

2026 PRODUCT LIABILITY ROUNDTABLE

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2026

9:15 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

Registration

10:00 a.m. – 10:10 a.m.

Welcome and Introductions

Mark D. Hansen, IADC President, GROWMARK, Inc., Peoria, IL USA

Edward Dumoulin, Program Co-Chair, Goldman Ismail Tomaselli Brennan & Baum LLP, Chicago, IL USA

Daniel Higginbotham, Program Co-Chair, Thomas Combs & Spann PLLC, Charleston, WV USA

10:10 a.m. – 11:10 a.m. (60 General CLE Minutes)

Reading the Jury Room: Defense Tactics That Win Cases

Today's jurors bring new expectations, new skepticisms, and new ways of evaluating risk and responsibility. Those shifts—alongside the continued rise in outsized verdicts—require defense teams to be even more deliberate and data-driven than ever. This panel unpacks current trends in juror mindsets and shows how research-based insights can shape themes, witnesses, and strategy. Attendees will learn practical ways to read the jury room, counter the nuclear-verdict playbook, and position their cases to win at trial.

Moderator:

Mollie Benedict, Tucker Ellis LLP, Los Angeles, CA USA

Speakers:

Stephanie Laws, MASLON LLP, Minneapolis, MN USA

Jill M. Leibold, PhD, IMS Legal Strategies, Los Angeles, CA USA

Eric L. Probst, Schindler Elevator Corporation (U.S.), Morristown, NJ USA

11:10 a.m. – 11:25 a.m.

Networking Break

11:25 a.m. – 12:25 p.m. (60 General CLE Minutes)

The “Black Box” of AI: No Longer A Legal Shield for Product Manufacturers

With the EU's AI Act and new Product Liability Directive demanding accountability for AI, together with the proposed US AI LEAD Act, 2026 marks a pivotal year for AI as the legal framework governing its risks continues shifting from voluntary guidelines to hard liability. This panel will analyze the updated EU Product Liability Directive which formally classifies AI as a “product,” alongside the proposed US AI LEAD Act which seeks to do the same. This panel will then examine the collision of technological innovation with legal responsibility, focusing on how AI is used throughout the product life cycle—from design, to manufacture, to warnings—and how product manufacturers can prepare for a more litigious, heavily regulated AI landscape.

2026 PRODUCT LIABILITY ROUNDTABLE

Moderator:

Katie Maechler, MASLON LLP, Minneapolis, MN USA

Speakers:

Lisa DeBord, Bayer U.S., St. Louis, MO USA

Phil Goldberg, Shook, Hardy & Bacon LLP, Washington, DC USA

Michael Malterer, Dentons, Munich, Germany

Danielle Mindlin, Pfizer Inc., New York, NY USA

12:25 p.m. – 1:25 p.m.

Networking Lunch

1:25 p.m. – 2:10 p.m. (45 Ethics/Professional Responsibility CLE Minutes)

They Did What?!?!?! The Latest in Plaintiffs' Bar Tactics

Recent books, articles, and judicial opinions have spotlighted the tactics currently being used by plaintiffs' attorneys and third-party service providers in mass tort litigation. Allegations range from false representations about the timeliness of major categories of claims to improperly using consultants that used to work for the defendants. These are not just "war stories." These are tactics that are currently being utilized in litigation and how courts are responding. This panel will discuss recent judicial decisions, how defendants can respond to similar actions in the future, and how the present will impact the future.

Moderator:

Mark K. Silver, Schenck Price Smith & King, LLP, Florham Park, NJ USA

Speakers:

Nancy M. Erfle, Gordon Rees Scully Mansukhani, LLP, Portland, OR USA

Mark A. Prost, Sandberg Phoenix & von Gontard P.C., St. Louis, MO USA

Peter J. Rotolo, Chaffe McCall, L.L.P., New Orleans, LA USA

2:10 p.m. – 2:55 p.m. (45 General CLE Minutes)

Beyond the Point of Sale: Emerging Risks and Evolving Duties in the Modern Product Lifecycle

This session will examine the rapidly evolving landscape of post-sale products liability law, with emphasis on the expanding regulatory, standards-driven, and common-law obligations manufacturers face long after a product enters the marketplace. As agencies, courts, and international standards bodies increase focus on the full product lifecycle, companies must navigate complex expectations involving post-sale recalls, refurbished and remanufactured products returning to commerce, and ongoing duties to warn or update consumers.

Moderator:

Carolyn E. Riggs, FBT Gibbons, Indianapolis, IN USA

Speakers:

Dana Baiocco, White & Williams LLP, Washington, DC USA

Jay Spears, Continental Tire the Americas, LLC, Fort Mill, SC USA

Sarah K. Wolfe, AUMOVIO, Charlotte, NC USA

2026 PRODUCT LIABILITY ROUNDTABLE

2:55 p.m. – 3:10 p.m.

Networking Break

3:10 p.m. – 4:10 p.m. (60 General CLE Minutes)

Rulemaking on the Edge: Trends in a New Era of Federal Regulation

With government agencies changing regulations with less rigor, executive orders being issued which impact agency actions, and the plaintiffs' bar or those in alignment with their interests becoming more involved in shaping public policy, companies face uncertain regulatory control. This can be seen in the EPA, FDA, HHS, and USDA, among other agencies. This is most apparent in changes to environmental regulations, food safety initiatives, and pharmaceutical governance. We will discuss what is driving these changes and how companies have been impacted by them, along with how they can best make decisions in a time of regulatory uncertainty, including litigation strategy.

Moderator:

Sharon L. Caffrey, *Duane Morris LLP, Philadelphia, PA USA*

Speakers:

Mike Gentine, *Arnold & Porter, Washington, DC USA*

Christiana Jacxsens, *B. Braun Medical Inc., Atlanta, GA USA*

Roy Prather, *Beveridge & Diamond PC, Baltimore, MD USA*

4:10 p.m. – 5:10 p.m. (60 General CLE Minutes)

What's Next? How In-House Counsel Are Reacting to Developments in Product Liability Litigation

This experienced and varied panel of in-house counsel will offer insights on how they are adapting to some of the latest trends and developments addressed during the 2026 Product Liability Roundtable. They will discuss changes in juror attitudes, the defense bar's response to plaintiff bar-led regulatory changes, and AI liability exposure and regulation. These in-house strategy drivers will offer advice for how external counsel can help them successfully navigate a shifting legal and regulatory landscape.

Moderator:

Allyson Miller Julien, *Goldman Ismail Tomaselli Brennan & Baum LLP, Chicago, IL USA*

Speakers:

Larissa Eustice, *Bayer Corporation, Whippany, NJ USA*

Lisa M. Floro, *Coloplast Corp., Minneapolis, MN USA*

Shaniqua L. Singleton, *Mercedes-Benz USA, Atlanta, GA USA*

5:10 p.m. – 5:15 p.m.

Closing Remarks

Edward Dumoulin, *Program Co-Chair, Goldman Ismail Tomaselli Brennan & Baum LLP, Chicago, IL USA*

5:15 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

Cocktail Reception