

\$4.75 Million Settlement Secured in Alabama 18-Wheeler Wrongful Death Case

How Dean Waite & Associates Helped Our Client Obtain Justice and Accountability After a Fatal Truck Wreck

On a quiet stretch of Alabama Highway 10 in Butler County, a devastating crash claimed the life of a Monroeville man when an 18-wheeler crossed the center line and struck his vehicle head-on. He was killed instantly. The tragedy was compounded by what the investigation later revealed: the truck driver had been awake for more than 24 hours and was under the influence of illegal narcotics at the time of the collision.

At [Dean Waite & Associates, LLC](#), we, along with our co-counsel law firm, represented the victim's family in a wrongful death claim and helped secure a **\$4.75 million settlement** — the full amount of available insurance coverage. While no amount of money can undo such a devastating loss, this result provided the family with financial security and a sense of accountability.

Fatal [truck accidents](#) like this are preventable. When trucking companies cut corners on safety, ignore federal regulations, and allow impaired or fatigued drivers behind the wheel, innocent lives are put at risk. The goal of our Alabama truck accident lawyers is to uncover the truth, hold negligent parties accountable, and fight for the justice families deserve.

The Dangers of Fatigue and Drug Use in the Trucking Industry

Truck drivers are under constant pressure to meet tight delivery schedules. Long hours behind the wheel, combined with unrealistic deadlines, often push drivers beyond safe limits. In some cases, drivers turn to stimulants or other drugs to stay awake, creating a deadly combination of fatigue and impairment.

[Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration \(FMCSA\) regulations](#) are designed to prevent these situations. [Hours-of-service rules](#) limit the number of consecutive hours a trucker can drive and require rest breaks to reduce fatigue-related crashes. Similarly, strict prohibitions on [drug and alcohol use](#) are intended to keep impaired drivers off the road.

When drivers or trucking companies ignore these rules — whether by falsifying logbooks, pressuring drivers to skip rest breaks, or failing to conduct proper drug testing — the consequences can be catastrophic.

In this case, we uncovered evidence during litigation that the driver had been awake for more than 24 hours and had used illegal narcotics prior to the crash. These facts were central to securing justice for the victim's family.

Proving Liability in a Fatal Tractor-Trailer Accident

Cases involving semi-trucks, tractor-trailers, and other heavy commercial trucks are far more complex than typical car accidents. That's because multiple parties may share responsibility, including the driver, the trucking company, and sometimes even third-party contractors.

In this case, our investigation focused on establishing:

- **Driver Negligence** – The truck driver clearly violated safety rules by driving without adequate rest and while under the influence.
- **Company Oversight Failures** – Evidence suggested the trucking company failed to monitor driver hours or enforce drug-testing requirements properly.

In serious truck accident cases, we often work with accident reconstruction experts, obtain driver logs and employment records, and secure toxicology reports to build a compelling case. By leveraging these findings during settlement negotiations, we can achieve the maximum recovery available under all applicable insurance policies.

How Do Federal Trucking Regulations Protect Other Drivers?

Federal trucking regulations exist for one primary reason: to ensure public safety. When these rules are ignored, the results can be devastating. Key protections include:

- **Hours-of-Service Limits** – Designed to prevent fatigue-related crashes by restricting drive time and mandating rest periods.
- **Mandatory Drug and Alcohol Testing** – Trucking companies must conduct pre-employment screenings, random tests, and post-crash evaluations.
- **Vehicle Maintenance Standards** – Carriers are required to maintain their fleets to ensure safe operation.
- **Recordkeeping Requirements** – Companies must maintain accurate driver logs, inspection records, and test results to ensure compliance.

In many cases, violations of these rules provide critical evidence of negligence. When companies knowingly put unsafe drivers on the road, they can — and should — be held accountable.

The Human Cost of Overlooking Safety

Statistics show that crashes involving large trucks often result in life-altering injuries or fatalities for those in smaller vehicles. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the vast majority of people who die in large truck crashes are occupants of passenger vehicles.

But behind every statistic is a family coping with unimaginable loss. In this case, our client's family faced the sudden, [wrongful death](#) of a loved one due to a tragic and preventable crash. While financial compensation can never replace what was lost, it

provides the means to cover funeral costs, household expenses, and the future security of the family.

Recoverable Damages in Alabama Wrongful Death Claims

Alabama's wrongful death laws are unique. Unlike many states, Alabama does not award compensatory damages for medical bills or lost wages in [wrongful death cases](#). Instead, the focus is on punitive damages — amounts designed to punish egregious conduct and deter future wrongdoing.

Because the truck driver's behavior involved both fatigue and illegal drug use, we were able to present a strong case for punitive damages during negotiations. By holding the trucking company and its insurer accountable, we secured the maximum settlement possible under Alabama law.

Why Acting Quickly After a Fatal Trucking Crash Matters

Evidence in truck accident cases tends to disappear quickly. Driver logs can be altered, electronic data overwritten, and physical evidence repaired or lost. That's why it's critical to contact an Alabama truck accident lawyer immediately after a serious or fatal crash.

When we handle a case, we launch an immediate investigation to:

- Secure black box data and other electronic records before they're deleted.
- Obtain driver qualification files, employment histories, and drug test results.
- Interview witnesses while memories are still fresh.
- Issue preservation letters to prevent the destruction of evidence.

This rapid response often makes the difference between uncovering the truth and facing an uphill battle against missing or destroyed records.

How We Stand Up to Trucking Companies and Insurers

Trucking companies and their insurers have significant resources, which they often utilize to minimize their financial exposure. Their teams of lawyers and adjusters may try to shift blame onto victims or pressure families into accepting lowball settlements.

At Dean Waite & Associates, LLC, we're all too familiar with these tactics and know how to counter them. We've spent years fighting for victims of truck accidents across Alabama and the Gulf Coast, so we already know their playbook. Our team takes on the burden of investigation, negotiation, and litigation so families can focus on grieving and healing.

In this case, our firm refused to settle for less than what the family deserved. By demonstrating the severity of the driver's misconduct and the company's failures, we successfully secured the entire \$4.75 million available under all policies.

What This Settlement Means for Other Families

This case highlights an important truth: fatal truck accidents are often preventable. When carriers fail to enforce safety standards, they put everyone on the road in danger. By holding these companies accountable, we not only deliver justice for our clients but also send a clear message that reckless practices won't be tolerated.

For families facing similar tragedies, you don't have to navigate this process alone. Dean Waite and his dedicated legal team provide compassionate, aggressive representation designed to uncover the truth and maximize recovery.

Injured in a Truck Accident? Make the Call That Matters

If you've lost a loved one in a truck accident in Alabama, you deserve answers — and justice. Our wrongful death lawyers have [recovered millions](#) for families facing unimaginable loss. We'll listen to your story, explain your rights, and fight tirelessly for the compensation you deserve.

[Contact Dean Waite & Associates, LLC, today](#) for a free and confidential consultation. Don't hesitate...call Dean Waite!