Cooley

Rod Freeman

Partner



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London
Brussels

Product Compliance and Product Litigation
Commercial Litigation
Class Action Litigation
Crisis Management
Food and Beverage
Retail and Consumer Products
Life Sciences and Healthcare
Healthcare
Artificial Intelligence
ESG and Sustainability Advisory
CooleyREG
Wellness
Global Hearings and Inquiries
Ecommerce + Marketplace

Rod is an international products lawyer with more than 25 years of experience supporting the world's top and most innovative companies with their product liability, product compliance and product safety issues. He is routinely ranked as a leader in major legal directories, where he has been described as an 'outstanding go-to specialist for product liability matters', 'one of the top product liability and product regulatory experts worldwide', and 'without a shadow of a doubt, the most knowledgeable product liability lawyer in the European space'. Regarded as a 'real technical expert with knowledge of all the latest developments and an enormously instinctive feel for the law', Rod appeared on The Lawyer's Hot 100 2018 list of UK lawyers and is recognised in The Legal 500 Hall of Fame. He also was named the Who's Who Legal Lawyer of the Year for Product Liability Defence for two consecutive years (2022 and 2023) and was the first lawyer outside of North America to win that accolade.

Since joining Cooley in 2017, Rod has built a different kind of products law team – one that focuses on finding creative and practical commercial solutions to worldwide problems. Rod provides unique insights into the global liability and regulatory landscape, and he has an instinct for finding practical solutions for international companies. With a background in high-stakes product compliance litigation, Rod understands the challenges faced by companies in an increasingly risky global environment. He has particular knowledge in understanding the impact of regulation and liability laws on new technologies, including artificial intelligence, connected products and the Internet of Things (IoT), autonomous technologies, and 3D printing, as well as the intersection between product safety regulation and the drive for greater sustainability and environmental protection in the consumer products space.

Rod holds multiple leadership positions in the international product law community, and he frequently works with policymakers to help shape the future of product compliance and litigation. Rod was appointed to the European Commission's Expert Group on Liability and New Technologies. He also serves on the board of directors for the International Consumer Product Health and Safety Organization (ICPHSO), where he is chair of its International Program Committee. He sits as an industry representative on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Working Party on Consumer Product Safety, serves as vice chair of the Consumer Policy Committee for Business at OECD (BIAC), and authored the OECD publication 'Consumer Product Safety in the Internet of Things'.

Rod's representative experience includes:

- Defending thousands of claims brought against a medical device manufacturer involving allegations of diseases linked with use of the product
- Coordinating, on a global basis, some of the largest product recalls ever undertaken, including those involving lithium-ion batteries, consumer electronics, home appliances, sporting goods, electrical products, cosmetics, toys and motor vehicles
- Facilitating the international launch of innovative products in a range of industries, finding practical and workable solutions to regulatory compliance issues around the world
- Defending and resolving claims in multiple countries amounting to hundreds of millions of dollars arising from a quality deviation in the supply of a product used in the manufacture of pharmaceutical products
- Acting in the largest and most complex transatlantic insolvencies involving liabilities arising out of historical asbestos exposure
- Successfully recovering tens of millions of euros from an upstream supplier as compensation for losses flowing from a major recall in the automotive industry. Representing a major international brand name in the Public Inquiry into the Grenfell Tower fire in London, and advising in relation to subsequent claims and litigation

Education

The University of Sydney Master of Laws, 1994

The University of Sydney Bachelor of Laws, 1990

The University of Sydney Bachelor of Economics, 1988

Admissions & Credentials

England and Wales

Brussels (List B)

Rankings & Accolades

Chambers UK: Band 1 – Product Liability: Mainly Defendant (2006 – 2027)

The Legal 500 UK: Hall of Fame – Insurance – Product Liability: Defendant (2022, 2026 – 2027)

Who's Who Legal, Product Liability Defence

Memberships & Affiliations

International Consumer Products Health and Safety Organization, director

Product Liability Advisory Council (US)

International Association of Defense Counsel (IADC)

Defense Research Institute