



# CASE SUMMARIES

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## Wisconsin / Eastern District

**Court rejects FAAAA preemption defense in broker negligence action following Supreme Court's Montgomery decision.**

**Barkholtz v. Ivory**, 2026 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 109001 (E.D. Wis. May 18, 2026)

The Court denied in part a transportation broker's motion to dismiss claims arising from a fatal tractor-trailer collision, holding that state-law negligence claims against brokers are not preempted by the FAAAA. Plaintiffs alleged the broker negligently selected the motor carrier involved in the crash. Relying on the Supreme Court's recent decision in *Montgomery v. Caribe Transport II, LLC*, the Court concluded such claims fall within the statute's safety exception for claims "with respect to motor vehicles," overruling prior Seventh Circuit authority that favored preemption. Although the Court ultimately dismissed the claims for insufficient pleading, it rejected the broker's broader preemption and statute-of-limitations arguments, allowing plaintiffs the opportunity to replead their allegations.

## Pennsylvania / Middle District

**Court grants summary judgment dismissing punitive damages and direct liability claims in lane-change tractor-trailer collision.**

**Enari v. Davranov**, 2026 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 101941 (M.D. Pa. May 8, 2026)

The Court granted multiple summary judgment motions arising from a tractor-trailer lane-change accident on Interstate 80. The Court held the Graves Amendment barred vicarious liability claims against the vehicle owner, Kamuna Express, which merely leased the tractor to motor carrier BEK Express and exercised no operational control over the driver. It further dismissed plaintiffs' direct negligence claims against BEK because the carrier admitted vicarious liability for the driver's conduct. The Court also dismissed punitive damages claims against all defendants, finding no evidence of reckless or outrageous conduct despite allegations involving blind-spot operation, cellphone use, and hiring deficiencies. Negligence claims against the driver and carrier remain pending.

## New Jersey / District of New Jersey

**Court stays cargo-loss dispute for mediation and arbitration after fraudulent carrier allegations tied to stolen shipment.**

**S-Platform, LLC v. RPM Express, Inc.**, 2026 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 105054 (D.N.J. May 12, 2026)

The Court administratively terminated competing motions for default judgment and to vacate default in a cargo-loss dispute involving allegations of fraudulent carrier identity theft. Plaintiff alleged broker RPM Express arranged transportation of a \$170,000 shipment of solar panels through an unknown entity using another carrier's DOT and MC numbers, resulting in the disappearance of the shipment. Rather than rule on the pending motions, the Court stayed the action for ninety days and directed the parties to pursue mediation and/or arbitration. The decision highlights the growing litigation risks surrounding fraudulent carrier schemes, cargo theft, and broker verification practices in the transportation industry.