



Transportation and Maritime

Creating value that goes the extra mile

The Spencer Fane Transportation and Maritime team understand firsthand the operational, regulatory, and market pressures industry companies face. Leveraging deep, practical experience, the Team works with owners and operators, carriers, logistics providers, NVOCCs, and related industry partners to deliver combined legal and business counsel that helps clients navigate challenges and risk, keep momentum, and strategically and soundly advance their business goals. A legal compass you can trust – navigating clients confidently through uncharted territory.

Overview

Understanding the business of moving goods and people by land and sea

The Spencer Fane Transportation and Maritime team understands the complex, fast-moving environment in which owners / operators, carriers, logistics providers, and maritime industry businesses work. Our attorneys bring deep, hands-on experience advising and defending transportation and maritime companies and their insurers, supported by a practical understanding of the operational realities that shape day-to-day decision-making.

We represent motor carriers, owners / operators, shippers, freight forwarders, brokers, charterers, marine service providers, and terminal operators, both directly and through insurers, nationwide. As a full-service team, we provide contract drafting and review, regulatory and safety guidance, and comprehensive claim investigation, defense, and management – from catastrophic injury and wrongful death to cargo losses and property damage. We know these industries and dive deep into each client's business structure, operations, and personnel, so we can respond quickly, strategically, and efficiently.

When litigation becomes necessary, the Spencer Fane team has extensive experience and a proven track record of helping clients navigate the most difficult cases to minimize financial exposure and reputational damage. We know when it is right to fight, and when interests are better served through efficient, reasonable, and negotiated resolution of disputes.

We have extensive experience handling a broad range of statutory and regulatory issues that arise in connection with federal and state administrative agencies. Our work encompasses investigations and resulting claims under various statutes and regulations, as well as compliance with agency rules and procedures. We advise clients on steps to improve compliance and minimize the likelihood of future issues.

Our broad-based approach and experience ensures end-to-end legal support across all modes of transportation – on the road, in the water, and across the supply chain – delivering practical, industry-driven solutions that keep our clients' businesses navigating forward.

Experience

With years of industry experience and knowledge, the Spencer Fane team delivers robust, comprehensive, and business-minded counsel. We offer a comprehensive suite of legal services tailored to the unique needs of the industry, including:

- Drafting, reviewing, and negotiating transportation, maritime and logistics agreements, including independent contractor, owner / operator, motor carrier, shipper, broker, and lease-purchase arrangements, as well as charter party agreements, marine service contracts, wharfage agreements, and vessel purchase and sale documents together with documentation concerns.
- Advising on regulatory compliance at federal, state, and international levels, including licensing, safety, and environmental regulations.
- Representing clients in litigation and dispute resolution, covering cargo claims, personal injury and wrongful death defense, property damage, breach of contract, environmental permitting, and catastrophic loss cases.
- Handling employment and labor matters, such as wrongful termination, worker classification, collective bargaining, non-compete agreements, and OSHA, DOT, USCG and FMC compliance.
- Managing risk, insurance coverage, and claims, including defense in regulatory and administrative agencies such as the EEOC, USCG, USACOE, and FMC.
- Conducting internal investigations, accident response, and crisis management.
- Advising on mergers, acquisitions, and business growth strategies, as well as bankruptcy assistance within the transportation, maritime and logistics sectors.
- Providing counsel on customs, international trade, and cross-border transactions, including compliance with import / export laws and international arbitration.
- Supporting clients in technology, data security, and intellectual property matters relevant to maritime and logistics operations, such as software deployment, e-commerce platforms, and patent / trademark protection.
- Assisting with real estate, land use, and infrastructure issues related to transportation facilities, terminals, and warehousing.
- Offering strategic advice on supply chain management, operational efficiency, and long-term corporate planning for transportation and logistics providers.
- Advising on dock permitting and marina development projects, including coordinating environmental resource permitting with agencies such as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and other state and local environmental authorities.
- Preparing, recording, and foreclosing maritime liens, such as Preferred Ship Mortgages and liens for necessities.