

# Accident Reconstruction: why the police's investigation of an accident isn't enough

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-- According to National Council for Safety estimates, the number of traffic-related fatalities in the United States for 2016 was 40,200. This disturbing statistic shows that, despite campaigns advocating for seat belts and against distracted driving, and despite new cars designed to take evasive action on their own, serious automobile accidents continue to happen, and Americans continue to die as a result.

The first responders to a serious traffic accident are the EMTs, whose job it is to save lives. They are followed by local or state police, depending on where the accident took place. The police officers' job is to ascertain whether any laws were broken in the course of the accident. Speeding, breaking traffic laws, violating truck drivers' hours-of-service limits, and driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs are all frequent causes of accidents, and all are criminal offenses. If a fatality occurs as a result of one of these accidents, charges of vehicular homicide can be brought. When necessary, law enforcement makes arrests at the scene of the accident.

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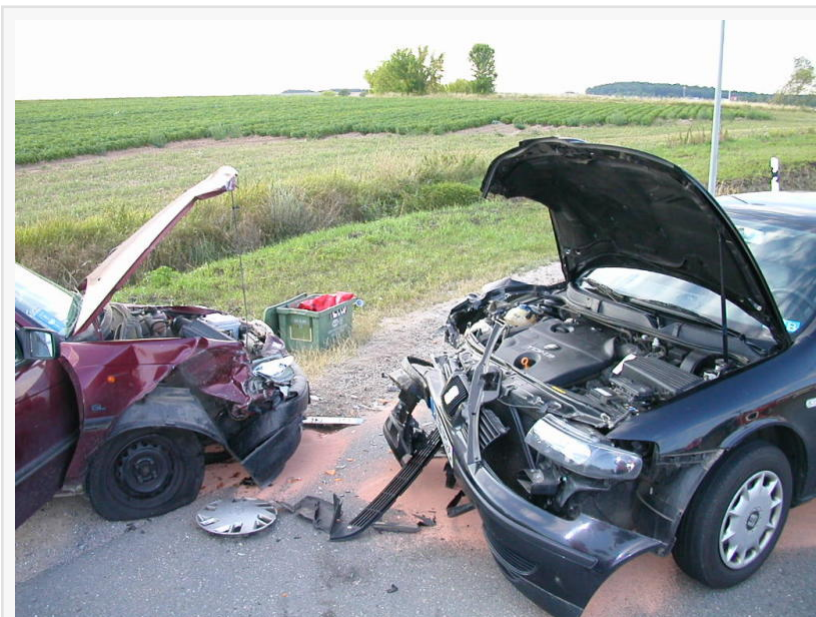
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*John A. DeMarr PI*

The scene of the accident is then systematically examined by the police. Using all the forensic methods at their disposal, their investigation continues their search for evidence of any criminal action connected with the accident. That is generally the full extent of their investigation.

Therefore, an accident investigation by the police does not answer every question an accident poses. The absence of criminal liability in an accident does not explain how the

accident occurred, or whether any civil liability was involved. This is where the private investigator enters the picture. By performing a thorough [accident reconstruction](#), he can determine what



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happened, how it happened, who was at fault, and, often, whether the accident could have been prevented.

Accident reconstruction is nearly a science onto itself. The investigator employs a full variety of techniques in order to ascertain the truth. He examines the scene of the accident and the vehicles involved, and collects statements from any witnesses who may have been present at the time of the accident.

A great deal can be gleaned from the careful examination of the vehicles involved in a collision. One can determine whether a mechanical failure was involved, and, if so, whether the driver would have been able to prevent the failure (for example, by making required repairs to the vehicle.) The physics of the impact have also to be considered: the damage sustained by a vehicle in a crash can reveal such important details as the angle and speed of impact. There is an adage that damage cannot be altered; it constitutes some of the most important evidence in an accident reconstruction.

The scene of the accident is then examined, with the investigator seeking to reconstruct exactly the events leading up to the accident. The point of impact, the final resting positions of the vehicles, and such physical evidence as skid and gouge marks and the condition of the point at which the vehicles came to rest all tell their own parts of the story. Also needing to come under the investigator's scrutiny are factors like the functioning of traffic signals and even the position of the sun at the time of the accident (as it could have temporarily blinded one of the drivers.) Surveyors' equipment and other technological devices are often brought into play. All this evidence must be carefully gathered and evaluated.

The investigator examining the scene of an accident must also be able to work around the problem of evidence that was disturbed in the course of the initial rescue efforts. The EMTs job is to save lives, not preserve evidence. Evidence may also have become altered as a result of the police's investigative efforts. For these and other reasons, the private investigator should be brought onto an accident reconstruction case as soon as possible.

The reconstruction of an accident by a private investigator can be of immense benefit to those involved. In addition to providing the answer to nagging questions, the investigator can gather evidence that will be admissible in the event of a court proceeding. Civil liability suits are frequently decided on the basis of a private investigator's reconstruction of an accident. An investigator can also provide the necessary evidence to exonerate someone who was found to be at fault. Particularly in the event of criminal charges, the importance of a private investigator's evidence cannot be overstated.

At John A. DeMarr PI we perform extremely thorough accident reconstructions, employing all the most modern techniques for determining how a collision came to happen. If you were involved in an automobile accident, and feel that a [private investigation](#) into the accident could be of benefit to you, do not hesitate to [contact us](#) at 877-433-6277. In the event of any serious accident, it's better to know.

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