

# What Happens If a Massachusetts Driver Runs a Stop Sign or Red Light and Causes an Intersection Accident?

## Our car accident lawyers can hold negligent drivers accountable

An [intersection car accident](#) in Massachusetts can shatter a normal day in seconds, especially if you entered the intersection expecting other drivers to follow the rules and one of them didn't. That's what makes stop sign and red light accidents in Massachusetts so frustrating. They often happen because one driver ran a red light or ignored a stop sign, resulting in a serious [car accident](#).

If you were hit in an intersection by a driver who ran a stop sign or red light in Boston or another Massachusetts city, you might think your car accident injury claim will be fairly straightforward. After all, another driver clearly broke the law and caused your collision. But car crashes involving drivers who ran a red light or stop sign can often be much more complicated than many people realize. That's why it's critical that injury victims fully understand their rights.

Our Boston car accident attorneys at the [Law Offices of Mark E. Salomone](#) understand how the legal system works when it comes to collisions involving drivers who fail to yield at a red light or stop sign. That's because we have represented countless car accident injury victims involved in such complex legal cases. As a result, we know how to build a case around Massachusetts law, physical evidence, and the way a crash actually happened.

## Why stop sign and red light crashes are often so serious

Some of the worst car crashes happen at intersections, especially when drivers ignore stop signs and red lights. That's what makes these collisions so dangerous. One vehicle is usually traveling straight through while the other suddenly enters from the side or turns across traffic. The result is often a violent T-bone crash, a chain reaction crash, or a front-end collision with enough force to cause severe injuries.

These crashes can be particularly serious for a few reasons:

- The driver with the right-of-way has little or no time to react.
- The impact often strikes the side of a vehicle, where occupants have less protection.
- The driver who ran the sign or signal may be accelerating, not braking.
- Intersections in Boston, Worcester, Springfield, and other Massachusetts cities often involve heavy traffic, pedestrians, and multiple turning movements.
- A second or third vehicle may get pulled into the collision after the first impact.

This cause-and-effect pattern matters. A driver who ignores a red light or stop sign puts their vehicle in a place where it doesn't belong. Suddenly, other drivers have to react or change course, resulting in a serious crash often with severe injuries.

### **What are common reasons why drivers don't stop at red lights or stop signs?**

Drivers usually run a red light or don't stop at a stop sign because they're behaving in a reckless or negligent manner. So why do they do it? Many drivers ignore the rules of the road and don't stop at a stop sign or red light because of:

- [Distracted driving](#), including looking at a phone, GPS, passenger, or something outside the vehicle.
- [Speeding](#), which reduces the time a driver has to notice the signal or stop safely.
- Aggressive driving, especially when a driver tries to "beat the light" before it turns red.
- Rolling through stop signs without coming to a full stop.
- [Tired driving](#), which can slow reaction time and make drivers less alert at intersections.
- [Driving under the influence](#) of alcohol, drugs, or certain medications.

These causes and many others all share one thing in common – the at-fault driver clearly caused the collision due to their reckless or negligent behavior. In a car accident claim, these details matter. They do more than describe the driver's behavior. They can help prove fault, which is important since the at-fault party often has to pay for many accident-related expenses in Massachusetts, especially in high-value injury claims or lawsuits.

### **What Massachusetts law says about stop signs and red lights**

The legal framework in these cases is usually strong, which is one reason these claims can be so important for injured people. [Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 89, Section 9](#) allows the state and local authorities to designate throughways and intersections where traffic on one or more roads must stop or yield and stop before entering the intersection or junction. That gives stop signs and yield rules their force under Massachusetts law.

[Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 89, Section 8](#) involves who has the right of way at an intersection, especially when there's a red light. Specifically, the statute addresses traffic control signals and requires drivers facing a steady red signal to stop before entering the crosswalk or intersection. The statute also explains limited situations in which a driver may turn right on red, or in some cases left from one one-way street to another one-way street, but only after stopping and yielding the right-of-way to pedestrians and other traffic proceeding as directed by the signal.

In plain English, a red light means stop, and even a permitted turn on red doesn't let a driver cut off people who already have the right-of-way. That matters because a lot of intersection crashes occur due to drivers who treat traffic controls like loose suggestions. The law doesn't.

