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WINTER DRIVING SAFETY AND CAR ACCIDENT PREVENTION ON ILLINOIS ROADS

Car Accident Lawyers in McHenry County

During the winter months, the risk of being involved in a **car accident** increases. According to the Federal Highway Administration, approximately 23 percent of the car accidents that occur each year are caused partially or entirely by poor weather conditions. During the 2009-2010 winter season, Illinois was one of the top 10 states for weather-related traffic fatalities.



Weather is not the only hazard one will find on the roads this winter. From November to January, thousands of holiday parties are thrown in homes and event centers across the state. When individuals drink and then take to the road, they become a danger to themselves, other drivers, and property.

If you are injured in a car accident this winter, contact an experienced personal injury attorney to learn more about your rights and options as a victim. You might be able to seek monetary compensation for your injuries.

Driving Under the Influence This Winter

In Illinois, the number of alcohol-related crashes is higher during the second half of the year than during the first. This trend starts in July with Independence Day celebrations and continues through New Year's Eve. Approximately 50 percent of the traffic fatalities that occurred on Thanksgiving day in 2011 involved alcohol. If you plan on drinking at a holiday party this winter, remember to choose a designated driver or take advantage of public transportation options.

Weather and Environmental Conditions

Driving in the winter is more difficult than driving during the warmer months of the year for various environmental reasons. Keep all of the following potential hazards in mind when you drive this winter:

- Snow on the road and beside it, making curbs and other obstacles difficult to distinguish
- Pot holes. When ice gets into the cracks in the road, it freezes and expands. This is why pot holes are more prevalent during the winter months. Driving through a pot hole can damage your tires, throw off your vehicle's alignment, and possibly cause your car to bottom out
- Ice. Patches of black ice on the roadways can make driving treacherous
- Fewer daylight hours. Longer nights mean lessened visibility on the roads and a greater chance of being involved in a collision and
- Extreme temperatures. There are many ways the cold can affect your car. Know how your car reacts to the cold before attempting to make a long or exceptionally stressful drive.

Accident Prevention

You can significantly reduce your chances of being involved in a car accident this winter by taking a few precautions before you get on the road. Keep yourself, your family, and other drivers on the road safe by doing the following:

- Drive during daylight hours if you can. In the dark, pedestrians and potential hazards are less visible.

- Use **snow tires** or chains on your vehicle. Snow tires are constructed a little bit differently from all-season tires. Their treads have higher sipe density to allow the tires to grip the road better and handle driving in snowy or icy conditions more easily. In Illinois, **tire chains** are permitted in hazardous winter weather.
- Keep your tires properly inflated. Over- and under inflated tires can make your car more difficult to handle, increase your chances of experiencing a blowout, and decrease your vehicle's efficiency. Extreme changes in temperature can cause your tires to quickly lose pressure, so be sure to always check your tire pressure and adjust the air in your tires as needed.
- Keep a safe following distance behind other vehicles. When the road is covered in ice or snow, stopping can take longer than it would take on a clear road. Always allow yourself and other drivers significant space to stop, turn, and accelerate on Illinois highways this winter.
- Drive at or below the speed limit. Speeding can increase your chances of colliding with another vehicle or stationary object. Keep control of your car by driving it within a safe speed range.

If you have been driving since the days of chokes and carburetors, you likely remember being told to idle your engine for a few minutes before driving in the cold. This is no longer necessary because modern vehicles take only 30 seconds to get their oil circulating, regardless of the temperature outside.

Contact an Experienced McHenry County Lawyer

If you are injured in a car accident this winter, **contact Botto Gilbert Lancaster, PC** at **815-338-3838** to discuss your case with one of our team's experienced personal injury attorneys. Do not accept an offer from another party involved in the accident or their insurance provider until you have discussed your case and the potential damages with a McHenry County personal injury lawyer. We are here to advocate for motorists and help car accident victims get the compensation they deserve.

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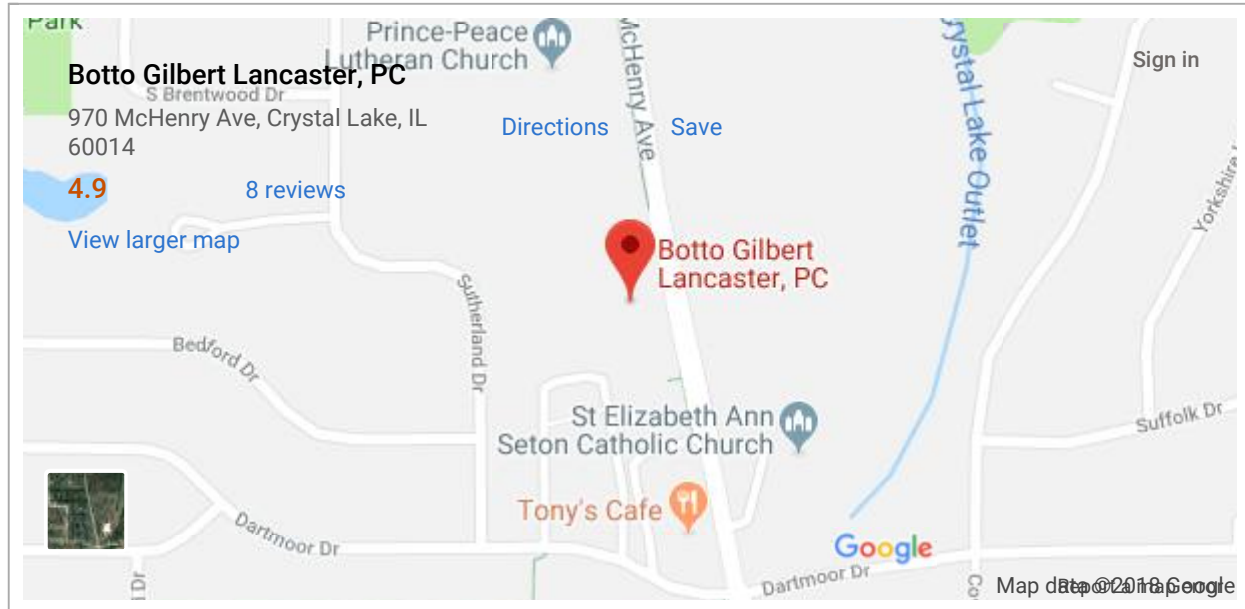
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