What is Transportation Law?

Transportation law concerns federal and state statutes regarding all forms of transportation. Congress holds the power to regulate interstate commerce under the United States Constitution. The Federal Transit Laws are codified at 49 U.S.C. 5332(b) concerning when federal funds are used to acquire, improve, or operate a mass transit system. Chapter 49 establishes agencies within the U.S. government that create transportation regulations and oversee transportation within and across state lines.

According to the American Bar Association, the transportation and energy industries are a bedrock of the United States and global economy. Both industries intersect with antitrust, environmental, and administrative law.

Where Do Transportation Lawyers Work?

Government

U.S. Department of Transportation—National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Federal Aviation Administration, Office of Inspector General, Federal Highway Administration, Pipeline Hazardous Materials Safety Administration, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, Federal Railroad Administration, Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation, Federal Transit Administration, Maritime Administration

Tennessee Department of Transportation

Private Sector

Private firms handle contracts and tort litigation in the area of transportation law. Transactional attorneys handle drafting contracts and bidding for federally and state-funded infrastructure.

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 Transportation Law

- Intern or extern with Memphis and Shelby County Airport Authority, FedEx, Memphis City Attorney’s Office, and the Shelby County Attorney’s Office
- Intern or extern with another state or federal transportation agency
- Work at a law firm that handles state and federal regulatory work
- Clerk for a federal judge

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.

Transportation Law Links

Blogs
- Truck Law Blog
- Train Law Blog

Podcasts
- The War on Cars
- Streets Ahead
- Sustainability Defined