



Karen M. Charlson

Shareholder

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Practice Areas

Occupational Safety and Health
Whistleblowing, Compliance and Investigations
Workplace Violence Prevention and Crisis Response
Workers' Compensation
HR Advice and Counsel
Discrimination and Harassment

Overview

Karen Charlson's practice focuses on litigation with concentration in the areas of:

- Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) federal and state plan compliance and litigation
- Wrongful discharge and retaliation/whistleblower defense
- Workers' compensation defense

Karen assists clients with federal and state plan Occupational Safety and Health Administration compliance issues, challenging citations and defending against formal Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) actions. She has experience running investigations and defense of fatality matters and other multiple fatality catastrophic matters involving explosions and building structural issues. She has represented clients in OSHA and workers' compensation matters in the following industries: healthcare, nonprofit social services, retail, public sector, construction, manufacturing, food production, paper production and trucking.

Karen's workers' compensation defense work is primarily with self-insured and high-deductible employers, defending against claims in an administrative setting and retaliation claims in district court. However, she regularly counsels employers on nonlitigated workers' compensation issues including workplace safety, risk management, return-to-work programs and the interplay of workers' compensation with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

She has handled jury trials, bench trials, administrative hearings, and has appeared before the Minnesota Workers' Compensation Court of Appeals, the National Labor Relations Board, Department of Labor and Industry Administrative Courts in multiple states, and the Federal Occupational Safety & Health Review Board. She also presents and trains employers, insurers/administrators and other lawyers on related topics.

Professional and Community Affiliations

- Member, Hennepin County Bar Association
- Member, Minnesota State Bar Association
- Member, Minnesota Women Lawyers (MWL)
- Board Member and Volunteer, Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid
- Volunteer, NYFS

Recognition

- Named, The Best Lawyers in America®, 2018-2025
- Named, Rising Star, *Minnesota Law and Politics*, 2002, 2004 and 2007-2009

Education

J.D., University of Minnesota Law School, 1997, *cum laude*

B.A., University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 1991

Bar Admissions

Minnesota

Wisconsin

Courts

U.S. District Court, District of Minnesota

Tribal Court of the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux (Dakota) Community

Wisconsin Supreme Court

Minnesota Supreme Court

Publications & Press

Downsizing's Next Target – NIOSH

Littler ASAP

April 4, 2025

OSHA Issues Proposed Rule on Improved Tracking of Workplace Injuries and Illnesses

Littler ASAP

April 4, 2022

A Blizzard of Activity from Minnesota OSHA in the New Year

Littler ASAP

January 5, 2022

Friday Night Fights – What Just Happened to the OSHA and Federal Contractor Vaccine Mandates?

Littler ASAP

December 18, 2021

Best Lawyers in America© 2022 Edition Honors More Than 240 Littler Lawyers

Press Release

August 19, 2021

OSHA Publishes Updated COVID-19 Guidance in Light of Rising Delta Variant Cases

Littler ASAP

August 17, 2021

Cal/OSHA Standards Board Passes Revised Emergency Standard Regulation for COVID-19

Littler ASAP

June 17, 2021

CDC Issues New Quarantine Period Guidance

Littler ASAP

December 3, 2020

CDC Modifies Guidance for Critical Infrastructure Employers

Littler ASAP

November 19, 2020

CDC Finds That Cloth Face Masks Provide Personal Protection

Littler ASAP

November 11, 2020

Best Lawyers in America© 2021 Edition Honors More Than 250 Littler Lawyers

Press Release

August 20, 2020

The Next Normal: A Littler Interview with Dr. John Howard, Director of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health

Littler ASAP

May 12, 2020

The Next Normal: A Littler Insight on Returning to Work – Safety and Health

Littler ASAP

April 22, 2020

Minnesota Update: The Latest COVID-19 Developments Impacting Minnesota Employers

Littler ASAP

April 22, 2020

CDC Updates Guidance for Critical Infrastructure Workers Exposed to COVID-19

Littler ASAP

April 9, 2020

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Guidance for Business Preparedness

