CLANCY & DIAZ
PERSONAL INJURY ATTORNEYS

October 2026 Edition

The Hidden Dangers of Parking Lots and Garages

Why one of the most ordinary spaces you cross every day is also one of the most overlooked sources of serious injury



You Expect the Store to Be Safe. What About the Space Between Your Car and the Door?

Most people don't think of a parking lot as a place where serious injuries happen. But parking lots and garages produce a steady stream of premises liability and negligence claims across Northern California.

Parking lots combine moving vehicles, pedestrians, uneven surfaces, and often minimal supervision, all in the same small space. When property owners fail to maintain or monitor these areas properly, the people using them are the ones who pay for it.

Slip and Fall Hazards Hide in Plain Sight

Parking lots take a beating from weather, traffic, and time, and it shows. Covered garages bring their own problems, with dim lighting that hides curbs and uneven transitions between levels.

- **Cracked and Uneven Pavement:** Potholes, buckled asphalt, and crumbling curbs create trip hazards that are easy to miss, especially at night.
- **Oil Slicks and Fluid Leaks:** Vehicles can leak fluid, and an unaddressed spill can turn a parking space into a slip hazard within hours.
- **Poor Lighting in Covered Garages:** Burned-out bulbs and shadowed corners make it hard to see curbs, wheel stops, and pooling water in time to avoid them.
- **Missing or Damaged Wheel Stops:** Broken concrete stops and unmarked curbs cause falls that a simple repair could have prevented.

When these hazards are left unaddressed, they can cause preventable injuries.

When Vehicles and Pedestrians Share the Same Space

Parking lots put cars and people on foot within a few feet of each other. Drivers hunting for an open space are frequently distracted and moving too fast. Other factors can also increase the risk of a collision.

- **Blind Corners and Ramps:** Garage ramps and tight turns limit visibility in both directions, giving drivers and pedestrians little time to react.
- **Backing Out Without a Clear View:** Reversing out of a space is one of the most common ways pedestrians are struck in parking lots.
- **No Marked Pedestrian Walkways:** Lots without designated walking paths force people to cross through active traffic lanes with no protection.

Even at low speeds, a vehicle striking a pedestrian can cause serious injuries.

Poorly Monitored Areas Invite a Different Kind of Danger

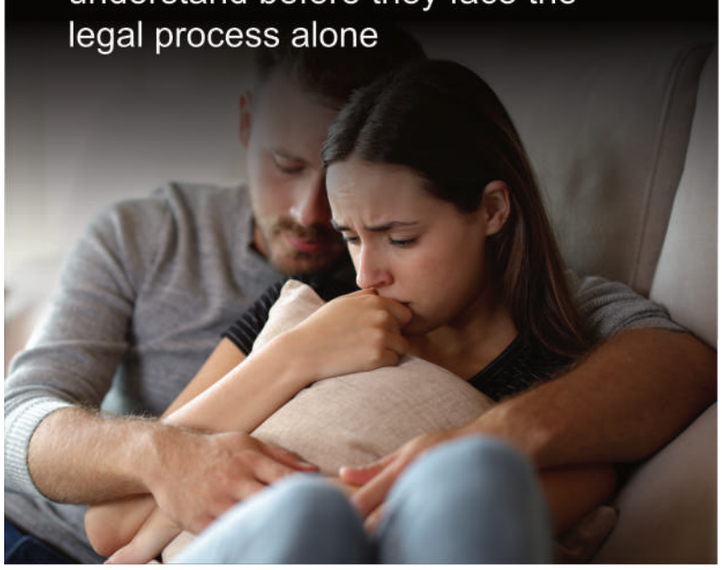
Parking lots put cars and people on foot within a few feet of each other. Drivers hunting for an open space are frequently distracted and moving too fast. Other factors can also increase the risk of a collision.

- **Inadequate Lighting and Blind Spots:** Dark corners and unlit stairwells give criminals cover and leave visitors with no way to see trouble coming.
- **No Working Security Cameras:** Cameras that are broken, disconnected, or aimed at the wrong area do nothing to deter crime or capture what happened.
- **Ignoring a History of Crime on the Property:** Prior police reports of assaults or robberies on site can establish that an owner had notice of the danger and did nothing.

Continued On Page 4

The Top 5 Things Families Need to Know About Wrongful Death Claims in California

What grieving families should understand before they face the legal process alone



A Loss That Should Never Have Happened

Losing a family member because of someone else's negligence is devastating, and the legal process that follows can make the situation even more difficult. Attorney Pete Clancy has guided Northern California families through wrongful death claims for years. Here are the five things he makes sure every family understands before they take their first step.

