



McDougall Law Firm Issues Car Accident Corridor Advisory

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McDougall Law Firm, LLC has issued a car accident advisory for Beaufort County following a series of fatal and serious-injury collisions on the US-278 and US-21 corridors in 2025, addressing how South Carolina's modified comparative fault standard applies to victims of chain-reaction and head-on crashes.

The advisory is anchored by a six-car chain-reaction collision at the intersection of US Highway 278 and White Oak Circle on May 20, 2025, which killed one driver at the scene. According to the South Carolina Highway Patrol, a 2019 Ford pickup crossed into the opposing lane after rear-ending two westbound vehicles, triggering a multi-vehicle crash that killed the operator of a 2006 Chevrolet pickup and required multiple emergency transports.

Months later, on September 20, 2025, a fatal intersection crash at US Highway 278 and Sun City Boulevard in Okatie killed 81-year-old Margaret Mallet of Bluffton. According to the South Carolina Highway Patrol and the Beaufort County Coroner's Office, a 2014 Nissan Sentra traveling west on US-278 collided with a 2015

Acura traveling east at the intersection. Mallet was transported to Coastal Carolina Hospital, where she died from blunt force injuries.

The advisory also cites a fatal single-vehicle crash on US-21 at Detour Road in Beaufort on December 4, 2025. According to the South Carolina Highway Patrol, a vehicle traveling north on US-21 veered off the road and struck a tree just after 9 p.m., killing the driver at the scene. The US-21 corridor north of Beaufort has been the site of multiple serious and fatal crashes involving both single-vehicle departures and head-on collisions.

These incidents reflect a broader pattern. According to data published by the South Carolina Department of Public Safety covering October 2019 through September 2024, Beaufort County recorded 17,493 total collisions, including 98 fatal collisions resulting in 114 deaths and 333 serious-injury collisions resulting in 394 seriously injured victims. The figures span a five-year period on the county's primary arterials, including US-278 and US-21, and are available through the South Carolina Department of Public Safety's published collision records.

South Carolina's modified comparative fault standard bars recovery for any victim found 51 percent or more at fault. Fault determinations depend on the specific facts of each crash and the applicable law, and outcomes vary case by case. In multi-vehicle chain-reaction crashes such as the May 2025 US-278 incident, insurance defense teams representing each vehicle's insurer typically examine whether victims contributed to the crash by following too closely, failing to brake in time, or entering the intersection at an unreasonable speed. Under the standard, a finding of 51 percent or greater fault against a crash victim would eliminate recovery under South Carolina law.

J. Olin McDougall, II, Founder of McDougall Law Firm, said the standard poses particular challenges for unrepresented victims. "When a pickup crosses the center line and sets off a six-vehicle crash, insurance adjusters for every involved vehicle begin examining whether each other driver followed too closely or entered the intersection too fast," McDougall said. "Under the 51 percent bar, the question of whether a victim who did not start the crash can recover often turns on how fault is apportioned among multiple drivers, which is why these multi-party cases are so fact-intensive."

McDougall added that comparative fault analysis in chain-reaction crashes requires close review of each vehicle's movements, timing, and position at the moment of impact. As a Beaufort car accident lawyer practicing in Beaufort County, McDougall said that reviewing crash records along the US-278 and US-21 corridors is central to how these cases are evaluated.

McDougall Law Firm, LLC is a personal injury law firm based in Beaufort, South Carolina, serving clients throughout Bluffton, Hilton Head Island, Okatie, Beaufort County, Jasper County, Colleton County, and the

South Carolina Lowcountry. Founded by J. Olin McDougall, II, the firm handles cases involving car accidents, truck accidents, boat accidents, golf cart accidents, and other personal injury matters throughout South Carolina. The firm handles cases on a contingency fee basis.

J. Olin McDougall, II and Clinton Frederick Redfern have represented injury victims in South Carolina courts for more than a decade. Additional guidance for injury victims is available through the McDougall Beaufort car accident lawyer resource at the firm's website.

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McDougall Law Firm, LLC has over 15 years of experience serving Beaufort County personal injury clients.

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