

## Step 1. I'm in dispute over fault

If the other party denies your version of events or continues to deny liability then you are in a dispute about fault. **Information about fault** All drivers and owners have a duty to other road users to take reasonable care. Generally, any person who is negligent (does not take reasonable care) in the driving, control or maintenance of a vehicle and causes damage as a result is at fault and will be responsible for the damage caused. For example, a driver may be negligent if they:

- drink drive;
- speed;
- don't obey a traffic light or sign; or
- don't keep a proper lookout.

If the other party or their insurer is contacting you and demanding payment, they may believe you are at fault based on what the other party has told them. If you and other party (or their insurer) can't agree about who is fault or there is conflicting evidence and versions of events, fault will be decided by a court. The Court will make a decision about fault based on:

- the availability and credibility of witnesses
- physical evidence, for example photos, videos, damage reports, skid marks on roads
- interpretation of the [Road Rules](#).

It is possible for more than one person to be at fault – each person may have contributed to the accident. So it is possible for fault to be apportioned (divided or split up) in percentages. For instance, the first driver may be 25% at fault and need to pay 25% of the cost to repair the damage to the second car, while the second driver is 75% at fault and needs to pay 75% of the cost to repair the damage to the first car. **Gather your evidence** As soon as possible, while the accident is still fresh in your mind, you should:

- write a statement about what happened
- draw a diagram of where the accident took place.

Your statement should cover:

- **who** was driving (names and addresses of people, colour, make, model and plates of each vehicle)
- **where** (name of roads, direction of travel, relevant cross-streets )
- **when** (date and time)
- **what** the **conditions** were like (weather, lighting, road surface and condition and speed limit)
- **what happened** (before, during and after the incident, what you saw the other driver do and what you did, including:
  - speed of travel
  - lane of travel
  - action you took (e.g. sound your horn, brake, put on your blinkers, swerve – left or right?)
  - action the other driver took (what you saw and heard)
  - what you did after the accident, for example:
    - what did you observe about the scene (e.g. skid marks on the road) and the cars involved after the accident
    - what you and any other people involved or witnesses said (their names and contact details if possible)
    - did the police attend (what was the name, rank and station of the police officer and date and time reported?).

You should also:

- take photos of any damage to your car and the other car.
- take photos of the scene, for example showing the position of the cars, the condition of the road, or lines of sight.
- take video footage, for example, from a dashcam.
- get CCTV footage as soon as possible (footage is often recorded over after a set timeframe and may be lost)
- get signed statements from any independent witnesses to the accident, for example, people who have no reason to take sides in the dispute.
- read the [NSW Road Rules](#) on the [Roads and Maritime Service](#) website, and see if they support your argument you are not at fault? Information about the NSW road rules is available from the [Roads and Maritime Road Rules page](#).

To read more about the [evidence](#) you could collect to show who was at fault, including example sketches of car accident diagrams and information about how to get witness contact details see:

- [Evidence](#) on the LawAccess NSW website

You also need to gather evidence about any damage or loss you are claiming was caused by the accident. To read more see

- [Evidence about damage and losses](#) on the LawAccess NSW website.

**What if I need advice about fault?** If you are not sure about fault you should get legal advice. Note: The Insurance Law Service is unable to give advice about whether you are at fault or not. You can start by contacting LawAccess NSW on 1300 888 529. You may be able to get free legal assistance from [Legal Aid NSW](#) or your local [Community Legal Centre](#). If you are unable to get free legal assistance, you may need to speak to a private lawyer. To find a private solicitor, contact the [NSW Law Society](#).