1 Who Is Legally Eligible to File a Claim

California limits who can bring a wrongful death claim. The surviving spouse, domestic partner, and children have the first right to file. If none exist, that right passes to whoever would inherit under California's intestate succession laws, which can include parents or siblings.

A personal representative of the estate can also file on the family's behalf, and in some cases, stepchildren or others who depended on the deceased financially may qualify too. Sorting out exactly who has standing is one of the first things an attorney needs to confirm, since filing without it can delay or jeopardize the claim.

2 Damages Go Far Beyond Funeral and Burial Costs

Many families assume a wrongful death claim only covers the immediate expenses of a funeral. In reality, California law allows families to recover for the full scope of what they lost.

- **Loss of Financial Support:** The income and benefits the deceased would have provided over the course of a working life.
- **Loss of Household Contributions:** The value of services the deceased provided, from childcare to home maintenance.
- **Loss of Care, Comfort, and Guidance:** Compensation for the loss of the deceased's love, companionship, and guidance to a surviving spouse and children.
- **Loss of Gifts or Benefits:** Financial gifts, inheritances, or benefits the family reasonably expected to receive.

These categories require looking years into a future that will never happen, which is exactly why they're so easy to undervalue without help.

3 California Gives Families Two Years, but the Clock Doesn't Always Run the Same Way

Families generally have two years from the date of death to file a wrongful death claim under California Code of Civil Procedure Section 335.1. That deadline shifts in certain cases: claims involving medical malpractice usually must be filed within one year of when the death was discovered, and claims against a government agency require a formal claim within six months. Missing any of these deadlines can permanently bar recovery, no matter how strong the case is.

4 The Full Value of These Claims Is Almost Always Underestimated Without an Attorney

Insurance companies use formulas built to minimize payouts. Capturing the full picture – the decedent's earning trajectory, the benefits they would have provided, the years of guidance a child lost – often takes economists, vocational experts, and a legal team that knows how to present it.

5 Insurance Companies Move Fast, Sometimes Before a Family Has Had Time to Grieve

Insurers know a grieving family is more likely to accept an early offer just to bring things to a close. That first offer is rarely close to full value, and once it's accepted, the case is over. Attorney Pete Clancy has seen this pattern enough to know that patience protects families far better than a quick check does.

Clancy & Diaz, LLP Is Here for Your Family

No amount of compensation replaces the person your family lost, but pursuing a wrongful death claim can provide the financial security your family needs to move forward and hold the responsible party accountable. There are no upfront costs and no legal fees of any kind unless we recover compensation for your family. Give us a call or contact us online for a free consultation.

UP NEXT

What to Do in the Days After a Serious Accident, Before You Talk to Insurance

What to Do in the Days After a Serious Accident, Before You Talk to Insurance



The decisions made in the first hours and days after a crash can shape a case for years to come

The Insurance Company Isn't Waiting for You to Feel Better

The hours and days after a serious accident matter more than most people realize. While an injured person focuses on getting medical care and fixing their car, the insurance company on the other side is already building its file, and its priorities aren't the same as yours.

What the Insurance Company Is Doing While You're Still in Shock

Within hours of a serious crash, the at-fault driver's insurer typically assigns an adjuster, pulls the police report, and starts calculating what the claim might cost them. Adjusters call injured victims within a day or two to try to get a recorded statement before the full extent of an injury is known.

STEP ONE:
Get Medical Care Immediately, Even If You Feel Fine

Adrenaline masks pain for hours after a crash, which is why so many serious injuries don't fully surface until the next day. Seeing a doctor immediately gets an injury properly diagnosed and treated, and it creates a medical record that connects the injury directly to the accident.

STEP TWO:
Document Everything Before It Disappears

Evidence from an accident scene doesn't last. Skid marks fade, vehicles get repaired, and surveillance footage is often overwritten within days.

- **Photograph the Scene:** Vehicle damage, road conditions, skid marks, and any visible injuries should all be photographed as soon as possible.
- **Get Witness Information:** Names and phone numbers of anyone who saw the crash can be difficult or impossible to track down later.
- **Request the Police Report:** An official report establishes a contemporaneous record of what happened and who was involved.
- **Preserve Vehicle Damage:** Photograph the vehicle before repairs begin, since repair estimates and damage photos are often used as evidence.

STEP THREE:
Be Careful What You Say, and Where You Say It

Politely decline to give a recorded statement to the other driver's insurance company. It's not refusing to cooperate. It simply means not providing information before you understand how it might be used. And be careful with social media. A single photo or a comment about feeling fine can be taken out of context and used to argue an injury was not that serious.

