

Houston Ranks #1 in America for Memorial Day Traffic Deaths: Lawyer Reveals the 5 Truck Mistakes Killing Texans

Houston and Dallas rank #1 and #2 nationally for Memorial Day traffic deaths. Houston attorney shares the 5 truck-driving mistakes every Texan must avoid.

HOUSTON, TX, UNITED STATES, May 21, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- With AAA projecting a record 39.1 million Americans on the road this Memorial Day weekend, two Texas cities carry a grim distinction. According to an analysis of National Highway Traffic Safety Administration fatality data from 2018 through 2022, reported by ABC13 Houston, KHOU, and other Texas news outlets, Houston ranked first among all U.S. cities for Memorial Day weekend traffic deaths, averaging 20 fatalities per holiday period. Dallas ranked second at 19. Texas as a whole led the nation with an average of 218 Memorial Day fatalities per year over that five-year span.

Sgt. Pike, founding attorney at [Texas Truck Accident Lawyer](#) and a former U.S. Army Special Forces operator, is urging Texas drivers to take specific precautions before sharing the road with 18-wheelers this weekend.

"Most people think holiday crashes are random. They are not. The patterns repeat every single year, and the same handful of mistakes show up again and again in Texas commercial vehicle wrecks. Drivers who understand those patterns get home alive. The ones who do not are the cases that end up on my desk." — Sgt. Pike, Texas Truck Accident Lawyer

The Numbers Behind Memorial Day Weekend on Texas Roads

A peer-reviewed analysis of NHTSA's Fatality Analysis Reporting System data, published in BMC Research Notes, found that all U.S. demographic groups face elevated motor vehicle fatality risk during Memorial Day weekend compared to non-holiday periods, with Saturday being the deadliest day. The National Safety Council reports that 38% of Memorial Day weekend traffic fatalities involve an alcohol-impaired driver, one of the highest rates among major holidays. Texas data sharpens the picture.

- Texas leads the nation. Texas averaged 218 Memorial Day weekend traffic fatalities per year from 2018 through 2022, more than any other state. California averaged 181 (NHTSA fatality data analysis reported by ABC13 Houston and KHOU).
- Houston #1, Dallas #2. Across that same five-year period, Houston led all U.S. cities with an

average of 20 Memorial Day weekend traffic deaths per year. Dallas ranked second at 19.

- Texas leads in truck fatalities. Texas recorded 546 fatal commercial motor vehicle crashes and 608 deaths in 2024, more than any other state, according to Texas Department of Transportation data reported by the Texas Tribune.
- Saturday night is the deadliest window. NHTSA data analysis reported by Texas news outlets found nationwide fatal Memorial Day crashes are most likely to occur between 11 p.m. and midnight on the Saturday before the holiday.
- Young drivers are disproportionately at risk. 42% of Memorial Day weekend traffic deaths were people between ages 16 and 35 (NHTSA data, as reported by KXAN Austin).

The 5 Mistakes That Get Texans Killed Around 18-Wheelers (And How to Avoid Them)

Each of these corresponds to a recurring fatality pattern in commercial vehicle crashes.

1. Driving in the No-Zones.

Commercial trucks have four blind spots: directly in front, directly behind, and along both sides. The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration notes the right-side blind spot is the largest. If you cannot see the truck driver in their side mirror, the driver cannot see you. Pass on the left, pass quickly, and do not linger alongside an 18-wheeler.

2. Following too closely or letting a truck follow too close.

A fully loaded 18-wheeler can weigh up to 80,000 pounds and needs nearly the length of two football fields to stop at highway speed, according to FMCSA. If a truck is behind you, give yourself an escape route. If you are behind a truck, you cannot see what is ahead of it.

3. Cutting in front of a truck and then slowing down.

FMCSA explicitly warns against this: never quickly cut in front of a truck, because doing so reduces the truck's safe stopping distance. Drivers who merge in front of an 18-wheeler and brake leave the truck no room to stop. In severe cases, the smaller vehicle is pulled underneath the trailer in what investigators call an underride collision. Once you merge, accelerate.

4. Driving during the worst traffic windows.

INRIX, which provides traffic data for AAA, forecasts the heaviest congestion this weekend on Thursday and Friday between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. and again Monday afternoon. The Houston-to-Austin route via I-10 West and SR-71 West is projected to see travel times 56% longer than normal on Friday around 3 p.m. Travel early morning or late evening when commercial traffic thins.

5. Assuming the other driver is sober.

Nearly four in ten Memorial Day weekend traffic deaths involve an alcohol-impaired driver, according to the National Safety Council. Defensive driving means leaving room for the mistakes other people are about to make. Stay off your phone, keep both hands on the wheel, and trust your instincts when something looks wrong.

If the Worst Happens: The First 48 Hours Decide Everything

Trucking companies dispatch rapid-response teams to crash scenes, often within hours. Their investigators are trained to gather evidence that protects the carrier. What victims do in the first 48 hours often determines whether they recover full compensation or a fraction of it.

- Call 911 immediately. Get a police report on the scene. A formal crash report is the foundation of any later claim.
- Photograph everything. The truck, the trailer, DOT numbers, license plates, road conditions, skid marks, and your own injuries. Do it before vehicles are moved.
- Get medical attention even if you feel fine. Adrenaline masks injuries. Internal bleeding and traumatic brain injuries often present hours later. A documented medical visit creates a record.
- Do not give a recorded statement to the trucking company's insurer. Their adjusters call within 24 hours and ask questions designed to limit liability. You are not required to answer.
- Preserve the truck's electronic data. Modern 18-wheelers record speed, braking, and hours-of-service data. This evidence can be overwritten on a routine maintenance cycle. A demand letter from an attorney puts a legal hold on it.

About Sgt. Pike and Texas Truck Accident Lawyer

Sgt. Pike is a former U.S. Army Special Forces operator who served as a Green Beret before entering law practice. He represents catastrophic injury and wrongful death victims across Texas, with a focus on commercial vehicle and 18-wheeler cases. Texas Truck Accident Lawyer has recovered more than \$750 million on behalf of clients.

Texas Truck Accident Lawyer is based at 2100 West Loop South, Suite 818, Houston, TX 77027, and serves clients throughout Texas. Consultations are free. The firm works on contingency, meaning clients pay nothing unless the firm recovers compensation.

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