



Dean A. Rocco

Partner

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Dean Rocco is a pragmatic, results-oriented attorney who leverages the firm's geographic reach and strength across multiple disciplines to the benefit of clients. He takes great pride in building longstanding partnerships with clients through responsive communication and positive outcomes consistent with their business philosophies and objectives.

Dean maintains a significant practice working with clients on transactional matters, providing advice and counsel and representing employers and management in a wide range of employment litigation. In addition, Dean develops award-winning e-learning solutions for clients, including online harassment prevention training programs, and serves as a member of the firm's COVID-19 Task Force.

Dean also serves as a chair of the firm's national Cannabis Law Practice. Dean works with clients inside and outside the cannabis industry to navigate the complex and quickly evolving framework of adult-use and medical marijuana laws impacting their businesses.

As a distinguished attorney and recognized authority in his field, Dean has been ranked in Chambers USA, recognized by publications and asked to serve in leadership positions of boards and committees of several organizations. He is asked routinely by media outlets, business organizations and professional associations to share his perspectives on evolving legal issues

Employment Counseling, Training & Litigation

Clients routinely seek Dean's help navigating difficult personnel issues, managing employees with disabilities and medical leave needs, complying with wage-and-hour regulations, developing handbooks and policies, constructing compensation plans and negotiating executive compensation arrangements. Dean's clients also sought his guidance on risk mitigation and business re-opening protocols in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Services

- Canada
- Cannabis Law
- Class Action
- Employment & Labor
- Fair Housing & Discrimination Claims
- Israel
- Life, Health, Disability & ERISA

Clients also call on Dean to train management and employees on a variety of subjects. Dean has produced a number of online training programs, including state-mandated sexual harassment training that clients can deliver to employees virtually through the firm's e-learning platforms.

Dean also maintains a significant employment litigation practice. He defends employers against such claims as breach of employment contract, discrimination and harassment, violations of disability and medical leave laws and workplace torts. He frequently litigates individual, representative and class action wage-and-hour lawsuits alleging denials of meal periods and rest breaks, misclassifications of employees, non-payments of wages, off-the-clock work, unlawful commission and bonus plans, and violations of statutory pay provisions, including the California Private Attorney General Act. Dean has successfully enforced employer-promulgated arbitration programs, secured restraining orders against employees involved in workplace violence, and prosecuted actions against employees engaged in unfair competition and misappropriation of trade secrets.

Cannabis Law

Within the cannabis industry, Dean assists with business formations and corporate governance, supports licensing applications and modifications, advises on commercial transactions, mergers and acquisitions and fundraising, develops sound SOP's and personnel policies and guides regulatory compliance in the growth, transportation, processing, production and distribution of cannabis products. Dean also supports ancillary businesses, financial institutions and insurance companies working with cannabis companies by providing guidance on regulatory compliance, risk management principles, underwriting practices and policy forms.

When disputes arise, Dean leverages the firm's strength across multiple disciplines to effectively litigate commercial, products liability, professional liability, intellectual property and employment law claims.

For employers of all types, Dean provides guidance on legalization's impact on employment law issues such as job applications, drug testing, accommodating employees' use of cannabis for medical purposes and cannabis as a cause or treatment for workplace injuries.

Fair Housing & Discrimination

Dean has significant experience counseling clients and defending against litigation asserting discrimination under state and federal fair employment and housing laws. He has defended hotels and business establishments against claims of discrimination under the Americans with Disabilities Act and California's Unruh Civil Rights Act. He also has handled numerous website accessibility claims under the same laws.

Education

- Pepperdine University School of Law (J.D., 2000)
 - Judicial Externship, Los Angeles County Superior Court, Honorable Lawrence J. Mira

- University of Michigan (B.A., 1997)

Bar Admissions

- California

Court Admissions

- U.S. Court of Appeals, Ninth Circuit
- U.S. District Court, Central District of California
- U.S. District Court, Eastern District of California
- U.S. District Court, Northern District of California
- U.S. District Court, Southern District of California

Professional Affiliations

- Child Care Resource Center, Board Member, 2018–present
- International Cannabis Bar Association, Member, 2018–present
- National Cannabis Industry Association (NCIA), Member, 2017–present; Human Resources Committee, Member
- California Cannabis Industry Association (CCIA), Member 2017–present; Former Chair and Member, Risk Management and Human Resources Committees
- Claims & Litigation Management Alliance (CLM), EPL Committee Chair, 2016, Member Cyber, Management & Professional Liability Committee, 2018–present
- National Human Resources Association – Los Angeles, Board Member, 2011–present
- Society for Human Resources Management, Member, 2014–present
- Pepperdine University School of Law Alumni Association, 2000–present
- University of Michigan Alumni Association, 1997–present

Awards & Honors

- Selected for inclusion in The Legal 500 United States in Cannabis Tier 4, 2023-2025
- Ranked in the Chambers USA Guide: 2021–2025, Cannabis Law – Nationwide: Western United States
- Selected for inclusion in *California Rising Stars*, 2010