

Canada container ports face backlogs, delays

Labor board order ended work stoppages

[Stuart Chirls](#)

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Trucks wait at the Port of Montreal's Racine terminal. (Screenshot from Port of Montreal webcam.)

Container operations have resumed following labor-related disruptions at Canada's busiest ports, which continue to work through backlogs toward normal operations.

The Canada Industrial Relations Board on Nov. 14 granted a request by Labor Minister Steven MacKinnon and [ordered an end to lockouts](#) of union workers at West Coast ports as well as at the Port of Montreal. The order also called for binding arbitration in the ongoing contract disputes.

On the west coast, the British Columbia Maritime Employers Association on Nov. 4 [had locked out](#) members of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union following the union's strike notice.

In Montreal, the Maritime Employers Association [had locked out](#) the Canada Union of Public Employees Local 375 after months of targeted work stoppages.

"A full recovery from the recent labor disruption will take time," the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority said in a statement Thursday. "Disruptions to port operations have long-term impacts on the port's and Canada's reputation. All port stakeholders have a shared responsibility to support our global reputation as a gateway that is reliable and committed to supporting future business."

Since operations resumed at the Port of Vancouver's four container terminals Nov. 15-20, average dwell is 7.7 days and trending downward (Wednesday's dwell was 5 1/2 days) but above October dwell of 4 1/2 days. Daily rail production is 54,000 feet per day, almost back to 57,000 feet per day before the labor disruptions.

As of Thursday, Vancouver's on-dock rail from CN and CPKC totaled 221,846 feet across four terminals. Dwell at Vanterm and FSD was 0-3 days; 3-5 days at Deltaport, and seven days or more at Centerm, the busiest hub with 58,988 feet of on-dock containers.

Vancouver showed seven container vessels at berth, with five vessels waiting at anchor and two vessels waiting outside the port.

Operations resumed Nov. 16 at all four Port of Montreal container terminals.

On Monday the Montreal Port Authority said more than 5,000 twenty-foot equivalent units were on the ground across its four terminals, with 55,000 linear feet of rail to handle and 22 vessels on their way or waiting at anchor.

In a statement posted to its website, the MPA said it is working closely with port and intermodal partners to implement a recovery plan to return to normal operations as quickly as possible.

"It may take a few weeks to reestablish the fluidity of the supply chain and process all goods, both imports and exports, currently at the Port of Montreal or in transit and due to arrive in the next few days. Every effort will be made to handle these volumes quickly."

Real-time port data showed five container ships at berth from CMA CGM, Hapag-Lloyd and MSC, with six more vessels expected in the coming week.

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