### **Who is usually at fault in a Massachusetts stop sign crash?**

In many stop sign cases, the driver who failed to stop is the main at-fault party. That driver had the duty to stop and wait until it was safe to enter the intersection. If the driver rolled through, failed to stop completely, or entered when traffic was already coming, that failure often becomes the central reason the crash happened.

For example, imagine you are driving straight through an intersection in Worcester where your road is the throughway. Another driver on a side street blows through a stop sign and slams into the side of your vehicle. The other driver may say the sign was hard to see or claim they thought they had enough time. That does not change the basic issue: the stop sign existed to prevent that exact collision.

Other factors that can strengthen fault against the driver who ran a stop sign can include:

- The crash happened on the through road where the injured driver had the right-of-way.
- The at-fault driver entered from a side street controlled by a stop sign.
- Witnesses saw the other driver roll through or never stop at all.
- Vehicle damage shows the at-fault driver entered the intersection at speed.
- There were no weather or visibility issues serious enough to excuse the failure to stop.

A Massachusetts car accident attorney often uses these facts to show that the collision didn't happen by accident. It happened because one driver ignored the basic traffic rules of the road.

### **Who is usually at fault in a Massachusetts red light crash?**

Red light cases often follow the same logic, but the facts can get contested faster. That's because drivers often try to blur the timing. The at-fault driver may say the light "just changed." The insurer may argue the injured driver sped up on a yellow. These cases can turn into a fight over a matter of seconds.

Still, the legal duty is clear. A driver facing a steady red light must stop before entering the crosswalk or intersection, with only narrow exceptions for certain turns after stopping and yielding. If a driver enters on red and causes a collision with traffic lawfully proceeding on green, that is often strong evidence of negligence. Negligence is the legal term for failing to use reasonable care. In a car accident case, it usually means the other driver broke a safety rule and caused your injuries.

For example, a driver heading down Route 9 near Framingham may try to beat a red light by speeding up and crashing into a vehicle lawfully entering the intersection on a green light. The at-fault driver may have seen the yellow and gambled. The law does not reward that gamble when it injures someone else. Instead, it punishes the at-fault driver for speeding and causing the collision.

### **What evidence usually proves fault in an intersection crash?**

Intersection crashes are often won or lost on evidence. That's because drivers rarely admit they ran a stop sign or red light. Instead, they tell a story that tries to blur what happened. A Massachusetts car accident lawyer often has to prove fault by putting together the evidence piece by piece.

Some of the most useful evidence in these cases includes:

- Your official [Massachusetts police crash report](#) filled out by the responding police officer.
- Witness statements from drivers, passengers, pedestrians, or nearby workers.
- Traffic camera or intersection camera footage, if available.
- Surveillance footage from nearby businesses, gas stations, or homes.
- Photos of skid marks, debris patterns, and vehicle resting positions.
- Vehicle damage showing the angle and point of impact.
- Event data from the vehicles, sometimes called black box data.
- The intersection layout, including stop signs, signal placement, and lane markings.

For example, side damage to your vehicle combined with front-end damage to the other car may support a classic failure-to-yield or red-light entry pattern. Skid marks may show you tried to brake but had no real chance to avoid the crash. A nearby business camera may capture the entire sequence. That's why early investigation matters so much. Evidence disappears faster than many people realize.

### **Can the insurance company still try to blame you for causing the crash?**

Yes, and that happens often. Even when the other driver clearly ran a stop sign or red light, the at-fault driver's insurance company may still argue that you were partly responsible. They may claim you were speeding, distracted, or failed to react in time.

Massachusetts follows a modified comparative negligence rule. That means an injured person can still recover damages (legal term for compensation for financial losses) as long as that person is not more than 50 percent at fault. However, that person's financial recovery would be reduced by the injured person's share of fault.

So if the at-fault driver's lawyer can shift enough blame onto you, the value of your claim can drop sharply, and if they push that fault over the 50 percent threshold, recovery can be barred. This is not specific to one traffic statute, but it is one of the biggest reasons intersection cases need to be built carefully from the start.

Here is how insurers often try to create that argument:

- They say you entered the intersection too fast.
- They argue you should have seen the other driver sooner.
- They suggest you were distracted by a phone or passenger.
- They claim the light was changing and both drivers "took a chance."
- They try to use incomplete evidence to turn a clear case into a shared-fault case.

