

Collective bargaining and the implementation of autonomous vehicle technologies

April 29, 2019

In the recent breakdown of collective bargaining with Canada Post, [the CUPW National President, Mike Palecek, stated](#): “Our members gave us a clear mandate to take job action if Canada Post refused to address our major issues - health and safety, gender equality and preserving full-time, middle class jobs.” While the “job preservation” sought by the CUPW might not specifically be referring to autonomous vehicles or drones, the reality is that collective bargaining must increasingly account for technological developments, such as autonomous technologies, that are set to disrupt conventional package delivery.

In the United States, the implementation of autonomous technologies in the logistics sphere has already become a contentious issue. In January 2018, [UPS and the Teamsters faced off during negotiations](#) of a new collective agreement over the use of drones and driverless vehicles to automate deliveries. As part of the new collective agreement covering more than 260,000 UPS employees, the Teamsters sought a prohibition on the use of drones and driverless vehicles. In the revised collective agreement, published in July 2018, the parties compromised. As part of the [amended Article 6 to the collective agreement](#), UPS must review with the union any proposed technological changes at least six (6) months prior to implementation. Examples of these changes explicitly include: drones, driverless vehicles, and platooning of tractor-trailers.

In light of the developments south of the border, companies in Ontario’s logistics space will likely face similar negotiation hurdles with respect to autonomous technologies. With growing delivery volumes and the rise of digital commerce, companies are exploring automated delivery options such as drones and platooning to alleviate the growing delivery demands. In the wake of such developments, it is expected that unions in Ontario may seek protections to restrict the use of autonomous vehicle technologies to protect against the possible downsizing that may result from its implementation. Thus, employers must continue to monitor the technological change provisions of current collective agreements and be prepared to address the implementation of autonomous vehicle technologies in future collective bargaining.

By

[Brad Hallowell](#)

Expertise

Information Technology, Autonomous Vehicles, Transportation

BLG | Canada's Law Firm

As the largest, truly full-service Canadian law firm, Borden Ladner Gervais LLP (BLG) delivers practical legal advice for domestic and international clients across more practices and industries than any Canadian firm. With over 800 lawyers, intellectual property agents and other professionals, BLG serves the legal needs of businesses and institutions across Canada and beyond – from M&A and capital markets, to disputes, financing, and trademark & patent registration.

blg.com

BLG Offices

Calgary

Centennial Place, East Tower
520 3rd Avenue S.W.
Calgary, AB, Canada
T2P 0R3

T 403.232.9500
F 403.266.1395

Ottawa

World Exchange Plaza
100 Queen Street
Ottawa, ON, Canada
K1P 1J9

T 613.237.5160
F 613.230.8842

Vancouver

1200 Waterfront Centre
200 Burrard Street
Vancouver, BC, Canada
V7X 1T2

T 604.687.5744
F 604.687.1415

Montréal

1000 De La Gauchetière Street West
Suite 900
Montréal, QC, Canada
H3B 5H4

T 514.954.2555
F 514.879.9015

Toronto

Bay Adelaide Centre, East Tower
22 Adelaide Street West
Toronto, ON, Canada
M5H 4E3

T 416.367.6000
F 416.367.6749

The information contained herein is of a general nature and is not intended to constitute legal advice, a complete statement of the law, or an opinion on any subject. No one should act upon it or refrain from acting without a thorough examination of the law after the facts of a specific situation are considered. You are urged to consult your legal adviser in cases of specific questions or concerns. BLG does not warrant or guarantee the accuracy, currency or completeness of this publication. No part of this publication may be reproduced without prior written permission of Borden Ladner Gervais LLP. If this publication was sent to you by BLG and you do not wish to receive further publications from BLG, you may ask to remove your contact information from our mailing lists by emailing unsubscribe@blg.com or manage your subscription preferences at blg.com/MyPreferences. If you feel you have received this message in error please contact communications@blg.com. BLG's privacy policy for publications may be found at blg.com/en/privacy.

© 2026 Borden Ladner Gervais LLP. Borden Ladner Gervais LLP is an Ontario Limited Liability Partnership.