

Leaving the Scene of an Accident in Louisiana May Result in Serious Criminal and Civil Penalties

OPELOUSAS, LA, UNITED STATES, March 27, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Fleeing the scene of a vehicle accident in Louisiana is a criminal offense that can carry significant legal consequences, both in terms of criminal liability and civil exposure. Under Louisiana Revised Statute 14:100, any driver involved in a crash resulting in injury, death, or property damage is legally required to remain at the scene, provide identifying information, and offer assistance when necessary. Failing to comply with these requirements may result in misdemeanor or felony charges, depending on the circumstances.



"Leaving the scene of an accident violates state traffic laws and also opens the door to additional liability in civil claims," said [William P. Morrow](#), a lawyer with [Morrow Law Firm](#) in Opelousas. "When a driver fails to stop, that action often becomes central to any subsequent litigation, particularly when injuries are involved."

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In Louisiana, a hit-and-run offense is defined as the intentional failure of a driver to stop after being involved in a crash. The law differentiates between accidents involving

only property damage and those resulting in bodily injury or death. For property damage alone, the offense is typically charged as a misdemeanor. However, when bodily harm occurs, or if impairment by drugs or alcohol is suspected, the charge may rise to a felony level.

Criminal penalties for fleeing the scene can include fines, license suspension, probation, or imprisonment. For example, a felony hit-and-run involving serious bodily injury or death carries a penalty of up to ten years in prison and significant fines. In cases where the driver is under the influence, additional charges such as vehicular homicide or negligent injury may also apply.



Beyond criminal sanctions, a driver who leaves the scene of an accident may also face civil consequences. Courts may consider the act of fleeing as an indication of fault or liability, especially in personal injury claims. When a plaintiff alleges injury and the defendant has fled the scene, this behavior can be used to support claims of negligence or even gross misconduct.

Moreover, insurance companies may deny coverage for a driver who violates the terms of a policy by engaging in criminal activity. Many auto insurance policies contain clauses that exclude coverage for intentional acts or illegal behavior. A hit-and-run violation may trigger those exclusions, leaving the driver personally responsible for damages, legal fees, and medical costs.

Louisiana law also allows injured parties to pursue damages through the state's civil court system. These damages may include compensation for medical expenses, lost wages, property damage, and pain and suffering. In some cases, punitive damages may be considered when the conduct of the defendant demonstrates a willful disregard for the safety of others.

Uninsured and underinsured motorist (UM/UIM) coverage becomes especially relevant in hit-and-run cases where the driver is never identified. Louisiana law allows policyholders to seek compensation from their own insurer under UM/UIM provisions when the at-fault party cannot be located or does not have adequate coverage. However, these claims often require a detailed investigation and must meet strict procedural guidelines.

Law enforcement agencies treat hit-and-run incidents with urgency, particularly those involving injuries or fatalities. Investigations may involve witness interviews, surveillance footage, and forensic analysis of vehicle debris. In many instances, drivers who flee the scene are later identified through license plate recognition or tips from the public.

The consequences of fleeing are not limited to the driver. Vehicle owners may also become entangled in legal proceedings, especially if they are alleged to have allowed someone else to operate the vehicle negligently or without permission. Commercial vehicle operators may expose their employers to liability depending on the context of the crash and the use of the vehicle at the time.

In civil litigation, plaintiffs who are victims of a hit-and-run often face additional burdens when it comes to identifying the defendant and preserving evidence. It is essential that timely legal action be taken to ensure that surveillance footage, eyewitness accounts, and physical evidence are collected and preserved.

Morrow Law Firm, based in Opelousas and led by William P. Morrow, John Michael Morrow, Jr., and Stephen M. Morrow, regularly handles matters related to motor vehicle collisions and personal injury law. The firm's attorneys emphasize the importance of understanding legal rights and obligations following a crash—especially when the other party has violated traffic laws by fleeing the scene.

Understanding the statutory and procedural framework surrounding hit-and-run incidents in Louisiana is essential for both plaintiffs and defendants. Legal counsel can help assess the facts, preserve evidence, communicate with insurance carriers, and represent interests in both criminal and civil proceedings.

Drivers involved in any accident are urged to remain at the scene, contact law enforcement, and comply with legal requirements. Failing to do so can escalate a manageable situation into a complex legal battle with long-term consequences. The law in Louisiana is clear: fleeing the scene of an accident is not only unlawful but can significantly worsen a driver's legal exposure in both the criminal and civil arenas.

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