That is where strong evidence and a strong legal strategy make a real difference.

### **What injuries are common in stop sign and red light crashes?**

These crashes often cause serious injuries because drivers hit other vehicles with direct force and little warning. A driver who runs a stop sign or red light often crashes into the side of another vehicle, and side-impact protection is not as strong as front-end protection. In other cases, the injured person may brace at the last second and suffer major neck, back, shoulder, or head trauma. Common car accident intersection injuries include:

- [Concussions](#) and traumatic brain injuries.
- [Whiplash and serious neck injuries](#).
- Herniated discs and [back injuries](#).
- Broken ribs, arms, legs, or hips.
- Shoulder injuries from bracing or impact.
- Internal injuries caused by side-impact force.
- Knee and ankle injuries from lower-body intrusion into the cabin.

A crash in an intersection in downtown Boston, on Belmont Street in Worcester, or near a busy suburban junction on Route 1 in Foxboro can look ordinary in a police summary and still leave someone with injuries that interfere with work, sleep, family life, and basic movement for months or years. Don't underestimate the seriousness of your intersection accident.

### **What should you do after a Massachusetts intersection accident?**

Your first priority should always be your health. Get checked right away by a doctor, even if you think your pain will fade. Some serious injuries do not show their full symptoms immediately,

especially head injuries, soft tissue injuries, and back injuries. Having a doctor diagnose your intersection accident injury also serves another important purpose – your diagnosis creates a medical record linking your injury to your accident.

After that, some practical steps that can help protect your claim:

- Report the crash and make sure police create a report.
- Take photos of the vehicles, the intersection, and any visible signs or signals if you can do so safely.
- Get names and contact information for witnesses.
- Write down what direction you were traveling, what signal or sign controlled your lane, and what you saw the other driver do.
- Avoid giving the insurance company a recorded statement before speaking with a lawyer.
- Get follow-up medical care and follow all treatment recommendations.
- Contact a Massachusetts car accident lawyer before video footage disappears or the other driver's story hardens.

These are not just paperwork steps. They can help shape whether your claim stays strong or gets undermined early by aggressive insurance companies looking to save money by denying your car accident injury claim.

### **What if the crash also triggered Massachusetts no-fault issues?**

Massachusetts is a no-fault car insurance state for initial injury benefits, which means your Personal Injury Protection (PIP) coverage may pay certain medical bills and related losses first, regardless of who caused the crash. But that does not mean fault stops mattering. If your injuries are serious enough, you may still pursue a claim against the at-fault driver for pain and suffering and other damages.

Under [Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 231, Section 6D](#), an injured person can recover compensation for pain and suffering in a motor vehicle case if reasonable and necessary medical expenses exceed \$2,000, or if the injuries involve death, fracture, loss of a body member, permanent and serious disfigurement, or certain losses of sight or hearing. So once your case crosses that threshold, the driver who caused the intersection crash may be exposed to a much larger injury claim. That's another reason fault matters so much. It affects much more than the crash report. It affects how your whole case may move forward.

### **Why should I hire a Massachusetts car accident lawyer after an intersection crash?**

These cases are rarely as simple as they should be once the at-fault driver's insurance company gets involved. A driver runs a stop sign or red light, causes a violent crash, but then the story starts changing. The insurer starts questioning timing, speed, visibility, and blame. Meanwhile, you're trying to recover from your injuries and keep your life together.

At the Law Offices of Mark E. Salomone, we know what it takes to win these cases. Our Massachusetts car accident lawyers know how to investigate stop sign crashes and red light collisions, secure intersection footage, work with witness testimony, and build a claim that connects the traffic violation directly to your injuries and financial losses. We also know how quickly insurers try to minimize the harm caused by these collisions, especially when they think the injured person is overwhelmed.

If another driver ran a stop sign or red light and crashed into you, don't let the insurance company turn a clear traffic violation into a confusing blame game. [Contact us](#) and schedule a free case evaluation with a skilled Massachusetts car accident attorney. We can answer your questions, explain your rights, investigate what happened, and fight to hold the at-fault driver accountable for the harm your crash caused. We have offices in 10 locations conveniently located throughout Massachusetts.