What is Telecommunications Law?

Telecommunications law concerns the systems of electronic communications and broadcasting across the United States. This includes regulations for telephone, cable, satellite, radio, and Internet communication companies. The telecommunications industry is highly regulated by the Federal Communications Commission. The Commission was established in 1966 by the Telecommunications Act. Telecommunications law has been amended several times since 1966 to account for communication over the Internet. The goal of federal telecommunication laws is to promote competition within the industry so that all Americans have access to communication platforms at affordable rates. Telecommunications law encompasses such issues as ownership and competition in the industry, communications licensing, political advertising regulations, and net neutrality regulations. This body of law is also related to national security law because sophisticated public communications systems are required in emergency situations.

Telecommunications attorneys assist their clients in navigating telecommunications regulations as private attorneys or prosecute telecommunications breaches as government attorneys. Telecommunications attorneys that serve as in-house counsels at communications companies may also handle contract negotiation, customer litigation, taxes, and lobbying for the company.

Where Do Telecommunications Lawyers Work?

Private Sector
In-house for a telecommunications company including TV stations, advertising companies, political campaigns, radio stations, and phone companies

Government
Federal Communications Commission—Jobs & Internships
National Telecommunications and Information Administration in the Department of Commerce—Employment Opportunities
SAFECOM in the Cybersecurity and Information Security Agency—Careers

What Classes Should I Take?

Civil Procedure
Contracts
Torts
Administrative Law
Employee Benefits
Tax Law
Professional
Responsibility
Legal Methods
Business Organizations
Economic Analysis of the Law
Constitutional Law
Resume Boosters for Telecommunications Law

Extern with the Memphis Shelby County Airport Authority, FedEx, the Memphis City Attorney’s Office, or the Shelby County District Attorney’s Office

Pursue your *pro bono* hours with the Memphis and Shelby County Airport authority

Intern or extern with another telecommunications company

Intern or extern with a firm that handles telecommunications cases

Gain related experience by working for a radio, television, or internet communications business

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 Infrastructure and Regulated Industries Section, the Section of Administrative Law and Regulatory Practice, the Section of Public Contract Law, and the Government and Public Sector Lawyers Division.

Transportation Lawyers Association

The Transportation Lawyers Association ("TLA") is an independent bar association, comprised of in-house government and private practice attorneys. Its members assist providers and commercial users of domestic and international logistics and transportation services in all modes. The TLA has a Career Center with both transportation related and non-transportation related job postings.

Telecommunications Law Links

American Bar Association Communications Law Forum

Digital Advertising Discrimination

Protecting Intellectual Property in the Internet Age

Media Law Resource Center