



Rachel Welford

Member

Washington, D.C.

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Practice Areas

- Aviation Regulatory
- Transportation & Trade
- Maritime Regulatory
- Trade Regulation, Export Controls & Sanctions

Industry Sectors

- Aviation

Education

- George Mason University School of Law, J.D., *magna cum laude*, 2014
- University of Michigan, B.A., 2008

Bar Admissions

- Virginia
- District of Columbia
- Pennsylvania

Affiliations

- American Bar Association Forum on Air and Space Law
 - Program Chair, Governing Committee of the Forum on Air and Space Law, 2023-2024
- Women in Aviation, International

Awards & Honors

- Best Lawyers in America "Ones to Watch" 2021-2025
- *JD Supra's* 2021 Readers' Choice Awards, Top Author 2021, 2022
- Chambers and Partners USA, *Associate to Watch* 2021, 2022
- Chambers and Partners USA, *Up and Coming* 2023, 2024
- *The Legal 500 United States* "Rising Star" for Transport: Aviation and Air Travel 2021, 2022
- *The Legal 500 United States* "Next Generation Partner" for Transport: Aviation and Air Travel 2023, 2024
- Super Lawyers "Rising Star" in Washington, D.C. for Aviation and Aerospace, 2021-2024
- *Business Today*, Top 10 Influential Regulatory Aviation Lawyers Shaping US Airspace in 2023
- Capital Pro Bono Honor Roll, 2023

Rachel concentrates her practice on aviation regulatory matters, with a particular focus on advising clients on aviation security law and policy involving U.S. government agencies, including the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP). She represents airlines, airports, aviation security vendors, and other regulated entities before TSA and CBP on administrative investigations and civil enforcement actions. She advises TSA-regulated entities on compliance with TSA security regulations as well as TSA's Full All-Cargo Aircraft Operator Standard Security Program (FACAOSSP), Aircraft Operator Standard Security Program (AOSSP), Indirect Air Carrier Standard Security Program (IACSSP), and Foreign Air Carrier Model Security Program (MSP). As part of counseling clients on TSA compliance and enforcement matters, Rachel advises on appropriate mitigation measures that have proven to be successful in reducing liability and enhancing compliance. Rachel also advises clients on the legal and business ramifications of evolving TSA and CBP legislative and regulatory changes as well as transactional matters with an aviation security nexus.

As part of her broader aviation practice, Rachel counsels major aviation companies and entities on the increasingly complex safety and economic regulatory measures promulgated by domestic and international regulatory bodies. She also advises U.S. and foreign airlines on strategies for compliance with consumer protection and aviation safety laws implemented by the Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and helps clients secure economic and code sharing authority from the DOT.

Additionally, Rachel counsels enterprises through aviation regulatory issues concerning mergers and acquisitions, licensing, and certification, and briefs clients on due diligence and other considerations associated with multimillion-dollar commercial aviation transactions. She has experience defending clients in FAA investigations and enforcement actions, including denials of airman medical certificates.

Rachel returned to Cozen O'Connor in 2019 after serving as the director of security and government affairs at American Airlines. In that role, she gained valuable hands-on security operations experience as well as a deep knowledge of security policy matters. She was also an associate attorney in the Aviation and Corporate Practice groups at an Am Law 200 law firm in Washington, D.C., where she advised high net worth individuals on FAA regulations pertaining to personal use of business aircraft and provided counsel on the regulatory landscape surrounding commercial use of unmanned aircraft systems. Prior to attending law school, Rachel was a Corporate Communications specialist at Delta Air Lines. She has also held positions at the U.S. Department of Transportation's Office of Aviation Enforcement and Proceedings, the Aerospace Industries Association (AIA), Airlines for America (A4A), and Spirit Airlines.

Rachel earned her J.D., *magna cum laude*, from George Mason University School of Law with a concentration in National Security Law and Policy. She received her Bachelor of Arts with high distinction, Phi Beta Kappa, in political science and organizational studies from the University of Michigan. Rachel serves as co-chair of the Scholarship Committee of the American Bar of the American Bar Association Forum on Air and Space Law and is a member of Women in Aviation International. She was named to Best Lawyers in America's "Ones to Watch" category from 2021 to

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2025, which recognizes attorneys for outstanding professional excellence in private practice in the United States. Rachel was also selected as a top 10 author as part of JD Supra's 2021 Readers' Choice Awards for her thought leadership on transportation legal issues in 2020. She prefers a window over an aisle seat.

Experience

Transportation Security Administration

- Advised a large foreign air carrier on defense against a significant TSA civil penalty arising from the alleged violation of TSA cargo screening requirements and the carrier's Model Security Program (MSP) at a major U.S. airport.
- Advised a large U.S. passenger carrier on defense against a significant TSA civil penalty arising from the alleged violation of TSA screening requirements and the carrier's Aircraft Operator Standard Security Program (AOSSP) at a major U.S. airport.
- Counseled a leading aviation security services provider on its response to a TSA Letter of Investigation that involved the provider, which resulted in the avoidance of liability for a substantial civil penalty.
- Successfully defended a leading U.S. cargo airline as part of a TSA investigation alleging violations of TSA's security requirements and the carrier's Full All-Cargo Aircraft Operator Standard Security Program (FACAOSSP), resulting in no enforcement action against the airline.
- Successfully defended a U.S. flight school in a TSA investigation alleging a violation of TSA's regulations related to its Alien Flight School Program (AFSP), resulting in no enforcement action against the flight school.
- Successfully defended a TSA-regulated indirect air carrier specializing in the movement of perishable goods in a TSA investigation alleging a violation of TSA's regulations applicable to indirect air carriers and the carrier's Indirect Air Carrier Standard Security Program (IACSSP). This included advising on appropriate mitigation measures to reduce liability and increase compliance. TSA did not take enforcement action against the client.

Department of Transportation and Federal Aviation Administration

- Advised a leading aviation industry trade organization and individual U.S. airline members on a pending DOT rulemaking to redefine airlines' obligations to accommodate service animals, including emotional support or comfort animals in the aircraft cabin.
- Counseled a large U.S. passenger airline on compliance issues relating to the CARES Act, the legislation Congress passed in response to COVID-19, which included \$25 billion in financial support for the airline industry.
- Counseled a large U.S. passenger airline on the negotiation and structuring of an innovative set of joint venture and related agreements in furtherance of obtaining clearance for implementation of the alliance from the DOT.
- Advised an FAA-regulated manufacturer and supplier of in-flight entertainment systems on the aviation regulatory aspects of its avionics business.
- Advised a large U.S. passenger airline on airline alliance issues, including preparing comments on applications for immunity from U.S. antitrust laws for competitors' airline alliances, which successfully persuaded the DOT to propose competition remedy conditions.
- Represented non-U.S. air carriers in obtaining licenses/authorizations from the DOT and FAA for a range of air services to/from the United States, including wet leases, charters, and codeshares.
- Represented a law enforcement officer and pilot who faced a Notice of Proposed Certificate Action by the FAA proposing to suspend his pilot certificate for actions taken pursuant to his law enforcement duties. Successfully persuaded the FAA to withdraw its notice in its entirety.
- Represented a pilot and flight instructor in connection with a five-year suspension of his medical

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license imposed by the FAA based on an erroneous finding that a minor head injury affected his ability to safely pilot an airplane. Persuaded the FAA's Federal Air Surgeon, through the use of extensive medical testimony, that the client should be cleared to fly, effective immediately.

- Advised a provider of commercial drone services on FAA regulations governing the operation of drones in restricted airspace.

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