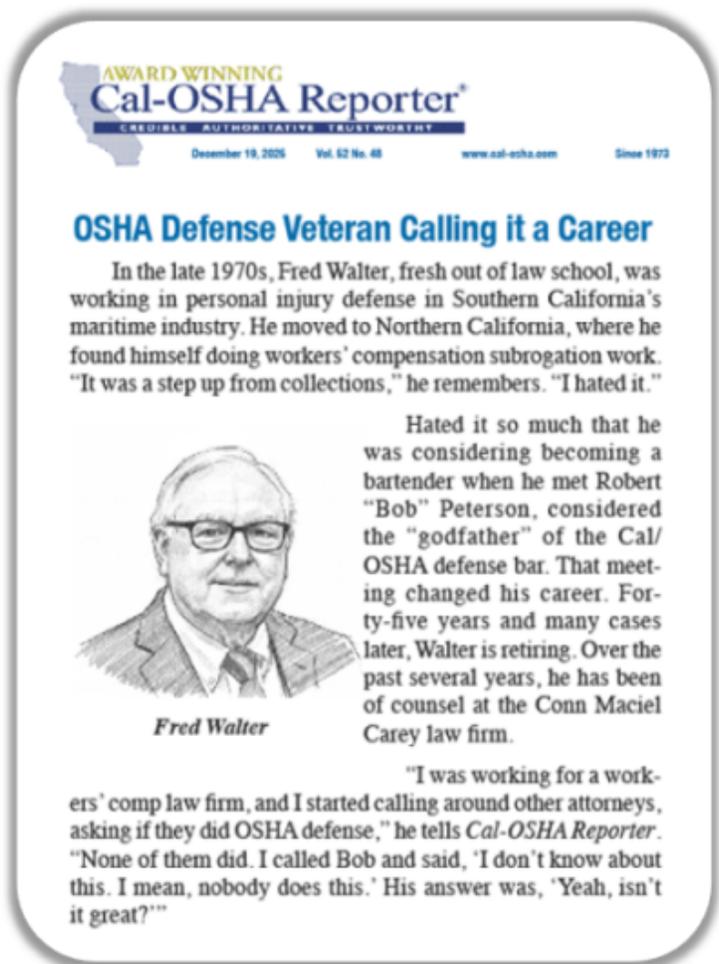


DECEMBER 23, 2025 | FIRM NEWS

Honoring a Career That Defined Cal/OSHA Defense: Fred Walter, CMC Of Counsel, Retires After 45 Years

After more than four decades shaping and defending California workplace safety law, legendary Cal/OSHA attorney [Fred Walter](#) is retiring and closing a chapter on a career that helped define an entire practice area.

In a recent [Cal-OSHA Reporter feature](#), Fred reflects on his path into Cal/OSHA defense, which began in the late 1970s in personal injury litigation before a pivotal meeting with Robert “Bob” Peterson, widely regarded as the godfather of the Cal/OSHA defense bar. As the first Chief Counsel for the Cal/OSHA Appeals Board, Peterson pioneered what was then an emerging specialty. Fred followed soon after, becoming only the second attorney to focus full-time on Cal/OSHA defense – a role he would hold for the next 45 years.



The image shows the cover of the December 19, 2025 issue of the Cal-OSHA Reporter. The cover features the magazine's title, a California map logo, and the article title "OSHA Defense Veteran Calling it a Career". The article text describes Fred Walter's career and his meeting with Robert Peterson. A portrait of Fred Walter is included, along with a quote from the article.

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OSHA Defense Veteran Calling it a Career

In the late 1970s, Fred Walter, fresh out of law school, was working in personal injury defense in Southern California's maritime industry. He moved to Northern California, where he found himself doing workers' compensation subrogation work. "It was a step up from collections," he remembers. "I hated it."

Hated it so much that he was considering becoming a bartender when he met Robert "Bob" Peterson, considered the "godfather" of the Cal/OSHA defense bar. That meeting changed his career. Forty-five years and many cases later, Walter is retiring. Over the past several years, he has been of counsel at the Conn Maciel Carey law firm.

"I was working for a workers' comp law firm, and I started calling around other attorneys, asking if they did OSHA defense," he tells *Cal-OSHA Reporter*. "None of them did. I called Bob and said, 'I don't know about this. I mean, nobody does this.' His answer was, 'Yeah, isn't it great?'"

Fred Walter

The article traces Fred's firsthand experience with Cal/OSHA's evolution, from its early, informal beginnings to the far more structured and legalistic system employers navigate today. Along the way, Fred shares what he loved most about the work, the cases that left a lasting impression, and the professional relationships that shaped his career. He also looks ahead to retirement, reflecting on the legacy he leaves behind and the future of Cal/OSHA practice.

We are proud to share this well-deserved tribute to Fred's extraordinary career and lasting impact on California workplace safety law.

- **Subscribers** can read the full article directly on the [Cal-OSHA Reporter](#).
- **Non-subscribers** may access the full article via the [PDF linked here](#).

As Fred's retirement becomes official on January 1, 2026, please feel free to reach out to our California OSHA defense team: [Rachel Conn](#), [Megan Shaked](#), and [Andrea Chavez](#) for any assistance you may need. We look forward to working with you during this transition process.