

Holding Automakers Accountable

Lieff Cabraser represents clients nationwide who have suffered serious injuries as well as the families of loved ones who have died due to unsafe cars, SUVs, and other vehicles.



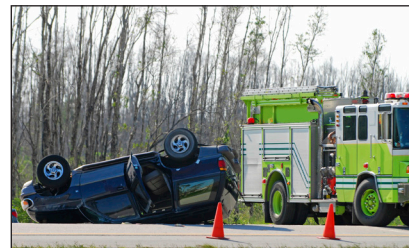
General Motors Ignition Switch Defect

We serve as plaintiffs' Co-Lead Counsel in the federal court cases brought against GM for manufacturing cars with a defective ignition switch. Without warning, the defect can cause the car's engine and electrical system to shut off, disabling the air bags. For over a decade, GM was aware of the defect and failed to inform government safety regulators and the public. An estimated 300 persons died in crashes where the front air bags did not deploy.



Toyota Sudden Unintended Acceleration

We serve as Co-Lead Counsel for the plaintiffs in the Toyota injury cases in federal court. For years, Toyota received complaints that its cars accelerated suddenly and could not be stopped by proper application of the brake. Toyota failed to incorporate within its cars a brake override system and other readily available safeguards that could have prevented unintended acceleration. Toyota has agreed to begin to settle the cases, and a settlement program is underway for our clients.



SUV Defects and Rollover Accidents

We have successfully represented families across America who lost loved ones in SUV accidents and obtained multiple seven-figure recoveries. SUVs typically have a significantly higher center of gravity than other passenger vehicles. When a driver makes a sudden turn or swerves to avoid a road obstacle, the higher center of gravity can cause the SUV to roll over. Electronic stability control systems that can prevent such accidents were developed in the 1990s, and should have been standard equipment in all SUVs by the year 2000, but millions of SUVs still on the road nevertheless lack ESC systems.

Once an SUV begins to roll over, other defects in the vehicle can make the accident deadly. These defects include insufficient roof strength (leading to roof collapse), defective door latches, seat belt defects, lack of laminated safety glass in windows, and lack of curtain airbags.

Vehicle Fires and Fuel Tank Explosions



Car makers must ensure the protection of the driver and passengers in the event of an accident, paying particular attention to preventing the fuel tank exploding or fuel spilling and catching fire. When the driver or occupants survive the crash but are killed in a post-crash fire, there should be a thorough investigation as to whether defects in the design and placement

of the fuel tank led to the fatal fire. No one should suffer a burn injury if a vehicle has been properly manufactured.

In one of the vehicle fire cases we prosecuted, we obtained a \$5.95 million recovery for our client who was severely burned following a fuel tank explosion after her car was struck in the road by another vehicle. Sharp metal brackets positioned near the fuel tank pierced and ignited the fuel tank during the collision. The complaint charged that the auto maker should not have positioned the bracket immediately behind the fuel tank.

Park to Reverse Transmission Defect



The “park to reverse” or “false park” defect is a flaw in a vehicle’s transmission in which it appears that the vehicle is in park. However, the transmission is neither in park nor in hydraulic reverse. Instead, it is in an unstable position between the two gears. Slight movements can cause the vehicle to self-shift into reverse.

Auto manufacturers have refused to accept legal responsibility for these injuries. Instead, they regularly blame the driver for the accident and deny their vehicle is defective.

In Louisiana in 2008, we prosecuted a wrongful death case against Chrysler involving a 1999 Jeep Grand Cherokee. The jury found that the park to reverse defect in the Jeep’s transmission played a substantial factor in Collin Guillot’s death and the severe injuries suffered by his parents and sister, and awarded \$7.2 million in damages. One year earlier in California, we obtained a \$54 million verdict against Chrysler in another wrongful death case based on the park to reverse defect. The judgment included a \$50 million award of punitive damages.



For a free, confidential, no-obligation review of your case, please contact Lief Cabraser attorney Fabrice Vincent at 1-800-541-7358 or fvincent@lchb.com.

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