- Between 2009 and 2018, about 7,500 pedestrians died in California

While drivers and pedestrians each need to do their part to put a stop to this troubling trend, the responsibility lies largely in the hands of motorists. Keep in mind that pedestrians don't have the same protection as those driving in enclosed motor vehicles, and when someone gets hit by a car, the injuries are often severe if not fatal.

## How Drivers Can Protect Pedestrians

At some point in the day, we're all pedestrians. That's why creating a safe walking environment should be a priority for everyone.

Here's how you can avoid causing a pedestrian accident:

- Watch out for pedestrians at all times, even if there aren't any nearby crosswalks.
- Yield to pedestrians in crosswalks and stop further back so that motorists in other lanes can see people crossing the road. If you see a vehicle stopped near a crosswalk, do not pass. There could be pedestrians crossing that you can't see.
- Use extra caution and look out for pedestrians in hard-to-see conditions, such as at night or in severe weather.
- Always obey the speed limit and be ready to stop when making a turn or otherwise approaching a sidewalk. Be careful in school zones, near playgrounds, and in neighborhoods where more children are present.
- Avoid distractions. Texting and driving is particularly dangerous (and illegal), even if you're only glancing at your phone for a few seconds. In that brief time, a person could enter the roadway without you noticing them.
- Don't drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Use extreme caution when backing up, especially in parking lots.

If you were hit by a car in the Bay Area, you have the right to pursue compensation for your losses—and we can help. Our personal injury attorneys have the knowledge, experience, and resources to handle every aspect of your claim, and we would be honored to talk to you about your potential legal case. Give us a call to see how we can help you. We proudly serve clients in Walnut Creek, Antioch, and throughout the Bay Area.



# Safe Bicycling Tips from the City of Walnut Creek

The East Bay features ideal weather and scenic routes for bicyclists, so it shouldn't come as a surprise to anyone that we have an enthusiastic community of cyclists in Walnut Creek. And while it's great to see more riders enjoying the outdoors, it's important for drivers and cyclists to prioritize safety.

Under California law, cyclists have the same rights as motorists and must follow the same rules of the road. That means obeying all traffic signs and signals, riding with traffic, not swerving in and out of traffic, safe lane changes, using hand signals, and yielding to pedestrians.

To promote safety and help prevent bicycle accidents, the City of Walnut Creek offers the following safety tips:

- Make sure your bicycle is the right size for you.
- Ensure your bicycle is safe by periodically checking the tire pressure, adjusting the brakes, and replacing any worn-out parts or components. Your bicycle should also have lights/reflectors for nighttime riding.
- Wear a helmet that fits.
- Never use headphones or earbuds.
- Keep a lookout for hazards like road construction, sewer grates, tree branches, glass, and other debris. Use extra caution when riding on uneven or slick pavement.
- Be ready to brake in case you need to stop suddenly. Give yourself more time to brake in wet conditions.
- Obey the speed limit. On multi-use trails, the speed limit is typically 15 mph.

In Walnut Creek, cyclists under 16 years old are allowed to ride on sidewalks, except in business districts. Adults may ride on sidewalks only if they are signed as a bicycle path.

## Talk to a bicycle accident attorney today

There's only so much a cyclist can do to avoid getting hit by a car. Ultimately, it only takes one reckless driver to cause a bicycle accident that leaves you injured, in pain, and facing mounting medical bills.

At Clancy & Diaz, LLP, we know how to hold negligent drivers accountable and aggressively advocate for the legal rights of injured riders. The costs associated with a bicycle accident can be substantial, and the insurance companies know this. That's why, in cases involving injured cyclists, it's common for insurance adjusters to delay, downplay, or deny valid injury claims.

Don't let them play games with your health and wellbeing. Let our personal injury attorneys fight for every dollar you deserve. To see how we can help you, contact us today for a free consultation. We have offices in Walnut Creek and Antioch.

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### *Severe Injuries Are Common in Stairway Accidents*

#### Our Attorneys Can Review Your Case for Free

If you were injured in a stairway accident, you need to do two things. First, seek immediate medical attention. Even if you don't have any noticeable pain or symptoms, your adrenaline could be masking a severe injury. It's important to get a proper diagnosis, and it's important to create a record of your injuries to protect your legal rights.

Next, talk to an attorney about your legal options. At Clancy & Diaz, LLP, our personal injury attorneys understand what it takes to build a winning case in California. We've got experience successfully handling cases involving stairway accidents, and we will leave no stone unturned to help you recover the compensation you're entitled to. If you were injured in the Bay Area, give us a call to schedule a free consultation.

Call us to learn more about how we can help you with your potential legal case.