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Canada-wide freight rail stoppage looms; some shipments already halted

- 20/08/2024
- by Shipping Telegraph



Canada's freight rail network could come to a grinding halt this week, inflicting a huge economic toll after the country's largest railroad operators issued lockout notices to the Teamsters Canada Rail Conference (TCRC), a union representing many railway workers.

From today, CPKC has said it will stop all shipments that start in Canada and all shipments originating in the US that are headed for Canada.

Failing last-minute deals, both Canadian National Railway and Canadian Pacific Kansas City (CPKC) plan to lockout workers from the early hours of Thursday.

Canadian National Railway, a North American Transportation and Logistics Company, formally notified the Teamsters Canada Rail Conference (TCRC) on Sunday of its intention to lockout Canadian TCRC-represented employees early on Thursday.

“Unless there is an immediate and definite resolution to the labour conflict, CN will have no choice but to continue the phased and progressive shutdown of its network which would culminate in a lockout,” it said in a statement.

“Despite negotiations over the weekend, no meaningful progress has occurred, and the parties remain very far apart.”

CN says it has offered the TCRC a modernized agreement on safety, wages, and work/life balance but this offer was refused.

It also said that the offer was improved in April, but it was also refused by the TCRC. In May it simplified the offer, CN says, and in the absence of any agreement it offered to voluntarily submit to binding arbitration in June.

Canadian Pacific Kansas City (CPKC) also has served notice to lock out Teamsters Canada Rail Conference (TCRC) Train and Engine (T&E) and Rail Traffic Controller (RCTC) employees at 00:01 August 22.

“Unless TCRC leadership and the company are able to come to negotiated agreements or agree to binding interest arbitration,” it said in a statement.

“Effective Tuesday, August 20, embargos for all shipments originating in Canada, all shipments originating in the United States destined to Canada, and all carload traffic destined to Canadian interchange,” CPKC noted.

From its side CN told that if a settlement is reached or an arbitration is agreed, it will remove its embargoes and resume normal operations.