Cooley

William O'Connor

Partner



woconnor@cooley.com

+1 858 550 6002
+1 415 693 2059

San Diego
San Francisco

Commercial Litigation
Product Compliance and Product Litigation
Insurance
Trials
Aviation – Manned and Unmanned
Spacetech and Satellite
CooleyREG

Bill is a highly regarded trial lawyer who represents clients in high-stakes litigation across the US and internationally. His practice focuses on complex commercial disputes, product liability and mass tort cases, including multidistrict litigation (MDL), as well as consumer class actions – particularly those arising from product recalls and alleged product defects. Bill has served as lead trial counsel in federal and state courts in the US, defending manufacturers, technology companies and other global businesses in matters involving significant financial exposure and reputational risk. Clients value Bill for his skilled courtroom advocacy and practical, business-minded approach to resolving disputes.

Commercial litigation and insurance experience

Bill's 20 years of litigation experience includes the trial and arbitration of commercial disputes related to real estate, investments, partnerships and joint ventures, license agreements, supply contracts, and insurance and reinsurance. His six-month secondment to the general counsel team of MS Amlin, the largest Lloyd's insurer in the London market, has given him particular insight into the international insurance industry. Bill routinely advises clients on coverage and risk management issues.

Aviation experience

As an experienced pilot, Bill understands the technical aspects involved in aviation-related litigation. He has been involved in several high-profile aviation accident cases, including the Alaska Airlines Flight 261, Gol Airlines Flight 1907 and Air France Flight 447 multidistrict litigations. Bill also represents aircraft and helicopter manufacturers in product liability litigation filed in the US and abroad. He maintains a significant airports disputes practice, which involves representing airport proprietors and fixed-base operators in controversial matters. For example, Bill led the representation of the city of Santa Monica, California, in litigation against the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), resulting in a landmark settlement to close the Santa Monica Airport. Bill also represents aviation clients in commercial and regulatory matters, FAA enforcement proceedings, FAA Part 16 cases and US Department of Transportation investigations. He is also involved in cutting-edge legal matters involving unmanned aircraft. His success in the aviation field has been recognized by Chambers USA and The Legal 500.

Product liability experience

Bill regularly counsels clients on a range of product issues, including regulatory compliance, risk assessment and mitigation, warning and labeling, recalls and crisis management. Bill's product advisement and litigation experience cover a range of product segments, including consumer products, medical devices, automotive products, robotics and autonomous systems and industrial equipment.

Education

Georgetown University Law Center JD, 2001

University of California, San Diego BA, 1998

Admissions & Credentials

California

Rankings & Accolades

Chambers USA: Transportation: Aviation: Litigation – Nationwide (2020 – 2026)

The Legal 500 US: Aviation and Air Travel: Litigation and Regulation (2023 – 2025)

Best Lawyers in America: Product Liability Litigation

Super Lawyers: Top-Rated Products Liability Attorney

Daily Journal: Top 20 Under 40

Memberships & Affiliations

Association of Business Trial Lawyers – San Diego, board of governors

The Honorable J. Clifford Wallace American Inn of Court, barrister