

Canada West Coast ports respond to dockworker strike with lockout

Container terminal operators in British Columbia have called a “defensive lockout” from 4 November following a strike notice by dockworkers.

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Fairview Container Terminal Credit: Prince Rupert Port Authority

On Thursday the BC Maritime Employers Association (BCMEA) said International Longshore and Warehouse Union Ship & Dock Foremen Local 514 (ILWU Local 514) had given 72 hours written notice of a plan of an industry wide strike from 8am (PT) on 4 November.

The BCMEA has now responded to the planned industrial action by calling what it describes a “defensive lockout” that will shutdown ports coastwide in British Columbia. Employers said they “did not arrive at the decision lightly”.

“ILWU Local 514's strike action will have repercussions across B.C.'s waterfront operations, and strike activity can easily escalate, including a complete withdrawal of labour without notice. Accordingly, to facilitate a safe and orderly wind-down of operations, the BCMEA has issued formal notice of its intention to defensively lock out all ILWU Local 514 members on Monday, November 4 at or around 08:00 am PT,” the BCMEA said in a statement on Friday.

The lockout will not affect grain or cruise operations in the region.

Despite the The BCMEA and ILWU Local 514 having been engaged in talks for nearly two years over negotiating a new collective agreement which expired in March 2023, a new deal has failed to be reached.

The BCMEA made its final offer on Wednesday which it claimed, “provides a fair agreement without requiring concessions from ILWU Local 514 and covers all matters remaining in dispute”. The response from the ILWU Local 514 has been an official notice to strike.

Related: [Dockworker strike to hit Canada West Coast ports from Monday](#)

The lockout and strike action would impact both the ports of Vancouver and Prince Rupert major container gateways on the Canadian West Coast. It would be the latest supply chain disruption to hit [Canada](#) including a short lived national rail freight lockout by employers and strike by unions in August.

At the heart of the ILWU Local 514's action is a dispute with one BCMEA member company [DP World](#) (Canada) over manning and automation, however, a local strike called by the union was deemed illegal by the Canada Industrial Relations Board (CIRB) on 7 July.

A strike by ILWU (Canada) members in July last year over a four-year labour deal with the BCMEA paralysed Canadian West Coast ports for 13 days and was only resolved when the federal government stepped in.