



## **Despite Safety Changes to SUVs and Pickups, Highway Threats Remain, Says NY Lawyer**

*New York personal injury attorney Steven J. Schwartzapfel says vehicle designs can affect severity of injuries, damage.*

New York, NY ([PRWEB](#)) September 23, 2009 -- Even though automakers have just redesigned sport utility vehicles and pickups to make them less deadly in collisions with other cars, older model SUVs and trucks on the highway still pose a serious threat in crashes, a New York attorney says.

"A vehicle design defect or flaw can cause or certainly contribute to a serious accident or make the injuries much worse," says Steven J. Schwartzapfel, founding partner of [Schwartzapfel, Truhowsky Marcus P.C.](#), a New York personal injury law firm that represents victims of car accidents. "We welcome advances in automotive safety, but the roadways remain a dangerous place. We deal with the death and devastation caused by crashes involving smaller cars and heavier SUVs every day."

Occupants of passenger vehicles including cars, minivans, pickups and sport utility vehicles represent by far the largest number of deaths in [motor vehicle crashes](#), according to an analysis of U.S. Department of Transportation data by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. In 2008 alone, 25,428 people died in crashes in passenger vehicles.

Frontal impact collisions account for more half of those deaths, side impact collisions represented 28 percent of fatalities and rollovers accounted for most of the rest, according to the Insurance Institute.

People in lighter vehicles remain at a disadvantage in collisions with heavier vehicles. In multi-vehicle crashes involving cars and SUVs or pickups, the occupants of the cars are more likely to die, and their vehicles usually sustain greater damage.

On the other hand, pickups and SUVs are proportionately more likely to be in fatal single-vehicle accidents, especially rollovers, the Insurance Institute said. Crashes in which a vehicle overturned represented 35 percent of passenger vehicle occupant deaths in 2008 and claimed more than 9,000 lives.

Overall, more than 280,000 rollover accidents are reported each year, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Auto manufacturers had a deadline of Sept. 1, 2009 to redesign their SUVs and pickup trucks to make them less deadly in frontal and side-impact collisions with passenger cars. The safety changes were to address the problem of taller SUVs and pickups overriding smaller cars' bumpers so that the car frame could not dissipate the energy of a crash, causing more harm to passengers.

Automakers notified the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration earlier this year that all



vehicles would be in compliance by the deadline, according to The New York Times.

#### About Schwartzapfel Partners

[Schwartzapfel Truhowsky Marcus P.C.](#) is a well-respected plaintiff personal injury and estate litigation firm in New York. With more than 150 years of combined experience and highly competent co-counsel throughout the country, Schwartzapfel Partners serves all your legal needs.

The firm concentrates in all types of personal injury litigation, including motor vehicle accidents (auto, truck, motorcycle, taxi), medical malpractice, nursing home neglect, wrongful death, defective products and drugs, construction accidents, workplace injuries, workers' compensation and Social Security disability. To contact the law firm, call 1.800.966.4999 or go to [www.fightingforyou.com](http://www.fightingforyou.com) for more information.

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