

John M. Kelly

Chicago, IL

He/Him

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About John

A defense attorney, John centers his practice on aviation, with a focus on product liability. He represents manufacturers of aircraft, engines, avionics, flight control systems, and other components in matters surrounding airplane incidents and accidents, as well as pilots, operators, maintenance facilities, and airlines. He has experience defending clients in fixed-wing and helicopter crashes, as well as mass airline disasters. John also handles cases involving toxic torts, workplace injuries, and catastrophic industrial accidents.

John appears in numerous state and federal jurisdictions throughout the country and works on matters involving foreign courts and tribunals. He has tried jury and bench trials to verdict and argued at the appellate level, securing early dismissals, summary judgments, and successful results in various alternative dispute resolution forums. John has also represented railroads in Federal Employers Liability Act (FELA), personal injury, trespasser, and major railroad crossing accident litigation.

John's Affiliations

- American Bar Association
- Illinois State Bar Association
- Chicago Bar Association

Areas of Focus

Industries: Aviation & Aerospace; Transportation & Mobility

Services: Complex Commercial Litigation ; Litigation & Trial

Recognition

- *Jury Verdict Reporter*, Trial Lawyer Excellence Award, Outstanding Defense Verdict in a Product Liability Case, 2017

Credentials

Education

DePaul University College of Law, JD, 1994

Arizona State University, BS, 1990

Bar Admissions

Illinois

Court Admissions

US Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit

US District Court for the Central District of Illinois

US District Court for the Northern District of Illinois, including Trial Bar

US District Court for the Western District of Wisconsin

Interests

Did you know...

In his free time, John enjoys spending time with his family and playing golf.

Thought Leadership

Presentations

- Presenter, Aviation Seminar, Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP, Chicago, Illinois, September 10, 2025
- Co-Presenter, “Navigating the Skies: Trends and Developments in Aviation Law,” Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP, Chicago, Illinois, October 18, 2023
- “Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Delegation System,” ABA Tort Trial & Insurance Practice Section, Aviation and Space Law Committee, Washington, D.C., 2019
- “Evidentiary Issues in the Aviation Case,” 52nd Annual Southern Methodist University Air Law Symposium, Irvine, Texas, 2018

Publications

- “Is Self-Certification Adequate Pre-Flight?” American Bar Association TIPS, 2019
- “Evidentiary Issues in the Aviation Case,” 52nd Annual Southern Methodist University Air Law Symposium, 2018

Press Releases

- Hinshaw Finalizes Adler Murphy & McQuillen LLP Deal in Chicago, Apr 3, 2023
- Hinshaw Announces Adler Murphy & McQuillen LLP Will Join the Firm, Mar 9, 2023