

Federal

LAWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

New Laws

May 7: To relieve Canadian businesses hurt by the recent Trump tariff countermeasures, the federal government [announced](#) that it will temporarily remit the surtax on goods used by the manufacturing, processing, food and beverage packaging, healthcare, and other sectors. Remission will apply to goods imported into Canada before October 16, 2025.

New Laws

Apr 15: The Government of Canada began accepting [applications](#) for the new Large Enterprise Tariff Loan Facility (LETL) offering loans to help large businesses affected by the U.S. tariffs maintain cash flow and liquidity. Sectors eligible for LETL loans include companies that contribute to food, energy, economic and national security.

Transportation Safety

May 2: With boating season set to open, the Canada Border Services Agency reminded private boaters of their [entry and reporting duties](#) when navigating Canadian waters or entering the country by boat. Failure to comply may result in fines of at least \$1,000 and other penalties.

CASES

Drugs & Alcohol: Shipping Company Took Too Long to Suspend Crew for Onboard Drug Use

In response to allegations about crew members using alcohol and drugs during Arctic voyages, a shipping company hired a private company to investigate the vessel. The 3-hour investigation, which took place on September 28, uncovered narcotics, empty beer bottles, and other evidence of drug and alcohol use in several cabins. On October 23, the company announced 30-day suspensions against the implicated crew members. The union cried foul, claiming the company violated its obligation under the collective agreement to impose any disciplinary actions within 10 days of the conduct giving rise to them. The company contended that the 10-day clock began ticking on October 20, the date it received the investigator's report, rather than the day the investigation took place. The federal arbitrator upheld the grievance. The company knew right away that the investigator had found incriminating evidence and didn't need the final report to determine that discipline was justified. Its real reason for the delay was to avoid compromising the ship's final voyage to the Arctic scheduled to begin the day after the investigation. **Result:** The suspensions were null and void and the company had to pay the costs of the arbitration [[Canadian Seafarers International Union v Desgagnés marine cargo inc.](#), 2025 CanLII 37584 (CA SA), April 28, 2025].

Action Point: As this case illustrates, cases challenging discipline for drug offences are often determined based on not just the workers' conduct but how the disciplinary process is carried out. Use the [OHS Insider Substance Abuse Compliance Game Plan](#) to curb drugs and alcohol at your workplace.

Drugs & Alcohol: Arbitrator Orders Railway to Stop Stalling Engineer's Return to Work

A railway company tested an engineer for drugs after getting "an anonymous tip" that he was smoking pot and planned to purge his body so he'd pass a urine test. The federal arbitrator ruled there was no just cause for testing and ordered the railway to immediately reinstate the engineer with no loss of seniority or pay. But the railway insisted that the engineer first submit to further drug testing. The tests came back negative, but the railway wanted him to undergo extensive medical review to ensure it was safe to reinstate him. The union balked and the stalemate dragged on for 2 years, during which the engineer was getting only 60% of his pay and benefits. The union finally filed another grievance, which the arbitrator upheld ordering the railway to immediately reinstate the engineer "on paper" and pay him interest on the compensation it improperly withheld plus \$20,000 in damages. It also ordered the employer to activate its accommodations process and get the engineer back to work in either his original or a reasonably accommodated position depending on his medical situation as soon as possible [[Teamsters Canada Rail Conference v Canadian Pacific Kansas City Railway](#), 2025 CanLII 32982 (CA LA), April 16, 2025].

Action Point: Find out how to create a legally sound [Drugs and Alcohol Testing Policy](#) for your workplace.