

# Kelvin Varghese in IP & Technology Law Review: Federal Circuit Untangles Means-Plus-Function Interpretation

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**PRACTICES** Patents, Patent Prosecution and Counseling, Intellectual Property

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In *MTD Products Inc. v. Iancu*, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit described how to identify a means-plus-function limitation under 35 U.S.C. § 112, ¶ 6. In particular, the court clarified that the question of whether § 112, ¶ 6 applies is distinct from the determination of what structure corresponds to the means-plus-function limitation, and held that the description in the specification of corresponding structure does not determine if § 112, ¶ 6 applies.

## Background

MTD is a decision on appeal from an *inter partes* review (IPR) of U.S. Patent No. 8,011,458 (the '458 patent), owned by MTD Products. The '458 patent describes zero turn radius (ZTR) vehicles such as riding lawnmowers, and explains how for prior art ZTR steering systems, when a vehicle was moving forward, it turned in the direction the steering wheel was rotated, but when the vehicle was moving in reverse, it turned in the opposite direction from steering wheel rotation.

To read the full article, click on the PDF linked below.

[Varghese-Identifying-Means-Plus-Function-Limitation](#)