

Canada rail unions call off strike, appeal to federal courts

Photo: CN



A planned strike by Teamsters union members working for national rail freight network CN has been stood down after the Canada Industrial Relations Board (CIRB) imposed binding arbitration.

[Marcus Hand](#) | Aug 26, 2024

The Teamsters [Canada](#) Rail Conference (TCRC) had served a strike notice for 10am on 26 August for union workers at Canadian National (CN). The move followed a lockout by CN and Canadian Pacific Kansas City (CPKC) on 22 August that lasted 18 hours before the government intervened with a direction to the CIRB to settle the dispute between employers and unions through binding arbitration.

TCRC members at CPKC went out on strike immediately the lockout started on 22 August and continued to picket after the government intervened.

Related: [Canadian government ends rail lockout](#)

While CN moved to get operations back up and running ahead of an official order of binding arbitration from the CIRB on 23 August unions issued a strike notice calling action from 10am on 26 August by workers at CN.

With the CIRB issuing an official order of binding arbitration on 24 August it ordered that no further lockout or strike could take place during the arbitration. The TCRC said it would lawfully comply with the order from CIRB but also appeal it at the federal court level.

“This decision by the CIRB sets a dangerous precedent. It signals to Corporate Canada that large companies need only stop their operations for a few hours, inflict short-term economic pain, and the

federal government will step in to break a union. The rights of Canadian workers have been significantly diminished today,” said Paul Boucher, President of the TCRC.

“CN will comply with the order which also extends the current collective agreement until a new agreement is signed between the parties,” CN said.

It was feared that a prolonged dispute could cost North American shippers millions of dollars bringing to halt rail freight movements from Canadian ports and across the border with the [US](#).

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