

MONTANA

Local litigation firms

Highly recommended

Boone Karlberg

Christensen Moore Cockrell Cummings & Axelberg

Crowley Fleck

Garlington Lohn & Robinson

Goetz Gallik & Baldwin

Lewis Slovak & Kovacich

Ugrin Alexander Zadick & Higgins

Recommended

Brown Law Firm

Davis Hatley Haffeman & Tighe

Clifford Edwards Law Firm

Hoyt & Blewett

Poore Roth & Robinson

Local litigation stars

Alexander Blewett

Hoyt & Blewett

Environmental Litigation, Personal Injury, Products Liability

Dana Christensen

Christensen Moore Cockrell Cummings & Axelberg
Insurance, Professional Liability

Shane Colton

Edmiston & Colton

Construction Litigation, Personal Injury

Randy Cox

Boone Karlberg

Complex Commercial Litigation, Products Liability

William Crowley

Boone Karlberg

Products Liability

Maxon Davis

Davis Hatley Haffeman & Tighe

Products Liability

Cliff Edwards

Edwards Law Firm

Personal Injury

Jean Faure

Faure Holden

Construction Litigation, Personal Injury

James Goetz

Goetz Gallik & Baldwin

Appellate, Commercial Litigation

Matthew Hayhurst

Boone Karlberg

Commercial Litigation, Insurance, Products Liability

William Evan Jones

Garlington Lohn & Robinson

Products Liability

Tom Lewis

Lewis Slovak & Kovacich

Products Liability

Bradley Luck

Garlington Lohn & Robinson

Insurance

Joe Maynard Jr

Crowley Fleck

Estate Litigation, Personal Injury Litigation

John Maynard

Crowley Fleck

Insurance, Products Liability

Gerald Murphy

Moulton Bellingham

Commercial Litigation, Products Liability

Michael Milodragovich

Milodragovich, Dale, Steinbrenner & Nygren
Civil Litigation, Products Liability

Ian McIntosh

Crowley Fleck

Insurance, Products Liability

Guy Rogers

Brown Law Firm

Insurance, Personal Injury

Perry Schneider

Milodragovich, Dale, Steinbrenner & Nygren
Commercial Litigation, Personal Injury

Robert Sheridan

Garlington Lohn & Robinson

Products Liability

J David Slovak

Lewis Slovak & Kovacich

Products Liability

Lisa Speare

Brown Law Firm

Civil Litigation

Gary Zadick

Ugrin Alexander Zadick & Higgins

Insurance, Personal Injury, Products Liability

Future stars

Sara Berg

Browning Kalczyk Berry & Hoven

Triel Culver

Edwards Law Firm

Kathleen DeSoto

Garlington Lohn & Robinson

Sean Goicoechea

Christensen Moore Cockrell Cummings & Axelberg

Natasha Prinzing Jones

Boone Karlberg

Kimberly More

Crowley Fleck

Jeffrey Oven

Crowley Fleck

Scott Stearns

Boone Karlberg



Montana

Lawyers in Montana are noticing an uptick in employment cases, as people are being laid off more frequently as a result of the economic downturn. The fact that Montana is not an “at will” employment state makes it easier to plaintiffs to file complaints. Since Montana did not ride the real estate wave to its crest like so many other parts of the country, the state has not experienced such dire fallout from the crash. Nevertheless, some anticipate more difficulties ahead, as bankruptcy work is picking up considerably. Oil and gas work remains plentiful in Eastern Montana.

Highly recommended firms

Boone Karlberg

Boone Karlberg is an active litigation firm based in Missoula. Peers mention that the firm has gained a lot of work from the railroads in the last five years; Montana Rail Link is a major client. The firm also has a robust insurance litigation practice; its attorneys have experience prosecuting and defending declaratory judgment actions in state and federal court, as well as trial and appellate work defending insureds. According to peers, “You hear a lot about **Randy Cox** in terms of railroad litigation.” Cox’s practice also extends to defense of toxic tort, products liability, and professional negligence claims. **Matthew Hayhurst**, a young partner at the firm, handles primarily personal injury, products liability, commercial litigation, and insurance law. **William Crowley** is one of the firm’s most experienced litigators, with 27 years of trial work to his name. He has tried cases involving all manner of commercial litigation in state and federal court, and is admitted to practice in both the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals and the U.S. Supreme Court.

