

PRACTICES

Environmental
Environmental Health and Safety

INDUSTRIES

Energy and Resources
Oil and Gas
Mining
Conventional Power
Oil and Gas Litigation
Oil and Gas Regulatory
Renewable Energy and Storage

EDUCATION

University of Houston Law Center, J.D., 2010
magna cum laude
Houston Law Review, Executive Board
Order of the Coif

Baylor University, B.B.A., 2007
cum laude

BAR ADMISSIONS

Wyoming
Texas
Utah
Washington

COURT ADMISSIONS

U.S. District Court for the District of Wyoming
U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Texas
U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Texas
U.S. District Court for the District of North Dakota

Robert Ayers

Partner

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Robert represents clients in environmental and workplace safety matters, including government investigations, emergency response, compliance counseling, internal investigations, and litigation.

Robert has counseled clients through several of the largest workplace incidents and regulatory enforcement actions in the United States.

Workplace Safety and Emergency Response
Robert routinely advises clients following major industrial incidents, including process safety events and workplace fatalities. He represents clients in connection with investigations by various government agencies, including the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the Chemical Safety Board (CSB), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA), the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA), and various state and local agencies. Robert also counsels clients on regulatory compliance, workplace safety culture, and process safety management.

Administrative and Civil Litigation
Robert defends clients in regulatory enforcement actions, including matters before the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission, Federal Mine Safety and Health Review Commission, the Interior Board of Land Appeals, and various state-level environmental and occupational safety appeals boards. He also represents clients in civil litigation following industrial incidents. Robert has litigated disputes relating to oil and gas development, personal injury, groundwater contamination, and breach of contract in state and federal courts across the United States.

Prior to joining Holland & Hart, Robert practiced at an Am Law 100 firm in Houston, Texas.

CLIENT RESULTS

Recent Representative Matters

Represented chemical manufacturer in defense of significant enforcement action by the Utah Occupational Safety and Health Division (UOSH) following a chemical release at the client's facility

Represented explosive manufacturer in defense of OSHA enforcement action alleging multiple process safety management (PSM) violations

Represented waste treatment company in response to a fatal explosion at its facility, including defense of state agencies' investigations and alleged

environmental and safety violations

Represented service contractor following multi-fatality workplace incident, including defense of significant alleged violations issued by the Occupational Safety an Health Administration (OSHA)

Represented renewable energy company in defense of multiple citations issued by Washington Department of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH) following a workplace fatality

Represented chemical manufacturer in response to investigation by the Department of Justice (DOJ) relating to EPA Risk Management Plan (RMP) issues

Represented geotechnical construction company in defense of citations issued by the California Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA) relating to lockout-tagout and workplace safety program violations

Represented refinery in connection with incident response actions following a flash fire, including responding to the US Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board (CSB)

Represented mining contractor in defense of multiple 104(d) citations and 110(c) special assessments issued by the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA)

Represented energy company in connection with privileged internal investigation of PSM issues at its processing facility

Prior to joining Holland & Hart, Robert's work included these matters:

Emergency Response & Agency Enforcement

- Represented chemical manufacturer in response to a catastrophic fire at its facility and related inspections by the CSB and OSHA
- Represented energy company in response to a fatal incident at a remote onshore drilling rig and the related OSHA inspection; conducted internal investigation into the incident and the client's workplace safety practices
- Represented chemical manufacturer in connection with an investigation by the CSB and enforcement actions by OSHA and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) following a fatal chemical release at the client's facility
- Represented energy company in defense of over twenty citations issued by the California Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA) following a major explosion at its refinery and subsequent hydrogen fluoride (HF) leak
- Represented oilfield services company in response to a fatal incident on a workover rig and the related OSHA inspection and enforcement action

- Represented oilfield services company in conducting an internal investigation into the company's hot work practices across the United States following a fatal welding incident and subsequent near miss
- Represented energy company before the Interior Board of Land Appeals (IBLA) where the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE) issued an Incident of Noncompliance (INC) to my client for allegedly failing to comply with federal regulations
- Represented automotive manufacturer in connection with government inspections following multiple workplace fatalities and conducted a company-wide internal investigation into its workplace safety practices
- Represented refining company in connection with citations issued by OSHA alleging lockout/tagout (LOTO) violations during a turnaround at the company's refinery

Civil Litigation & Arbitration

- Represented oilfield services company in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of West Virginia where plaintiffs claimed oil and gas operations, including hydraulic fracturing, contaminated their groundwater and exposed them to toxic substances
- Represented refining and petrochemical company in the Superior Court of Vermont, Washington Unit, where the State of Vermont claimed MTBE from my client's products contaminated the State's waters
- Represented oilfield services company in the Circuit Court of Bibb County, Alabama where plaintiffs claimed they suffered personal injuries resulting from alleged exposure to toxic chemicals while working at an oil and gas well site
- Represented oilfield services company in the District Court of Wharton County, Texas where plaintiffs claimed a “blowout” of a nearby oil and gas well caused hydrocarbons and various chemicals to be released onto their respective properties
- Represented mining company in the District Court of Harris County, Texas where my client sought a declaration of rights pursuant to an equity financing arrangement agreement
- Represented oilfield services company in the District Court of Harris County, Texas where my client claimed a former employee breached his employment agreement by disclosing confidential information to his new employer
- Represented oilfield services company in arbitration where claimant alleged my client underpaid intellectual property royalties by more than $50 million in breach of a cross-license agreement

PUBLICATIONS

"EPA's Proposed RMP Rollback: What Facilities Need to Know," *Environmental Law Update*, March 4, 2026

"Handling Civil and Criminal Investigations," *ABA's Disaster and*

Hazardous Materials Incident Response: A Lawyer's Guide, August 23, 2025

"Looming Deadline for California Employers to Implement a Workplace Violence Prevention Program," *Workplace Safety Legal Update*, June 7, 2024

"OSHA Issues Final Rule on Tracking Workplace Injuries and Illnesses," *Holland & Hart Legal Update*, July 26, 2023

"Sixth Circuit Reinstates OSHA's Vax-or-Test Mandate: Impact on Employers and Healthcare Providers," *Health Law Update*, December 20, 2021

RECOGNITION

- Mountain States Super Lawyers®, Administrative Law, 2023-2026