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Canada faces port strikes on east and west coasts

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Port of Vancouver

Canada is facing the real threat of strikes on both its west and east coasts.

Employers at British Columbia's ports say they have received 72-hour strike notice from the union representing about 700 foremen in an ongoing labour dispute.

The B.C. Maritime Employers Association (BCMEA) said yesterday that if the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 514 takes strike action, it would begin on Monday at 8 am.

Frank Morena, president of ILWU Local 514, said in the statement that the union told the employers association it would enact an overtime ban and refuse to implement tech change starting Monday unless a new collective agreement is reached by then.

"We are prepared to resume negotiations immediately," he added.

The two sides had been negotiating with the help of a federal mediator over three days this week to avoid the latest work stoppage

Meanwhile, unionised workers started an unlimited strike at two terminals at the port of Montreal on Thursday amid stalled talks on a new labour contract.

The strike affects two terminals operated by Termont, which handle about 40% of the port's container traffic but only about 15% of the port's overall volumes.