

Know Your Limits

June 2025

Oil Company to Pay Over \$744 Million to Restore Louisiana Coast—Environmental Liability

A Louisiana jury determined that an oil company must pay the local government \$744.6 million for the damage it caused to the state's coastal wetlands. The award consisted of \$575 million in compensation for land loss, \$161 million for contamination and \$8.6 million for abandoned equipment. The jury found that the oil company had violated state regulations by failing to restore wetlands impacted by drilling wells, dredging canals and wastewater dumped into the marsh. The lawsuit, filed in 2013, also stated that the oil company failed to obtain permits and clean up its mess, leading to contamination. Additionally, expert witnesses for the plaintiff testified that the company did not follow known best practices since it began operating in the area in the 1940s. The oil company stated it plans to appeal.

Family of Deceased Student Receives \$6.4 Million in Legal Malpractice Lawsuit — Professional Liability

previously represented them in a wrongful death claim. The underlying case, filed in federal court, concerned the death of a family member who was left for dead by first responders in below-zero windchills. In that case, a college student departed a December party in 2013 to walk home and was not seen again until the morning, near the banks of a river, bloodied and suffering from severe hypothermia. A firefighter arrived but couldn't find a pulse. First responders then made a visual assessment from 15 feet away, ruled he was deceased and did not perform life-saving measures. However, it was subsequently determined that the man was still alive and later died in the morgue. The man's family paid a retainer to an attorney to bring a wrongful death claim. However, that attorney delayed filing the claim and failed to advise the parents to become legally appointed as trustees of the deceased's estate. The defendants then filed a motion to dismiss for lack of jurisdiction, which was granted. The family's attorney amended the complaint to a civil rights lawsuit, but a judge dismissed it because the claims weren't sustainable and were outside the statute of limitations. A U.S. Court of Appeals upheld the ruling. The family later filed a legal malpractice claim against their attorney, which went unchallenged, leading to the judge awarding damages to them.

Bank Agrees to Settle Shareholder Lawsuit for \$100 Million—D&O Liability

An American multinational bank agreed to settle a shareholder lawsuit against its chief executive, current and former executives, and board of directors for \$100 million. The lawsuit, which was brought as a derivative action, claimed the banks and defendants breached their fiduciary duty, wasted corporate assets and were unjustly enriched by mismanaged and noncompliant actions. Those actions involved a series of regulatory consent orders concerning consumer banking practices and the company's risk management framework. The suit was filed in 2022 in California, and a hearing on the settlement is scheduled for July.

Texas County Jury Awards Over \$20 Million to Woman After Apartment Complex Fall—Liability

A Texas woman received a \$20.15 million verdict after sustaining injuries in a 2011 fall at an apartment complex. According to the lawsuit, the woman was walking down stairs to the apartment complex parking lot when the stairs began to bounce and move. This movement led to her fall and subsequent injuries. The lawsuit alleged the apartment complex managers failed to maintain and repair the steps, creating the conditions that caused the fall. The verdict listed that the judgment covers physical and mental pain, disfigurement, impairment and medical expenses.