Aviation and Space Law

**What is Aviation and Space Law?**

Those lawyers who practice in aviation law deal with issues relating to the manufacture, ownership, maintenance, and use of aircraft, aviation accident litigation, coverage afforded by aviation insurance policies, and other aircraft-related matters. Aviation law is a highly specialized field, requiring comprehensive knowledge of Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations, specific laws regarding flight, and aviation generally.

Most aspects of aviation law fall under the oversight of the FAA. However, air traffic regulationpolices, laws, and administrative agencies have been created by both federal and state government, with certain restrictions preventing states from regulating routes, services, or the rates of all air carriers authorized to provide interstate air transportation by the Federal Aviation Act. States may alter existing remedies and enact state laws consistent with federal mandate. Additionally, federal law does not preempt state products liability law, and in defective product cases, aviation manufacturers may be held strictly liable.

Space law is a burgeoning field relating to legal issues arising from the growing commercialization of space. General international law, international agreements, treaties, conventions, and United Nations General Assembly resolutions, as well as rules and regulations of international organizations comprise the body of space law.

**Where Do Aviation Lawyers Work?**

**Government**

U.S. Department of Transportation—Federal Aviation Administration

Air Force JAG Corps—General Information

Department of Justice—Aviation, Space, & Admiralty Litigation Section

National Aeronautics and Space Administration—The Office of General Counsel for NASA

Shelby County Airport Authority—Current Jobs

**Specialized Firms**

Firms may specialize in aviation law for transactional purposes or in aviation torts.

**Corporations**

In-house counsel for airline companies

FedEx

SpaceX

**What Classes Should I Take?**

Admiralty Law

International Law

Arbitration

Sales

Federal Courts

Secured transactions

Civil Procedure

Employment law

Products Liability

Torts

Contracts

**Resume Boosters for Aviation and Space Law**

- Obtain your pilot’s license
- Clerk with a federal judge
- Intern or extern with a federal agency
- Work with a law firm engaged in federal torts litigation
- Extern with the Shelby County Airport Authority
- Extern with FedEx
- Spend a summer with Air Force JAG Corps
Aviation and Space Law
Resources

Professional Associations

American Bar Association
All University of Memphis law students have free membership to the American Bar Association. Their website provides routinely updated information and interest-specific career advice. Join different sections to find out what they offer. Check out the Tort Trial and Insurance Practice Section and the Aviation and Space Law Committee.

Lawyer Pilots Bar Association
Membership in the Lawyer Pilots Bar Association largely consists of attorneys and pilots (or former pilots). Eligibility for membership varies from licensed attorneys to individuals who simply have an interest in aviation law or aviation safety. The organization publishes a journal on FAA enforcement actions, accident litigation, and advising aircraft owners and airman on a quarterly basis.

Become a Pilot
Read the Federal Aviation Administration’s information about the first steps to becoming an aircraft pilot here.

Aviation Law Links

“Why become an aviation attorney?”
This article was co-authored by Katzman, Lampert, and McClune Aviation Lawyers. September 28, 2016.

More Aviation Practice-related Articles

Space Law Links

The Outer Space Treaty
Astronaut Rescue
Convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects
Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space