



JOHN D. SURMA

Partner

Houston

713.292.5633

713.292.0151

Service Focus

- Counseling and Advice
- Litigation and Trials
- Workplace Safety

Industry Focus

- Construction
- Energy
- Healthcare

OVERVIEW

John D. Surma, a partner in the Houston office, defends employers nationwide in workplace safety and health matters, regulatory compliance, and catastrophic incident investigations. With decades of experience representing mid- to large-scale employers in healthcare, construction, industrial manufacturing, energy, and infrastructure, John guides businesses through OSHA, MSHA, and other agency actions, as well as risk management, regulatory counseling, and litigation arising from catastrophic workplace events. Employers rely on his strategic counsel to navigate the full scope of workplace safety statutes, enforcement actions, and investigations—ensuring compliance, reducing risk, and protecting business continuity when it matters most.

Drawing on extensive trial and counseling experience, John represents clients before federal and state agencies, manages compliance audits, and develops proactive programs to address evolving regulatory challenges. He has handled

approximately 2,000 regulatory inspections and investigated hundreds of fatal workplace incidents, delivering practical solutions that minimize liability and support operational goals.

John's clients include aviation companies, refiners, chemical manufacturers, transportation and logistics providers, and major construction and engineering firms. Known for his ability to respond quickly and effectively to catastrophic events, he frequently leads investigations and defends employers in both regulatory proceedings and related civil litigation.

Before joining FP, John was a shareholder at a national labor and employment firm, where he advised and represented employers in high-stakes workplace safety and employment law matters across the United States. His broad experience in multi-industry regulatory compliance and litigation enables him to anticipate issues, deliver actionable advice, and partner with clients to achieve optimal outcomes in even the most challenging circumstances.

Credentials

Education

- University of Wisconsin Law School, J.D., 1994
- University of Wisconsin-Platteville, B.S., *summa cum laude*, 1992

Bar Admissions

- Texas
- Wisconsin

Court Admissions

- U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit
- U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Texas
- U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Texas
- U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Texas
- U.S. District Court for the Western District of Texas

- U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Wisconsin
 - U.S. District Court for the Western District of Wisconsin
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Recognitions

- *The Best Lawyers in America*, Employment Law – Management (2024–2026)
 - *The Best Lawyers in America*, Labor Law – Management (2024–2026)
 - *The Best Lawyers in America*, Litigation – Labor and Employment (2024–2026)
 - *Martindale-Hubbell*, Distinguished rating (2000–present)
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Affiliations

Professional Activities

- Houston Bar Association
- State Bar of Texas
- State Bar of Wisconsin

INSIGHTS

News

Mar 26, 2026

Fisher Phillips Welcomes Prominent Workplace Safety Lawyer