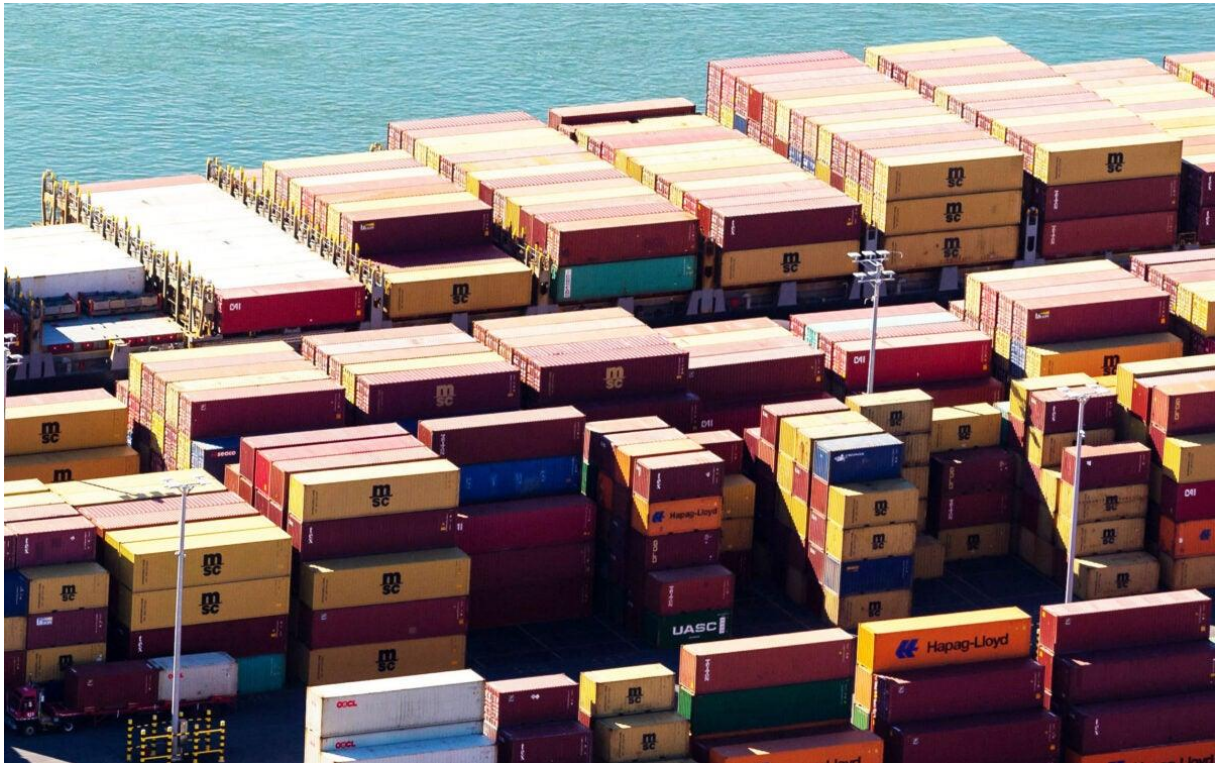


Longshore union halts overtime at Port of Montreal

Employers warn of possible port shutdown

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Containers are stacked waterside at the Port of Montreal. (Photo: Port of Montreal, Canada)

Employers warned an overtime strike by union dockworkers at the Port of Montreal could lead to a shutdown of cargo operations at the eastern Canada maritime hub.

The work stoppage by Longshoremen's Union Local 375 began Thursday after terminals and shipping lines asked the union to withdraw its overtime strike notice. It advised that assigned employees who were unable to work would not be paid for the hours they could have worked.

The union, an affiliate of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, represents approximately 1,200 dockworkers. Bargaining on a new contract with federal mediators reached a stalemate over scheduling and a reduction in hours for senior forepersons, according to reports.

The Maritime Employers Association representing shipping lines, terminals and other businesses said even a limited job action could bring cargo handling to a halt.

"The MEA believes that the systematic refusal of overtime will have significant repercussions on the port's activities — even to the point of stopping operations — and, by extension, on businesses, industries and the public," the employers group warned in a statement posted to its website. "The MEA reiterates its willingness to continue negotiations and asks the union to follow the process set out by the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service in order to reach a negotiated agreement as quickly as possible."

Dockworkers staged a three-day strike earlier this month at two container terminals at Montreal, Canada's second-largest port. The previous contract expired Dec. 31, 2023.

Montreal handled 1.54 million twenty-foot equivalent units in 2023. Traffic through August was 991,959 TEUs, off 1.89% year to date.