



Michael Doerksen (He/Him)

Lawyer

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Overview

Michael Doerksen is an experienced research lawyer who helps clients requiring complex legal analysis. His practice has a particular focus on insurance coverage issues including automobile liability, municipal and general liability, director and officer liability, professional errors and omissions coverage, casualty coverage and cargo and transportation coverage. His experience includes a wide variety of commercial disputes ranging from property development issues to construction disputes and contract interpretation.

He has prepared written submissions in cases before the Supreme Court of Canada, the Federal Court, the Alberta Court of King's Bench, Alberta Court of Appeal, the British Columbia Supreme Court and various administrative tribunals in Alberta.

As Field Law's research lawyer, Michael's clients and colleagues look to him to thoroughly analyze legal issues and make the analysis accessible. Describing himself as having an *"academic disposition"*, his aptitude for research and writing makes him the go-to person when clients need a comprehensive and knowledgeable legal opinion or a well-crafted written submission for a court, arbitration panel or tribunal. With more than 20 years of experience, Michael offers his clients the proficiency needed to write effective submissions that have received excellent feedback from the courts. Michael's clients appreciate that his legal opinions consistently provide a candid and forthright assessment of the pros and cons of the client's legal position.

Value to Clients

"In most litigation you can't tell the client with 100 per cent conviction where the dispute will end up. But what I can do is to dig deep into an issue and offer some concrete recommendations clients can be confident in." One of Michael's clients says of his insurance coverage advice: "You are full of wonderful information that makes my work seamless."

Outside the Office

His love of the fiddle keeps him busy. *"I started playing when I was young. When I came to Field Law I found other musicians here and I became part of the firm band."*

Experience

Brosseau Estate v Dubarry Estate, 2022 ABQB 60

Industries

Insurance

Services

Litigation

Education

University of British Columbia,
1998, Bachelor of Laws
University of Toronto, 1995, Master
of Arts
Concordia University, 1993,
Bachelor of Arts

Admissions

Alberta, 2000

King County (a Washington Municipal Corporation) v Gelhaus, 2022 ABQB 2

Lafferty v Co-operators General Insurance Co, 2021 ABCA 359

Keyland Development Corporation v Rocky View (Municipal District No 44), 2016 ABQB 735

Primewest Energy Inc v Texacana Turbines Inc, 2016 ABQB 715

Professional

Canadian Bar Association Alberta, Research Law Section (South)

Member

2003-Present

Law Society of Alberta

Member

2000-Present

Canadian Bar Association Alberta, Research Law Section (South)

Chair

2016-2018

Canadian Bar Association Alberta, Research Law Section (South)

Chair

2012-2014

Canadian Bar Association Alberta, Research Law Section (South)

Secretary/Treasurer

2010-2012

Canadian Bar Association Alberta, Research Law Section (South)

Chair

2008-2010

Canadian Bar Association Alberta, Research Law Section (South)

Secretary/Treasurer

2007-2008

Community

Board of Directors , Youth Central Society, 2020-Present

Client Stories

Helping clients with plain language policy writing

- The firm's client occupies a specialized market in property and liability insurance in Alberta. The client was in the process developing a new wording for its property and business interruption insurance. The client came to Michael for legal support because of his familiarity with the client's existing policy wording, experience in providing coverage analysis involving that wording and familiarity with the client's specialized market. The client's objective was a clear, rational and intuitive policy wording. Michael worked with the client's primary drafter to develop a new policy wording that addressed the client's insuring objectives in clear and accessible language and met the requirements of Alberta insurance law. The client remarks: *"I am pleased with Michael's consultative approach to our project. We were able to address policy wording challenges in an effective manner because of the open dialogue followed by his research and presentation of realistic and actionable options to each issue I raised."*

Using legal research to identify opportunities

- The firm acted for an Alberta municipality and its liability insurer in a factually complex lawsuit brought by a real estate developer against the municipality. The lawsuit arose from a residential real estate development. Working with one of Field's leading insurance litigation partners, Michael's legal research helped identify an opportunity to shorten the lawsuit by pursuing summary judgment on specific issues. Michael took the lead in preparing court materials supporting a summary judgment application, including affidavits

and written arguments on behalf of the client. Following a three-day hearing in 2016 a Queen’s Bench Justice’s decision (reported at 2016 ABQB 735) dismissed all claims, sparing the clients the expense and inconvenience of a lengthy trial.

News + Views + Events

March 2024 - 7 min read

[Ontario Court Addresses Important, Recurring Issues in Complex Liability Coverage Disputes](#)

February 2023 - 5 min read

[The Consequences of Fraud + Wilful Falsehood in Auto Insurance Claims](#)

March 16, 2021

[Coffee + Counsel: Alberta Automobile Insurance, Recent Reforms + Case Law](#)

June 2020

[A Provincial Twist on the Emergency Suspension of Limitation Periods](#)

June 2020

[Navigating Business Interruption Claims Due to COVID-19](#)