



Jeffrey M. Yeatman

Shareholder

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Jeffrey Yeatman represents domestic and international manufacturers in connection with class action, mass tort, consumer fraud, products liability, and warranty litigation.

Domestic and international manufacturers turn to Mr. Yeatman for legal matters involving class action, mass tort, consumer fraud, products liability, and warranty litigation.

A member of the Firm's Complex Litigation and Class Actions Group, Mr. Yeatman has significant experience with automotive and pharmaceutical product liability litigation. His practice focuses on the preparation, trial, and appeal of complex civil litigation cases, many of which involve complicated technological and procedural issues.

Mr. Yeatman has represented a number of clients in statewide and nationwide class action suits and multi-district litigation (MDL) proceedings, including actions arising from mass disasters or based on claims of product defect or consumer fraud. He has successfully opposed motions for class certification in numerous jurisdictions, both in state and federal court. Most recently, Mr. Yeatman successfully argued the motion to dismiss a major MDL proceeding against a major domestic automotive manufacturer relating to allegedly fraudulent fuel economy estimates.

He assists clients in the areas of case investigation, discovery practice, motions practice, and the preparation and presentation of expert witness testimony. He also has broad experience in drafting and negotiating warranties and commercial contracts, including drafting and revising warranty provisions for several international manufacturers of heavy machinery and automobiles.

With experience assisting numerous product manufacturers and distributors, Mr. Yeatman represents clients in cases involving serious personal injury and death relating to allegations of product defects or malfunction, including serving in national counsel and coordinating roles. In those roles, he has managed the investigation and defense of fatality and serious personal injury claims.

Mr. Yeatman's practice also includes counseling companies regarding governmental reporting obligations and compliance with various federal statutes and regulations, including the Consumer Product Safety Act. He has handled numerous investigations into potential product safety defects, prepared and submitted Section 15(b) reports to the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), and served as the interface with the CPSC on product recalls. In connection with these activities, Mr. Yeatman has also advised clients about their potential remedies against remote suppliers, manufacturers, and distributors associated with product recalls. In addition, he has prepared submissions in response to investigations and requests for information from governmental agencies such as the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). He has also supervised product recalls through NHTSA, including preparing defect reports, negotiating with NHTSA regarding the content of consumer point-of-sale notifications, and submitting quarterly recall status reports.

Relying on his significant experience with appellate litigation, Mr. Yeatman has argued cases in the Maryland Court of Special Appeals and submitted briefs and pleadings in numerous appellate courts, including the Maryland Court of Appeals, Maryland Court of Special Appeals, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, and United States Supreme Court. He has also prepared amicus curiae appellate briefs and submissions on behalf of trade groups.



Representative Matters

- Represented a major domestic automotive manufacturer in MDL proceedings in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan relating to allegedly fraudulent fuel economy estimates on several models of trucks. Successfully argued motion to dismiss case in its entirety.
- Represented a major domestic automotive manufacturer in a putative class action in the Eastern District of Michigan involving allegations of defective shifter bushings in a series of vehicles. Motion to dismiss was granted in its entirety on prudential mootness grounds.
- Defended a major domestic automotive manufacturer in a putative class action in the Central District of California involving allegations of defective exhaust manifolds in best-selling trucks. Motion to dismiss was granted in its entirety.
- Represented a major domestic automotive manufacturer in consolidated putative class action proceedings in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan relating to alleged incorporation of diesel emissions "defeat devices" in several models of diesel trucks.
- Represented a major domestic automotive manufacturer in putative class action proceedings in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan relating to alleged exhaust intrusion in several model years of SUVs. Argued opposition to class certification motion. During pendency of class certification motion, negotiated and obtained approval for nationwide class settlement.
- Representation of a major domestic automotive manufacturer in putative consumer privacy class action in U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington. Successfully obtained dismissal of case on initial motion.
- Representation of a major domestic automotive manufacturer in putative class action in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington, alleging personal injuries from exhaust intrusion in police interceptor vehicles. Successfully moved to strike class allegations as incompatible with class treatment.
- Representation of a major domestic automotive manufacturer in numerous putative class actions across multiple states alleging exhaust intrusion in several model years of SUVs.
- Representation of a major domestic automotive manufacturer in MDL proceedings in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida alleging defects in supplier airbags in a number of different vehicles.
- Representation of a major domestic automotive manufacturer in two putative class actions in the District of Colorado relating to allegedly fraudulent fuel economy estimates.
- Representation of a major domestic automotive manufacturer in two putative class actions in the District of New Jersey alleging personal injury claims from supposed exhaust intrusion.
- Representation of a major domestic automotive manufacturer in MDL proceedings in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York, including more than a dozen putative class actions, covering 29 states, alleging consumer fraud and breach of warranty claims relating to claimed misrepresentations of fuel economy performance of certain hybrid vehicles.
- Representation of an international pharmaceutical company in MDL proceedings and related state court litigation, arising out of claims of product defect.
- Representation of a domestic company and its affiliates relating to the manufacture and sale of construction materials associated with a high-profile building fire incident.
- Representation of an international medical device manufacturer in matters arising out of claims of product defect.
- Representation of a national chemical corporation in numerous overlapping putative class actions arising out of a significant chemical release and fire.
- Representation of the American-based operation of a Japanese multinational auto manufacturer in class action on behalf of all United States purchasers of certain vehicles, alleging violation of consumer protection statutes and breach of warranty due to misrepresentation of the performance of wheel rims on those vehicles. Obtained decision denying class certification.
- Representation of a manufacturer of automotive equipment in an NHTSA-supervised product recall.

- Representation of a manufacturer of consumer electronics before the CPSC on a potential product defect, including preparation of the company's Section 15(b) reports and working with CPSC on the eventual product recall.
- Representation of a major domestic automotive manufacturer in products liability action in U.S. District Court for the District of Maryland, relating to the claimed failure of an air bag to deploy during an accident. Obtained summary judgment for spoliation of evidence, where plaintiff failed to preserve the accident vehicle or notify manufacturer of the accident before filing suit three years later. Summary judgment was affirmed by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit in a reported opinion that substantially expanded the federal law of spoliation in that circuit.
- Defending a major domestic automotive manufacturer in a putative class action in the Northern District of California involving allegations of breach of emissions warranties.
- Defending a major domestic automotive manufacturer in a putative class action in the Southern District of California involving claimed privacy violations.



Professional Honors & Activities

- Permanent Member – Judicial Conference of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit
- Member – DRI (formerly Defense Research Institute)
- *The Legal 500 United States* – Recommended for Product Liability, Mass Tort and Class Action - Defense: Automotive/Transport (2015, 2021)



Publications

- "Shouldn't Fixing the Problem Be Enough? Post-recall Civil Litigation and the Prudential Mootness Doctrine," republished August 4, 2023, in Mealey's Litigation Report (August 2023)
- "Soothing Range Anxiety: Tips for EV Manufacturers and Sellers" (July 2023)



Speaking Engagements

- "*Ford v. Montana* Eighth Judicial District & Summary on the Use of Conjoint Analysis for Class Action Damages," webinar, The Knowledge Group (May 2021)



Education

- University of Maryland School of Law, J.D., 1996, with honor
- University of Maryland, B.A., 1991, summa cum laude
- University of Kent at Canterbury, Diploma, 1990, with merit



Admissions

- Maryland, 1996
- United States Supreme Court, 2000
- United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, 2000
- United States District Court for the District of Maryland, 1997
- United States District Court for the District of Colorado, 2013
- United States District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan, 2017