Steptoe's aviation team focuses on the representation of domestic and foreign air carriers, drone operators, aviation manufacturers, aviation service providers, aviation trade associations, and other aviation entities in regulatory, legislative, enforcement, transactional, and litigation matters. We represent clients in a full range of matters that relate to air transportation of passengers and property, including matters arising before the Department of Transportation (DOT), Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Department of Homeland Security (DHS), including the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), and the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB). Our regulatory work includes airline alliances, joint ventures, codesharing and other cooperative arrangements; securing antitrust immunity or clearance in the US and other jurisdictions worldwide; all facets of drone operations; advising on compliance with various aviation-related laws, such as consumer protection rules on airline advertising, required disclosures, tarmac delays and customer service plans, nondiscrimination against disabled persons, cabotage, carriage of hazardous materials, and oversales; airline distribution matters; public charters; and transportation security measures. We also counsel carriers on a broad range of aviation matters arising under international agreements and international arbitration proceedings conducted under such agreements, and we act for airlines in matters pertaining to antitrust compliance and antitrust litigation in the US and Europe. We advise aviation clients on a variety of legal matters arising from their business operations in the US, such as patent, trademark, copyright and other intellectual property issues, airport and other property leases, arrangements with vendors, employment matters, and tax issues. In addition, Steptoe's team regularly represents aviation companies in tort and business litigation, conducts corporate investigations, and handles enforcement actions against aviation concerns and their employees.

Aviation Safety and Accident Response

Steptoe's multidisciplinary aviation accident response team has extensive experience advising clients with respect to aviation accidents and investigations. Our team consists of regulatory, enforcement, and litigation lawyers who have in-depth knowledge of every aspect of the accident response and investigation process associated with aviation accidents, including those involving military aviation, missiles, and unmanned aircraft. We have successfully handled safety, enforcement, and regulatory matters before the NTSB, FAA, TSA, and DHS. We know that the post-accident environment can be stressful and confusing, so our team takes every necessary measure to provide our clients with peace of mind, realistic expectations, and a clearly defined approach to accident response. Our team has handled more than 35 NTSB accident investigations, of which more than 25 were in the aviation industry.
Representative Matters

- Represented multiple airlines in federal and state court litigation where we have successfully obtained dismissal of putative class action claims on the ground that the allegations were preempted by the Airline Deregulation Act.
- Successfully negotiated on behalf of a major international aircraft parts distributor to obtain relief from onerous aircraft parts documentation requirements imposed by the FAA and EASA as an Annex to a Bilateral Aviation Safety Agreement between the EU and the US.
- Obtained dismissal of all damages claims against Amadeus IT Group in putative antitrust class action case in New York on the ground that the claims were preempted by the Airline Deregulation Act as relating to airline rates and services. Gordon v. Amadeus IT Group, et al., –Supp.3d –2016 WL 3676678 15 CIV. 5457 (KPF) (S.D.N.Y. July 6, 2016).
- Represent Swissport SAS in highly technical litigation arising out of ground accidents that have occurred within various airport operations areas that involve the interplay of federal aviation regulations, state tort law and multijurisdictional contract law.
- Serve as primary outside counsel for TAP Portugal in aviation litigation and regulatory matters involving DOT’s consumer protection and disability-related regulations, compliance with FAA’s aircraft operations specifications requirements, and codesharing and other airline relationships.
- Advise Japan Airlines on a wide range of US regulatory-related matters including alliance, joint venture, codesharing and other cooperative relationships, DOT’s consumer protection and disability-related rules, cabotage issues, restrictions on air travel to Cuba, and copyright infringement.
- Successfully assisted foreign carrier in all aspects of launching operations to the United States, including FAA operations specifications, DOT economic authority, compliance with TSA and CBP passenger and crew information and manifest requirements, airport landing rights and agreements, collection and remittance of user fees, data reporting, and family assistance plan.
- Assisted a Midwestern utility and a lifestyle content/media company with the creation of a UAS department in compliance with FAA regulations, including preparation of an Operations Manual and related forms and documents (the department is now up and running).
- Currently assisting a municipality with obtaining FAA authorization for UAS operations.
- Provided guidance to a major tech company to secure domestic and international authorizations in connection with drone test flights.
- Assisted an aerial survey, mapping, and inspection services company to secure a section 333 exemption (and amendments thereto) and provided guidance on compliance with FAR Part 107.
- Provided guidance to a utility client on applying for and completing the voluminous requirements for the FAA’s new UAS Integration Pilot Program.
- Provided guidance to a major insurer on establishing in-house UAS capabilities, state and local UAS requirements, and applicability of drone registration and other requirements following the implementation of FAR Part 107.
- Counseled major public relations company on compliance with Federal Aviation Regulations in its drone usage on behalf of clients.
- Successfully represented company and individual in FAA investigation alleging improper production of aircraft parts.
- Represented aviation clients in more than 30 aviation accident investigations involving general aviation and air carrier accidents before the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), foreign accident investigation authorities and the Department of Defense.
News & Publications

PRESS RELEASES
Steptoe Receives 28 Practice Rankings, 29 Individual Awards in Legal 500 US 2020
July 7, 2020

MEDIA MENTIONS
Law360 Quotes Dane Jaques on FAA’s Aircraft Certification Process
July 6, 2020

PRESS RELEASES
Law360 Names Steptoe a 'Transportation Group of the Year' for Fourth Year
February 18, 2020

MEDIA MENTIONS
Law360 Quotes Jaques, Lipe on 2020 Transportation Legislation, Regulation
January 6, 2020

PRESS RELEASES
Steptoe Receives 30 Practice, 149 Individual Mentions in Legal 500 US 2019
June 5, 2019

PRESS RELEASES
Law360 Names Steptoe a 'Transportation Group of the Year' for Third Straight Year
March 4, 2019

MEDIA MENTIONS
Lawline Interviews Dane Jaques for 'Faculty Spotlight'
February 8, 2019

PRESS RELEASES
Steptoe Receives 32 Practice, 135 Individual Mentions in Legal 500 US 2018
May 30, 2018

PRESS RELEASES
Law360 Again Names Steptoe a 'Transportation Group of the Year'
February 9, 2018

MEDIA MENTIONS
Law360 Quotes Dane Jaques on Restoration of Universal Drone Registration
Law360
December 15, 2017

Events

WEBINARS
Using Unmanned Aircraft Systems for Infrastructure Inspection
June 13, 2017
Speakers: Carol R. Gosain, Dane Jaques

WEBINARS
Real World Accident Response: The NTSB
February 28, 2017
Speakers: David H. Coburn, Dane Jaques
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