STEP FOUR:
Understand What You're Being Asked to Sign

Insurance companies sometimes ask injured victims to sign broad medical authorization forms, giving the adjuster access to a person's entire medical history, not just records tied to the crash. Others offer a quick settlement. But once a release is signed and a settlement accepted, the case is closed, even if the injury turns out to be far worse than it first appeared.

STEP FIVE:
Talk to an Attorney Before You Talk to the Adjuster

An experienced attorney can deal with the insurance company directly, so an injured person isn't left navigating these tactics alone while trying to recover. That one decision, made early, often determines whether a claim reflects the full value of what happened.

Clancy & Diaz, LLP Is Ready to Help

The steps taken in the days after a serious accident can make the difference between a claim that's fully valued and one that's settled for far less than it's worth. Our attorneys know the tactics insurance companies use, and we know how to fight back.

We offer a free consultation, and you pay nothing unless we recover compensation on your behalf. Give us a call or contact us online before you talk to the insurance company.

CLANCY & DIAZ
PERSONAL INJURY ATTORNEYS

Contact Us For a Free Consultation

1575 Treat Boulevard
Suite 212
Walnut Creek, CA
94598
(925) 835-7500

2006 A Street
Suite 223
Antioch, CA
94509
(925) 667-3659

1060 Grant Street
Suite 3B
Benicia, CA
94510
(707) 418-3809

1210 Central Blvd.
Suite 123
Brentwood, CA
94513
925-365-7812

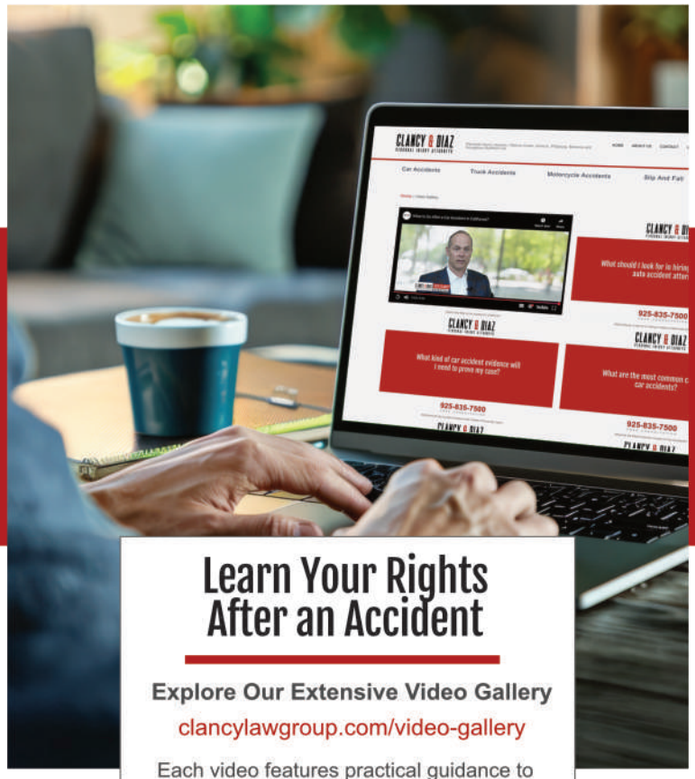
420 Railroad Avenue
Suite 210
Pittsburg, CA
94565
(925) 568-8707



The Hidden Dangers of Parking Lots and Garages

SEE PAGE 1

This publication is intended to educate the general public about personal injury and other issues. It is for information purposes only and is not intended to be legal advice. Prior to acting on any information contained here, you should seek and retain competent counsel. The information in this newsletter may be freely copied and distributed as long as the newsletter is copied in its entirety.



Learn Your Rights After an Accident

Explore Our Extensive Video Gallery

clancylawgroup.com/video-gallery

Each video features practical guidance to help you understand your rights and what steps to take after a crash.

Continued From Page 1

The Hidden Dangers of Parking Lots and Garages

Why one of the most ordinary spaces you cross every day is also one of the most overlooked sources of serious injury

These cases require more investigation than a simple slip and fall, and they demand it quickly.

Why These Cases Are Often More Complicated Than They Look

A parking lot rarely has just one responsible party. The property owner, a management company, a third-party security contractor, and the businesses that lease space on the property can all share some degree of responsibility.

Our attorneys know how to investigate these properties, preserve the evidence before it disappears, and identify every party who bears responsibility. Give us a call or contact us online for a free consultation.