Siam Legal International Publishes Legal Guidance on What to Do After a Car Accident in Thailand

November 23, 2026

Bangkok, Thailand - November 23, 2026 -
Siam Legal International, a full-service law firm with more than 22 years of experience serving Thai and foreign clients, has published new guidance on the legal responsibilities drivers carry after a car accident. The guidance covers situations ranging from minor property damage and disagreements over fault to accidents involving injury or death, and notes that language barriers and unfamiliar procedures can make the aftermath of a crash harder to manage.

These situations can overlap, and criminal liability depends on what happened and on the conduct of the driver. Whatever the circumstances, the first steps are to stop safely, check for injuries, and call for help.

Drivers involved in an accident must provide reasonable assistance, identify themselves to the police, report the accident immediately, and give their details to the other party, even if they believe they did not cause it. Fleeing the scene can lead to criminal penalties and create a legal presumption against the driver. Anyone who needs urgent treatment or must move to safety should inform the police as soon as possible.

For urgent medical care, call 1669 and follow the dispatcher?s instructions. You should also notify the police.

If you need help communicating in English, contact the Tourist Police.

The crash should be reported to the insurer promptly, even when the damage appears minor, as the insurer may send a representative to the scene and issue claim documentation. While waiting, drivers are advised to document the scene if it is safe to do so, save dash cam footage before it is overwritten, and collect the details of other drivers and witnesses. This evidence should be kept for the insurer, a lawyer, and the police.

The guidance also cautions against posting accusations online, as statements that damage another person's reputation can create defamation risks. Drivers are advised to check with their insurer before agreeing to a settlement or authorizing repairs.

Driving documents carry equal weight. A driver needs a license that is valid for the vehicle in Thailand, and anyone using an international driving permit must carry a valid national license with it. An ASEAN license that is not in English requires a certified English translation, and any license must cover the vehicle being driven. Insurance coverage depends on the policy terms and the circumstances, so the required documents should be confirmed with the insurer.

"Most drivers assume the legal risk after a crash comes from the collision itself, but it often comes from what happens in the hour afterward," said Rex Baay, Senior Immigration Consultant and Operations Manager at Siam Legal International. "Leaving the scene, guessing at fault, or signing a statement that has not been properly translated can shape the outcome of a case long after the vehicles have been repaired."

When speaking to the police, drivers are advised to stay calm, stick to the facts, and avoid guessing or accepting liability before they understand what happened. Before signing a statement or settlement, a clear translation should be requested, along with legal advice where necessary, because a signed document may be used as evidence or affect the right to compensation.

Even a minor accident can involve legal responsibilities. Legal advice is worth considering when someone is seriously injured, when fault or compensation is disputed, or when a driver faces a criminal investigation. It can also help when a driver is asked to sign something unclear or when an insurer rejects a claim.

Where negligent driving causes grievous bodily harm or death, the consequences under the Criminal Code can include imprisonment and fines. These penalties are not automatic simply because a crash happened, as the prosecution must establish the offense, and different or additional penalties may apply, including for drink driving or failing to assist. Siam Legal's car accidents in Thailand guide covers each step in sequence, from the first moments at the scene to dealing with police and insurers.

Siam Legal International is a full-service law firm with more than 20 years of experience assisting Thai and foreign clients, with offices in Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Phuket, and Pattaya. The firm provides comprehensive legal and immigration support across property transactions, business law, family law, and litigation.

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For more information about Siam Legal International, contact the company here:Siam Legal InternationalRex Baay+662 254 8900info@siam-legal.com18th Floor, Unit 1806 Two Pacific Place,142 Sukhumvit Rd, Khlong Toei,Bangkok 10110, Thailand

Siam Legal International

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Website: https://www.siam-legal.com/

Email: info@siam-legal.com

Phone: +662 254 8900