Littler ASAP

March 4, 2020

Best Lawyers in America© 2020 Edition Honors More Than 200 Littler Lawyers; 14 Named Lawyer of the Year

Press Release

August 15, 2019

Best Lawyers in America© 2019 Edition Honors More Than 200 Littler Lawyers

Press Release

August 15, 2018

Best Lawyers in America© 2018 Edition Honors More Than 200 Littler Lawyers

Press Release

August 17, 2017

Karen M. Charlson Joins Littler's Minneapolis Office Marking the Firm's Continued Lateral Growth

Press Release

October 8, 2012

OSHA Planning More Nursing Home Inspections Soon

Minnesota Employment Law Report

January 2, 2012

Bah, Humbug! Are Holiday Injuries Covered By Work Comp?

Minnesota Employment Law Report

December 7, 2011

Landed Aliens Deserve Work Comp Protection

Business Report, Issue No. 15

Fall 2003

Events & Speaking Engagements

2024 Midwest Regional Employer Conference

Minneapolis, MN

November 14, 2024

New Year, New Us! Resolutions for You and Your Organization

January 25, 2024

2022 Midwest Regional Employer Conference

Minneapolis, MN

November 3, 2022

The Return to Office in Interesting Times - Staying Flexible and Positive to Benefit Your Organization

Minneapolis, MN

July 21, 2022

“I’ll Take Safety and Health for \$500!” Critical Safety and Health Questions Answered for the Post-Pandemic World – So YOUR Organization Does Not End Up in JEOPARDY!

Littler Executive Employer Conference

May 5, 2022

Retail Industry Roundtable

Littler Executive Employer Conference

May 4, 2022

The 6th Circuit Lifted the Federal OSHA Emergency Temporary Standard (ETS) Stay - Now What?

December 22, 2021

2021 Upper Midwest Virtual Regional Employer Conference

Minneapolis, MN

October 20, 2021

The COVID-19 Testing Conundrum: What Employers Need to Know to Develop an Effective and Lawful Testing Program

October 7, 2020

Getting MN Back to Work - Maintaining a Safe Place to Work and Visit

June 17, 2020

Getting Back to Work in Minnesota - Lawfully

May 1, 2020

The Coronavirus: How Employers Can Manage the Outbreak

February 4, 2020

Work Comp, FMLA and ADA: The Bermuda Triangle - Working Within The Vortex

Twin Cities SHRM Chapter (TCSHRM) Webinar

June 20, 2018

Minneapolis Healthcare Industry: A Roundtable Discussion

Minneapolis, MN

October 10, 2017

2012 Midwest Employer Conference

Minneapolis, MN

October 11, 2012

Managing Mental Health Issues: The Impact Of The ADAAA , W.C. And FMLA

Littler Mendelson, Minneapolis, MN

October 11, 2012

Who Am I: Consultant, Independent Contractor or Employee? Clearing up blurred identities under the Work Comp vision

Firm Presentation

2012

Is the Age 67 Retirement Presumption Still the General Rule? Are we all presumed to be working forever?

Firm Presentation

2012

The New Work Comp Legislation & A Dash of OSHA: The Fate of Last Year's Proposed Changes, This Year's Proposed Changes and "Hot" OSHA Issues

Firm Presentation

2011

New Work Comp Rules & Proposed Legislation: Some things never change, but the work comp rules have

Firm Presentation

2010

Eleven Questions Every Employment Attorney Has About Workers' Comp – Beyond the Basics

Upper Midwest Employment Law Institute - Minnesota CLE

2009

The New ADA Amendments and New FMLA Regs: Case Studies to Illustrate the Practical implications for WC Practice

Workers' Compensation Institute

2009

Top 10 Ways Employers Inadvertently Increase Workers' Compensation Costs

Firm Presentation

2008

Minnesota Legislative Update – Proposed Changes to Work Comp Laws 2008

Firm Presentation

2008

Investigation, Documentation and Technology: Does the Mantra “Document, Document, Document” Need to be Modified?

Firm Presentation

2007

We've Received a Report of an Injury at Work...What Should We Do?

Firm Presentation

2007

General Employment Law Issues for Business Majors

Bethel College, St. Paul, MN

2007