Christensen Moore Cockrell Cummings & Axelberg

Christensen Moore Cockrell Cummings & Axelberg is a small, five-attorney outfit based in Kalispell. The firm represents clients in trial and appellate work, with an emphasis on environmental and natural resources regulatory and litigation matters. This is a clear asset given the current legal climate in Montana; there is a lot of environmental defense work in the state now, as plaintiffs counsel is aggressively pursuing these kinds of cases. For example, Arco has a Superfund site in Montana, and this and other hotspots around the state are sure to create work in this field. According to peers, **Dana Christensen** is very well known throughout the state for his insurance defense work and the mediation work he handles in Billings. Competitors note that he represents clients across the state in significant litigation.

Crowley Fleck

In January 2009, Crowley Fleck was born of

a merger between Billings, Montana-based Crowley Haughey Hanson Toole & Dietrich and Fleck Mather & Strutz, a 15-lawyer firm from North Dakota. The firm of Crowley Fleck now has over 100 lawyers in offices across Montana, North Dakota, Wyoming, and South Dakota. The firm retains its strong reputation in Billings, and remains one of the largest firms in Montana, but expects its new regional emphasis to be an advantage for clients in the area.

John Maynard primarily handles insurance defense work, including medical malpractice, products liability, and tort claims. **Ian McIntosh** focuses his practice on civil

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litigation defense, including products liability, insurance bad faith, and personal injury matters. **Joe Maynard Jr.** has experience in estate and personal injury litigation, emphasizing medical malpractice and workers’ compensation claims.

Garlington Lohn & Robinson

Along with Crowley Fleck, Garlington Lohn & Robinson is one of the largest firms in Montana. Garlington has a major presence in Missoula, and Western Montana generally. Its 30 lawyers handle the full range of general commercial litigation.

William Evan Jones has tried 130 civil cases to verdict, primarily handling products liability, negligence, and insurance bad faith claims. He has been with Garlington since 1959, and through his vast trial experience has developed a network of contacts throughout every jurisdiction in the U.S. **Robert Sheridan** focuses his practice on defending claims of products liability, governmental liability, premises and vehicular liability, and defense of workers’ compensation claims. He has also litigated claims under the FELA and has handled numerous appellate matters in addition to his

trial work. **Bradley Luck** largely handles insurance litigation, including matters of bad faith, personal injury, products liability, professional negligence and workers’ compensation.

Goetz Gallik & Baldwin

Goetz Gallik & Baldwin is an eight-lawyer general litigation firm located in Bozeman. The firm’s four partners and four associates focus on civil and criminal trial work, as well as appellate work. The firm’s practice areas include construction litigation, civil rights work, professional malpractice, and land use and zoning matters.

James Goetz has a state-wide practice representing both plaintiffs and defendants in commercial matters, and occasionally handling personal injury matters for plaintiffs. Peers recognize him as “one of the best lawyers in the state.” Unlike so many lawyers in the state, Goetz does not handle insurance defense work, choosing instead to restrict his practice to the aforementioned areas.

Lewis Slovak & Kovacich

The firm of Lewis Slovak & Kovacich is a plaintiff firm located in Great Falls. The firm is known in the Montana market for handling plaintiffs’ personal injury and

environmental claims. The firm handles toxic tort claims relating to exposure to asbestos and other chemicals that cause mesothelioma, lung cancer, asbestosis and other lung diseases. In 2008, the firm obtained a favorable ruling from the Montana Supreme Court reversing the district court’s dismissal of a diseased worker’s asbestosis claim on the basis of worker’s compensation exclusivity. The partners handle environmental claims relating to exposure to contaminated groundwater or soil, and personal injury claims including wrongful death.

