

WILENTZ

—ATTORNEYS AT LAW—

WILENTZ, GOLDMAN & SPITZER, P.A.

Memorial Day Weekend Driving in New Jersey: Why Accidents Spike and What to Know If Something Goes Wrong

Thursday, May 21, 2026

Memorial Day weekend marks the unofficial start of summer with beach trips, barbecues, and time with family. It's also one of the busiest travel times in New Jersey. Roads leading to the Jersey Shore fill up, traffic backs up on the Parkway and Turnpike, and millions of drivers are trying to get where they need to go at the same time, which can make it one of the most dangerous weekends of the year to be on the road.

Each year, car accidents increase over Memorial Day weekend due to a mix of heavy traffic, long drives, and holiday celebrations. In just a moment, a routine trip can turn into something far more serious.

Here's what makes this weekend riskier and what to keep in mind if you're involved in an accident.

Why Memorial Day Weekend is Riskier for Drivers in New Jersey

Unlike a typical weekend, Memorial Day brings a unique combination of conditions that increase the likelihood of accidents:

- Heavy volume headed to the Shore creates stop-and-go traffic and rear-end collisions
- Longer drives lead to driver fatigue, especially later in the day or at night
- Holiday gatherings increase the risk of impaired driving
- Congested highways often trigger aggressive driving and speeding between slowdowns
- Out-of-town drivers may be unfamiliar with local roads and traffic patterns

In short, Memorial Day weekend brings more cars, more pressure, and less patience on the road.

Common Memorial Day Accident Scenarios

Over the holiday weekend, certain types of accidents tend to happen more often:

- Rear-end crashes in heavy Parkway or Turnpike traffic
- Multi-vehicle accidents caused by sudden slowdowns
- Late-night crashes involving impaired or fatigued drivers
- Accidents near beach towns, events, and busy intersections

These are not unusual, and they often happen when drivers least expect it.

What People Don't Expect After a Holiday Accident

One of the biggest challenges with holiday weekend accidents is that the impact isn't always immediate. Many people:

- Feel fine at the scene, only to develop pain days later
- Wait until after the weekend to deal with medical care or insurance
- Underestimate the seriousness of their injuries

- Are contacted quickly by insurance companies before they fully understand their injuries or legal rights to attempt to cheap resolution when the true value of the case may be much higher

The timing of a holiday weekend can delay how people respond, and that can make things more complicated later.

If You're Injured, Focus on the Basics

This isn't the time to go through a long checklist, but there are a few priorities that matter:

- Get medical care, even if symptoms seem minor at first
- Document what you can, including photos and basic information
- Be cautious when speaking with insurance companies, especially early on

Taking these steps early can make a difference as things unfold after the holiday.

Tips for Safer Memorial Day Travel

While you can't control other drivers, you can reduce your own risk:

- Leave early or travel during off-peak times when possible
- Give yourself extra space in heavy traffic
- Avoid distractions and stay focused, especially in stop-and-go conditions
- Never drive under the influence and be aware of others who may be

Memorial Day weekend should be about remembering those who made the ultimate sacrifice for our country and perhaps spending time with family and friends while enjoying the start of summer. But with increased traffic and higher car accident rates, it's important to stay aware of the risks.

If you're injured in a Memorial Day car accident in New Jersey, avoid ignoring symptoms, take time before making decisions, and make sure you understand your legal options as the situation develops after the holiday.

If you or a loved one has been injured in a car accident, contact a member of our Personal Injury team at 732-352-9800 for a free case evaluation.

Attorney

- Giovanni "John" Anzalone

Practice

- Personal Injury