



CONSUMER ATTORNEYS OF CALIFORNIA

Seeking Justice for All

Driver death rate drops; litigation spurs improvements

Civil justice system has led to greater safety on the road

SACRAMENTO (Jan. 30, 2015) – A new study by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) shows a dramatic decline in the death rate of drivers, and the civil justice system has played an important role in spurring safety improvements, according to the president of Consumer Attorneys of California.

“By holding carmakers accountable for design flaws, trial lawyers and citizen juries have provided crucial incentive to correct problems and add safety features,” said CAOC president Brian D. Chase. “Many times it’s been the investigative work of attorneys that has shown manufacturers and the public just how dangerous their vehicles are.”

The [study](#) found the chance of a driver dying in a crash of a late-model vehicle has fallen by more than one-third over the last three years, and a record nine vehicle models in the 2011 model year had no driver deaths at all. As recently as eight years ago there were no models that had zero driver deaths. The IIHS says it is “striking” that six of the nine zero-death vehicles are SUVs, given that “a decade ago, SUVs had some of the highest [death] rates, due to their propensity to roll over.” The rollover death rate for 2011 model vehicles was less than a quarter of what it was for 2004 models.

“That’s an area where the civil justice system has made a huge difference,” Chase said. “Trial lawyers drew attention to shoddy designs that led to rollovers and forced vehicle makers to take responsibility for fixing them.”

Going back to the days of the Chevrolet Corvair and Ford Pinto, trial lawyers have been relentless in protecting consumers from unsafe vehicles. For more information about how civil litigation has brought about improvements in gas tanks, door latches, air bags, tires, seat belts and other vehicle elements, go to <http://tinyurl.com/CivilJusticeSafety>.

Consumer Attorneys of California is a professional organization of plaintiffs’ attorneys representing consumers seeking accountability against wrongdoers in cases involving personal injury, product liability, environmental degradation and other causes.

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