

Steven D. Lehner

Tampa, FL

He/Him

📞 813-868-8850

✉️ slehner@hinshawlaw.com



About Steve

Steve focuses his national tort litigation and mediation practice on employee benefits litigation, including ERISA and non-ERISA matters. He represents employee benefit plans and fiduciaries in court and alternative dispute resolution, handling dispositive motions and appeals. His work in employee benefits litigation includes defense of health, life, and disability claims, annuities, suitability issues, long-term care coverage, provider matters, and breach of fiduciary duty.

Steve brings extensive experience to his insurance practice, representing insurers and self-insured clients in complex regional and national litigation. He handles cases involving premises liability, insurance coverage, catastrophic injury, wrongful death, dram shop and liquor liability, automobile negligence, and general liability. In addition, Steve represents insurers in first-party property matters related to sinkhole claims, including breach of contract and extra-contractual exposure.

His clients include hospitality and retail businesses, restaurant groups, private security firms, and transportation companies operating across a broad geographic footprint.

Steve's Affiliations

- Defense Research Institute (DRI)
- Hillsborough County Bar Association, Trial Lawyers Division
- Federal Bar Association
- American Bar Association, Former Member
- Exchange Club of Tampa, Former Member

Areas of Focus

- Industries:** Cannabis ; Insurance; Life, Health, Disability & ERISA
- Services:** Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR); Complex Commercial Litigation ;
Employee Benefits & Executive Compensation ; Employment Litigation;
Insurance Coverage Litigation & Counseling; Litigation & Trial
- Initiatives:** Nationwide Litigation Portfolio Management

Experience

- Defended a hotel in a premises liability claim. The plaintiff alleged the defendant's dock was unsafe, and the jury returned a defense verdict after a four-day trial.
- Obtained a directed verdict for the defense defending a grocery chain in a slip-and-fall case.
- Obtained a verdict for the defense representing a large lawn care company in a breach of contract suit.

Recognition

- *The Best Lawyers in America*®, Commercial Litigation, 2020 – 2026
- *Florida Super Lawyers*, 2024 – 2025
- *Florida Trend*, Legal Elite, Legal Leader, 2016, 2019
- *Tampa Bay Business Magazine*, Tampa Bay Top Lawyer, 2010
- Martindale-Hubbell, AV® Peer Review Rating

Credentials

Education

University of Florida Levin College of Law, JD, 1994
Southern Methodist University, BA, BBA, *with honors*, 1991

Bar Admissions

Florida

Court Admissions

US Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit
US District Court for the Middle District of Florida
US District Court for the Northern District of Florida

Interests

Did you know...

When not in the office, Steve enjoys golfing, snow skiing, and scuba diving.

Community/Civic Activities

- Royal Krewe of Privateers

Thought Leadership

Presentations

Steve has delivered in-house presentations to his clients on topics including bad faith claim handling and issues of attorney-client and work product privilege. His other presentations include:

- Co-Presenter, “The Verdict: No Surprises Act,” Hinshaw University, CLE Webinar, June 5, 2025
- “Current Trends in ERISA Attorneys’ Fee Claims” Definitive Disability Conference 4, Boston, Massachusetts, October 2019
- “Effective ERISA Mediations,” 11th Circuit ERISA Meeting, Tampa, Florida, January 2012
- “Deposing Expert Witnesses,” Hillsborough County Public Defenders and State Attorneys Offices, Tampa, Florida, September 2009

Hinshaw Alerts

- District Court Finds Reduction in Monthly LTD Benefit Due to IRA Rollover Appropriate Under Plan Terms, Oct 13, 2021
- District Court Holds Breach of Contract Claims are Time-Barred, Sep 29, 2020

Press Releases

- 102 Hinshaw Lawyers Recognized in 2026 Editions of *The Best Lawyers in America*® and *Ones to Watch*™, Aug 21, 2025
- 105 Hinshaw Lawyers Recognized in 2025 Editions of Best Lawyers in America and Ones to Watch, Aug 15, 2024
- Appellate Spotlight: Client GeoVera Secures Florida Appellate Court Affirmation of Summary Judgment Win Over Limited Water Damage Exclusion, Oct 19, 2023
- 101 Hinshaw Lawyers Recognized in 2024 Editions of Best Lawyers in America and Ones to Watch, Aug 17, 2023
- Eighty-Seven Hinshaw Lawyers Recognized in 2023 Editions of Best Lawyers in America and Ones to Watch, Aug 18, 2022

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