



Governmental & Civil Rights

Crisis events may involve high risk, high exposure, and media attention. Our team has developed a seven-step critical response program that we employ if one of these events occur. Additionally, through counseling on a variety of issues related to public entities, we pursue the goals of reducing lawsuits and minimizing costs of defense and ultimate liability. If litigation occurs, our experienced legal team will work to provide a swift and effective resolution to the matter.

Our attorneys will train your staff on these seven steps and work with you to develop written policies and plans that you can implement before, during, and after a critical incident. If an incident does occur, we will work side by side with you to develop a strategy for press releases, media responses, investigations, potential discipline, and future litigation.

Legal Counseling Services

Our attorneys are experienced in representing a variety of local governmental entities and special districts—including municipalities, counties, townships, park districts, school districts, and fire protection districts—in a variety of capacities, from general counsel to special counsel.

We are knowledgeable in the laws governing the critical day-to-day matters encountered by local governments, which enables us to effectively counsel our clients in the following areas:

- legislative and procedural matters
- state and federal compliance issues
- ethics and conflicts of interest
- public bidding
- purchasing and contracting
- open meeting and open records
- labor and personnel issues

PRACTICE CONTACTS

Matthew B. Champlin
Alexandra S. Haar-Justice
Stephanie W. Weiner

PROFESSIONALS

John C. Hanson
Peter A. Houser
Sarah B. Jansen
Lance T. Jones
Thomas J. Magee
Eric W. Moch
Jamie M. Rein

RELATED PRACTICES

Employment & Labor

- FOIA responses
- council, committee, and board meetings
- government functions and practices
- finance
- vendor contracts
- land use matters
- prosecutions
- labor negotiations
- drafting and reviewing policies, procedures, and general orders
- internal investigations (employment, racial profiling, elected officials)
- crisis response programs

Litigation Services

Our Governmental and Civil Rights attorneys have extensive experience in state and federal courts in Illinois, Indiana, and Missouri, defending §1983 actions and lawsuits alleging personal injury, property damage, and breach of contract. Further, we defend employment-related claims.

Section 1983 Civil Rights Defense

Civil rights defense is a unique area of law requiring extensive knowledge of 42 USC §1983. This statute provides a civil cause of action for violations of an individual's constitutional rights by a state actor. Our attorneys have in-depth experience defending police officers, police departments, and local governments in these complex claims, with all of their unique characteristics and pitfalls. Defending such claims requires knowledge and understanding of the duties of law enforcement and the legal system, as well as a sense of fairness and confidentiality.

HeplerBroom's Governmental and Civil Rights Practice Group has defended claims involving:

- excessive force
- officer-involved shootings
- unlawful detention and arrest
- illegal search and seizure
- wrongful convictions
- improper procedure
- denial of healthcare
- wrongful death actions

- cruel and unusual punishment
- failure to train
- *Monell* claims
- in-custody deaths
- deliberate indifference
- First Amendment violations
- sexual abuse

Tort Litigation

Our attorneys defend police officers, police departments, prosecutors, and local governmental entities in tort claims brought in Illinois, Indiana, and Missouri state courts. This requires an understanding of the unique laws applicable to such claims, including immunities and other defenses. We have successfully defended claims involving:

- wrongful death
- personal injury
- property damage
- negligence
- breach of contract

Employment Litigation

We also regularly represent a variety of local governmental entities in employment litigation matters. We have extensive experience in matters involving:

- discrimination
- retaliation
- wrongful discharge
- breach of employment contracts
- whistleblowers
- disability

Case Results

AUGUST 23, 2022

Jansen Gets Waukegan Negligence Case Dismissed 3 Times

AUGUST 18, 2022

Elworth Secures Summary Judgment in Premises Liability Case

MARCH 19, 2013

Murphy Wins Appeal in U.S. Court of Appeals for Seventh Circuit

OCTOBER 2, 2012

Kaufmann and Murphy Secure Dismissal with Prejudice in Federal Court

AUGUST 9, 2011

Kaufmann and Murphy Secure Dismissal of Employment Claim

Insights

News

JUNE 14, 2022 | FIRM NEWS

Reda is Certified Mediator

JANUARY 4, 2011 | FIRM NEWS

HeplerBroom Springfield Attorneys Begin Jury Trial In Peoria Federal Court

Events

JULY 6, 2021 | SPEAKING ENGAGEMENT

Weiner Presents Risk Transfer Webinar

Blog Posts

FEBRUARY 14, 2023 | BLOG

Child Riding Bicycle on Residential Street Not “Intended User” and Village Entitled to Immunity

AUGUST 5, 2022 | BLOG

Local Governments and Cyclists Take Note: First District Limits Recent Exception to Tort Immunity Act

MAY 24, 2022 | BLOG

First District Creates Narrow Exception to Tort Immunity Act

NOVEMBER 14, 2018 | BLOG

Step on a Crack, Break the City's Bank: Discretionary Immunity Requires a Conscious Decision to Not Repair City Sidewalks

FEBRUARY 13, 2018 | BLOG

What's in a Name? Missouri's Constitutional Prohibition Against Negligence-Based Claims Arising out of Alleged Sexual Misconduct of Clergy: Who Exactly Qualifies as Clergy?