

# NEWS RELEASE

Arizona Supreme Court  
Administrative Office of the Courts

Contact: Alberto Rodriguez  
Phone: 602-452-3656  
Email: [arodriguez@courts.az.gov](mailto:arodriguez@courts.az.gov)



July 7, 2026

## Arizona Supreme Court Clarifies Strict Product Liability Law

**PHOENIX** – The Arizona Supreme Court today issued its opinion in *Maywald v. Toyota Motor Company*, ruling that a person bringing a strict product liability claim must prove two separate things: first, that a product was defective, and second, that the defect made the product unreasonably dangerous.

The case arose from a 2019 auto collision where the driver of a Toyota 4Runner fell asleep, crossed the center line, and struck another vehicle. The injured individuals claimed the 4Runner was defectively designed because it did not include a lane departure warning system, a feature that alerts drivers when they drift out of their lane.

The Supreme Court concluded that the absence of that technology did not make the vehicle defective. It explained that drivers are still responsible for safely operating their vehicles and that lane departure warning systems are designed to assist drivers and not replace their duty to stay awake and maintain control of the vehicle.

The Court also clarified Arizona law governing strict product liability claims. It reaffirmed that a plaintiff must first prove a product is defective before a court considers whether the defect made the product unreasonably dangerous. The Court further explained that when evaluating whether a defective product is unreasonably dangerous, courts should examine the risks and benefits of the product as it was actually designed and sold, rather than simply comparing it to a product with additional safety features.

Because the plaintiffs did not establish that the 4Runner was defective, the Supreme Court affirmed the trial court's judgment in favor of Toyota and vacated the court of appeals' decision.

Justice James P. Beene wrote the opinion for a unanimous court.

###

*This summary is intended solely to notify the public about an Arizona Supreme Court Opinion. It is not to be considered an official commentary by the Court or any member of the Court, nor may it be cited as legal authority for any reason or purpose. The full Opinion is available [here](#) for those seeking details about the Court's reasoning.*

To learn more about Arizona's judicial branch, visit [azcourts.gov](http://azcourts.gov). Follow @AZCourts on Instagram and YouTube and @ArizonaSupremeCourt on Facebook.