

No win, no fee car accident claims and infant distress calls

It is a situation familiar to just about every parent in the UK; you are making yet another trip to the dreaded supermarket. Tension is high as you are already running fifteen minutes behind schedule, when from the back seat a terrible noise begins. "Please," you think, "Just please remain quiet for another few minutes. I don't want to have to face a car accident claim for compensation." For many driving parents, a crying child in the back seat is an everyday reality. Yet how real a factor is it in contemporary car accident claims. Surprisingly, a long laborious trawl through internet and library sources reveals there is virtually no information on the subject. However, through an examination of anecdotal sources, together with a look at the science on the physiological response of a parent to a child's crying, we can gain some idea of the significance this kind of scenario has to car accident claims. Infant distress call Crying is often a baby's only means of communication. A baby simply cannot say, "Excuse Mummy, but would you mind terribly changing my nappy" Or, "Daddy dearest, I'm feeling a bit peckish so would it be too much trouble if we pulled over at Little Chef so I can indulge in a little snack." In the absence of words, babies resort to what they do best - crying. The problem with this for parents who are driving is that it is an ancient infant distress call designed to perturb a parent into action. This can lead to a loss of concentration and a potential car accident claim. Parents often describe how the sound of their child crying actually seems to penetrate their bones making them feel disturbed to the point of nausea. It is obvious that driving in such a state carries all kinds of dangers, heightening the risk of being involved in a car crash that might cause a serious personal injury such as whiplash. In such instances it is clearly a better idea to pull over somewhere safe and attend to your baby. Such action is infinitely preferable to becoming involved in a costly car accident claim for compensation. A news story from May 2007 shows that some elements of society lack empathy for parents who take the safety-first option. The story in question concerned a 27-year-old mother who was driving in Lambeth, London when her breastfed 14-week-old started crying. Wishing to feed her baby and avoid risking a car accident claim she pulled into a parking bay away from the busy street on which she was driving. It was at that point that an overly-officious traffic warden decided to issue her with a parking fine. Even leaving aside the fact that the mother is an admirable practitioner of the UK government's promotion of breast feeding, she should be commended for doing the right thing. By pulling over, she was being a responsible road user who was reducing the risk of personal injury to both herself and her baby as well as to all other road users. Lambeth Council have since apologised for the actions of their jobsworth traffic warden, which is a good thing as I think that most road users would agree that they'd rather the inconvenience of looking that little bit harder for a parking space than that of making a personal injury compensation claim. Anecdotal sources on the impact of crying babies on a parent's driving The following anecdotes are a fairly representative sample of the kinds of things parents told us about their experiences of crying children and car accident claims. Overall, what we heard seems to confirm scientists' belief that women are slightly more susceptible than men to losses of concentration caused by a crying children. The simple evolutionary explanation for this is that women are traditionally the main carers so are hardwired to be more responsive in a nurturing role than men: * Mary, 23-years-old and a mother of one, was driving from the northeast of England to Scotland to introduce her six-month old child to a friend. The child had been crying for close to an hour when she pulled over at a roadside cafe to try and compose herself and her baby. "I had a coffee and sandwich, Johnny had a bottle, then we returned to the motorway. Within a minute he was screaming again. I drove on for about another twenty minutes, then had to stop again, this time at a garage. A trip I'd been looking forward to for so long had turned into a total disaster. I was a nervous wreck. I just thought, "I can't get into the car again. There is no way I can drive. I cannot risk personal injury to my son and I cannot risk inviting a car accident claim because I'm driving like a paranoid drunk'. "I actually had to stay overnight in a roadside motel and have my husband come and drive me the next day. It was that bad. Now he's a little older it is better, but I'm still very cautious about causing a car accident because of his crying." * Tracey, a 29-year-old mother of two from Birmingham finds that having her children in the back seat actually makes her a safer driver. "I think it is a primal instinct operating in a very modern situation. I want to protect my children therefore I am very alert to potential dangers. You certainly won't catch me speeding now, where as before I would have done if I was in a rush. "Although if things get really bad, for example if the two of them are trying to outdo each other in the decibel stakes, I will pull over and try and calm the situation. God forbid we should be in a car crash and even if it were quite minor there is always the risk of something like whiplash, which would be a terrible experience for a young child. And, of course, I have no intention of becoming the subject of a compensation claim and losing my no claims bonus. * Matt, an IT consultant from London has a very strong ability to block out those distressing noises from the back seat. "I can compartmentalise, you know, just put up a barrier. When I was young, I suppose you could say I was a reckless driver. I even lost my license for a while after causing a crash and having to pay up some car accident compensation. But now I'm a responsible driver and if the kids are screaming I just accept it and get on with navigating the road." On the evidence presented to us it seems that there is no definitive course of action that should be taken when driving with a crying child - only that individuals are affected in differing ways and employ varying strategies for coping with the distraction. It seems that the best advice is that if you are becoming agitated or distracted because your child is crying or creating a disturbance, you should pull over as soon as is safely possible. Doing so will help you avoid a potential road accident and a possible costly car accident claim for compensation. This article may be published on another website free of charge, on the condition that a link is provided from this article to our website:

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