Tom Lewis has spent his entire career handling civil litigation for injured plaintiffs, and in that capacity he has argued before all state and federal courts in Montana. He has been honored by a number of associations for his trial and appellate advocacy on behalf of workers, consumers, and landowners.

Ugrin Alexander Zadick & Higgins

Ugrin Alexander Zadick & Higgins is one of the larger firms in Great Falls, and primarily handles defense work in that area of the state. The firm has represented health care institutions, insurance companies,

governmental entities, and corporations both in Montana and out of state. The firm currently has eleven attorneys handling matters ranging from appellate work to commercial litigation to civil rights, employment, insurance defense, medical malpractice, personal injury and products liability. Clients include Chrysler and American Motors Company for products liability work, numerous Montana hospitals and healthcare providers, and Citadel, AFLAC, Kemper, Hartford Accident & Insurance, and Montana Municipal

known for their prowess at handling medical malpractice cases. Speare's practice is focused on defending physicians, hospitals and nursing homes against civil litigation, including malpractice claims.

Davis Hatley Haffeman & Tighe

Located in Great Falls, Davis Hatley Haffeman & Tighe is a business litigation firm that has expanded beyond its principal practice area of insurance defense to include class actions, products liability, employment, and environmental work. The firm's clients

actions to force cleanup of toxic waste and pollution on behalf of private plaintiffs and government entities.

"Clifford Edwards is one of the best plaintiffs' lawyers in the state" claims a competitor. Throughout his career he has sued polluters, manufacturers of defective products, and insurance companies. His two younger sons, Christopher and John Edwards, practice with him at the firm.

Hoyt & Blewett

Hoyt & Blewett is a personal injury firm located in Great Falls. The firm handles a vast array of litigation, including medical negligence and malpractice cases, railroad FELA claims, insurance bad faith, nuisance, and environmental claims. The firm does not represent insurance companies, instead focusing exclusively on claims brought by the injured and those brought on behalf of the deceased. The firm has obtained major verdicts in malicious prosecution cases, negligent construction cases, and railroad crossing cases. Local litigators mention that Alexander "Zander" Blewett is known around Montana as an excellent plaintiff's personal injury attorney.

Poore Roth & Robinson

Poore Roth & Robinson is one of the oldest and largest firms in Butte, and practices civil litigation almost exclusively. The firm consists of ten partners and two of counsel. Partners have argued before both state and federal courts, as well as the U.S. Supreme Court. The firm handles medical malpractice and insurance defense work for clients including Blue Cross Blue Shield, John Deere, and Wells Fargo. Partners are also familiar with natural resource law, water rights, and Superfund issues. On the employment front, partners have handled OSHA and ERISA litigation as well.

“Clifford Edwards is one of the best plaintiffs' lawyers in the state,' claims a competitor.”

Insurance Authority.

Name partner Gary Zadick handles complex litigation, including products liability, personal injury, and insurance law. He is also increasingly handling mediation and arbitration work.

Recommended firms

Brown Law Firm

Brown Law Firm is one of the bigger firms in Billings, with approximately 15 lawyers practicing out of that office. The firm is a litigation boutique, and its lawyers handle defense work almost exclusively. They represent insurance companies, including AIG, National Farmers Union, and the Doctors Company, as well as corporations including Albertson's, Avanta Federal Credit Union, and Holland Chemical International. The partners, including Lisa Speare, are

include Bridgestone Firestone North American Fire Co., Albertson's Inc., Johnson & Johnson, Showdown Ski Arena, and insurance companies Allied Insurance Group, Allstate Insurance Company, Nationwide Insurance Company, and Farmers Insurance Group. Maxon Davis handles work for defendants in civil litigation, including professional liability, products liability, employment and environmental claims. He also handles insurance defense work for insureds, self-insureds, and insurers.

Edwards Frickle & Culver

Edwards Frickle & Culver is a personal injury shop based in Billings. The firm's specializations include serious personal injury and wrongful death suits as a result of product defects, automobile accidents, railroad accidents, and professional negligence. Partners at the firm also handle

