

Robert Pleines, Jr.

Cleveland
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Overview

Bob represents a variety of commercial shippers, motor carriers, freight brokers, manufacturers, and distributors with regulatory compliance counseling, contract and policy drafting, and business consultation. He has experience advising clients in several transportation modes, including truckload, less-than-truckload (LTL), and refrigerated, and regularly provides strategic legal and operational guidance to clients who engage independent contractor owner-operators.

Bob works closely with a number of last-mile freight delivery providers and freight brokers to develop compliant transportation models that meet the demands of modern deliveries while adhering to federal and state transportation regulations. He regularly counsels clients on contract design and compliance procedures that minimize risk and enhance operational efficiency.

He is also well-versed in a variety of transportation-related rules regulations, including the Federal Leasing Regulations (FLRs), Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations, (FMCSRs), regulations set forth by the California Air Resources Board (CARB), and the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS). He has previous experience as a litigator at a regional insurance defense firm where he represented commercial motor carriers and their drivers in complex pre-suit claims and lawsuits involving wrongful death, personal injury, cargo, and property damage.

Outside of his practice, Bob is a Major in the United States Marine Corps Reserve and currently serves as a Detachment Officer-in-Charge. He is a commissioned officer with over a decade of experience in collaborative project development and leadership-driven unit cohesion.

Representative Matters

- Provided expedited regulatory due diligence for a private equity firm's acquisition of a freight brokerage having nearly $2 billion in annual revenue.
- Drafted and offered revisions to temporary driver service agreements, ensuring regulatory compliance and protecting clients' interests.
- Drafted, reviewed, and provided comprehensive counsel on multiple dedicated motor carrier services agreements, tailoring solutions to meet shippers' specific transportation needs.
- Advised freight brokers and motor carriers in the last-mile delivery space as to applicable permitting and licensure requirements.
- Developed ground transportation models and crafted template agreements to support these new models, ensuring legal compliance and operational efficiency.
- Reviewed and offered strategic guidance on multiple owner-operator models, ensuring compliance with the Federal Leasing Regulations and acceptable industry practice.
- Offered specialized counsel and tactical guidance to clients transitioning between transportation service providers, ensuring seamless operational shifts and regulatory compliance.
- Represented a vehicle manufacturer in its negotiating emissions compliance language with a major city for the sale of vehicles to be used in public transportation.

Credentials

EDUCATION

- Cleveland State University College of Law, 2016, J.D.
  - *Cleveland State Law Review*
    - Managing Editor of the Year (2015-2016)
    - Associate of the Year (2013-2014)
- Ohio University, 2012, B.A., *magna cum laude*
  - Randolph Stone Award Winner, History Essay Competition, 2012
  - Political Science Outstanding Intern Award, 2012
  - Publication: "The New Deal's Impact on American Socialism," *Ohio University Undergraduate Journal of History*

BAR & COURT ADMISSIONS

- Ohio

Memberships

- Member, Ohio State Bar Association
- Member, Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association

Awards & Recognition

- Listed, Pros to Know – Top Transportation Innovators, Food Logistics and Supply & Demand Chain Executive, 2026
- Listed, Ohio Super Lawyers – Rising Stars, 2024-2025

News & Insights

- Owner-Operators and Federal Leasing Regulation Compliance: Legal Q&A
  October 22, 2026 | Client Alerts & Insights
- InterConnect Newsletter | Q3 2026
  October 20, 2026 | Newsletters
- FMCSA MOTUS Implementation - Common Motor Carrier Concerns
  October 14, 2026 | Client Alerts & Insights
- Cross-Border Transport Risks: Cabotage Regulatory Enforcement Intensifies
  September 18, 2026 | Client Alerts & Insights
- USPS Highway Contract Route Carrier Legal Issues for Closing Out 2026
  September 15, 2026 | Client Alerts & Insights
- SCOTUS Extends FAA Exemption to Last-Mile Drivers: What the Flowers Foods Decision Means for Motor Carriers and Transportation Providers
  May 29, 2026 | Client Alerts & Insights
- Supply & Demand Chain Executive Names Robert Pleines, Jr. Recipient of 2026 Pros to Know Award
  April 14, 2026 | Press Releases
- Benesch's Jonathan Todd and Robert Pleines, Jr. Publish Article in Law360 on New DOT Restrictions Impacting Nondomiciled Commercial Driver's Licenses
  February 27, 2026 | Contributed Content & Presentations

- InterConnect Newsletter - Q1 2026
  February 25, 2026 | Newsletters
- Non-Domiciled CDLs - FMCSA Final Rule and its Operational Impacts
  February 17, 2026 | Client Alerts & Insights

Speaking & Events

PAST EVENTS

- Legal Updates to Close Out 2026 | Jonathan Todd, Christopher Razek, Robert Pleines
  November 5, 2026 | Speaking Engagement
- Regulation and Legal Update: Navigating Broker Liability Standards and Insurance Complexities | Robert Pleines, Jr.
  May 20, 2026 | Speaking Engagement
- Top Broker Operations Risks You Aren't Considering | Megan K. MacCallum, Robert Pleines, Jr.
  April 15, 2026 | Speaking Engagement
- FMCSA's Broker Transparency Rule | Megan K. MacCallum, Robert Pleines, Jr.
  November 10, 2025 | Speaking Engagement
- Chicago Vice - Navigating Risk in Transit: Legal Insights on the Storage and Transport of Cannabis, Hemp, Alcohol, Hazmats and Munitions (Including Tariff Implications)
  July 15, 2025 | Firm Events