

Litigation & Dispute Resolution



How we help

We combine detailed knowledge of all forms of dispute resolution, with a strong grasp of commercial realities.

Our experienced dispute resolution team can help you avoid costly litigation and, when it does arise, help to resolve it successfully.

With advisors who know the market and understand your business and concerns, we can lighten the load enormously.

Who we are

We are one of the largest and longest-established litigation practices in Hong Kong. Our size and experience enables us to handle very complex, high value and large-scale disputes.

What we do

Deacons' highly experienced and multi-disciplinary dispute resolution team provides strategic advice and aims for pragmatic and commercial solutions. We can help you avoid costly litigation and, when it does arise, help to resolve it successfully. We have helped clients to deal with many complex, high value and high profile disputes.

Our practitioners are experienced at every level of the court system in Hong Kong, as well as in international arbitration, mediation and other dispute resolution processes. With representative offices in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou and well-established connections with other large, independent law firms around the world, we are well placed to deal with cross-border and multijurisdictional disputes.

Our services include:

Administrative and public law

A wide variety of businesses, individuals and other organisations rely on Deacons to represent them in dealings with public bodies, and to review the legality of decisions made by such bodies. We have considerable experience in handling high profile public inquiries and judicial review proceedings. We also advise and assist clients on handling any media interest associated with the case as well as related reputational issues.

Banking litigation

We handle complex banking disputes on behalf of leading investment and retail banks, investment funds, private banks, brokerage firms, money lenders and borrowers. Our work ranges from letter of credit disputes, fraud and asset tracing, and enforcement of mortgages, loans and guarantees, to the most complex and high profile derivatives mis-selling claims.

We also have extensive experience in assisting financial institutions navigate the complex issues arising from parallel investigations by the authorities and legal proceedings by investors.

Bribery, fraud and corruption

Our team advise and represent clients in relation to bribery, fraud and corruption investigations and any criminal prosecutions that might arise. For those under investigation, we provide legal advice and assistance to them during the course of the investigation. For companies which are victims of, or witnesses to, alleged bribery, fraud or corruption, we provide advice and support, to ensure that the matters are handled properly, to avoid any repercussions.

On the compliance side, we can help clients ensure that their businesses are fully compliant, by devising suitable anti-bribery and corruption policies and procedures and providing training on the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance, as well as advising on corporate due diligence.

Contentious regulatory

Our team advises clients and represents their interests in investigations by the Securities and Futures Commission, Hong Kong Monetary Authority, Hong Kong Stock Exchange, Hong Kong Competition Commission and the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data, involving cases of a criminal, civil or disciplinary nature.

Cybercrime

We advise clients who have fallen victim to email fraud and assist them to recover funds transferred as a result of such fraud. Our team is experienced in making court applications for disclosure orders and injunctions and taking legal proceedings against fraudsters and 2nd/multiple layer recipients for recovery of funds. We also advise on measures that can be put in place to prevent such frauds from occurring.

Employment disputes

We advise clients, including international corporations and small and medium-sized businesses, on a comprehensive range of contentious employment matters, encompassing everything from major industrial disputes and tribunal claims, to disciplinary proceedings and complex terminations. We also provide advice and training on Hong Kong's discrimination ordinances and claims at the Equal Opportunities Commission and in the courts.

Fraud and asset tracing

We regularly advise corporate clients in relation to cases involving allegations of fraud and also assist senior executives in respect of fraud investigations against them. We help trace and recover assets, and advise on investigations and court proceedings in Hong Kong and Mainland China, as well as working as part of a larger team on multijurisdictional frauds and investigations. Our in-house principal forensic accountant can provide forensic accounting services to our clients.

Additionally, we help clients plan and implement internal investigations and deal with regulators, law enforcement agencies, forensic accountants and the media.

International arbitration

Our lawyers are experienced in arbitration – the drafting of dispute resolution procedures to be included in contracts, conducting arbitration proceedings and enforcing/setting aside arbitral awards. We handle high value, multi-jurisdictional and cross-border arbitration, related to commercial, construction, and energy and resources disputes, as well as disputes involving Belt and Road projects.

Members of our team are regularly retained as arbitrators themselves in Hong Kong and Mainland China.

Product liability

We can help clients steer through various regulatory requirements, negotiate effectively on their behalf, represent them in product liability proceedings and recalls and help them deal with enforcement authorities.

Professional negligence

Our lawyers act for insurers and their professional insureds in the legal, accountancy, financial services and medical fields, among others. We also handle professional misconduct and complaint cases. We advise clients on negotiation strategy and settlement arrangements, in addition to litigation.

Real estate disputes

We act for the Government and statutory bodies, major developers, owners, occupiers, management companies and incorporated owners in all manner of real estate disputes. Our team is very experienced in handling issues and disputes over sales and purchases, tenancy and building management issues, planning and zoning, land resumption and compensation, enforcement of Deeds of Mutual Covenant, judicial review, development projects and agreements, mortgages/loans, licenses to occupy, reinstatement and handover condition of properties, and operation of shopping malls.

Reputation management

Deacons has been helping clients protect their reputations for decades. We act for both claimants and defendants in defamation actions and advise clients (and their in-house public relations teams) on the most appropriate course of action to prevent, contain and minimise the harm done by negative publicity. Our clients include newspapers, internationally-known publishers, social media platforms and Big Tech companies, as well as high profile public figures.

Shareholder and partnership disputes

We have substantial experience in handling complex shareholder and partnership disputes for a wide range of clients, from multinational corporations to family businesses and professional services firms. We can assist with everything from commercial shareholder disputes and squeeze-outs, or resolving differences between joint venture partners, to negotiating the exit of directors and partners and dissolving partnerships. We also provide strategic advice to clients when attending board and shareholder meetings, as well as in handling difficult issues that often arise in such disputes.

Tax investigations, audits and disputes

Our tax lawyers assist in all matters relating to tax dispute resolution in Hong Kong, from the tax audit and objections process all the way to representing clients before the Board of Review and higher courts, up to and including the Court of Final Appeal.

Trust, probate and private wealth disputes

Our experienced team handles a wide range of contentious probate and trust issues, often high profile, high value and multi-jurisdictional, including asset distribution disputes involving high-net worth families, disputes in relation to trusts, challenges to the validity of wills and settlements, financial and maintenance claims against a deceased's estate, variations and breaches of trust terms, replacement and removal of trustees, executors and administrators, applications for Beddoe Orders, seeking court directions on behalf of trustees, executors and administrators, enforcing trusts, family settlements and deeds of family arrangement, disputes in relation to governance issues within family offices, and inheritance and mental capacity disputes.

What they say about us

Recent awards and recognition include:

Outstanding Firm in Dispute Resolution

Asialaw Profiles 2021

Litigation & Dispute Resolution Firm of the Year 2019

Asian-mena Counsel In-House Community

Civil Litigation Law Firm of the Year 2018

Asian Legal Business

" The firm is professional and knowledgeable on pretty much every topic, offering practical and usable advice with an industry perspective and delivering high-quality work within any timeline.

Chambers Asia-Pacific 2021

" They have a strong litigation team, with excellent back up from highly able associates. They are very result-and client-orientated, and go to great lengths to do their best to achieve results for their clients. The level of client care, as well as their extensive efforts on behalf of clients, is outstanding.

Legal 500 Asia-Pacific 2021

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