

CN derailment leads to delays at Port Metro Vancouver

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The derailment of a CN train carrying crude oil in Ontario on March 7, which closed a main line from Toronto to British Columbia, has led to delays to container movements at Port Metro Vancouver.

"We continue to experience significant congestion issues in Vancouver. The backlog of rail traffic has resulted in up to a week delay for a large portion of our rail traffic," Japanese container line "K" Line said in a customer advisory on Wednesday.

The derailment of 38 rail cars near the northern Ontario town of Gogama last Saturday caused a large fire and damaged a bridge, and five cars fell into a river, according to news reports. Executives at Port Metro Vancouver terminals said Thursday that the accident is having an impact on port operations but is expected to be temporary.

"Rail to Eastern Canada from all ports in British Columbia has taken a delay whilst the CN reopened the line," Stephen Edwards, chief executive of Global Container Terminals, which operates the Deltaport and Vanterm terminals at Port Metro Vancouver, told JOC.com on Thursday. "This is catching up now and as railcars that were trapped east of the accident arrive, it will clear."

Others said the accident had temporarily affected rail movements to and from the port.

"Generally speaking, Vancouver is backlogged, predominantly due to rail car supply," Marc Bibeau, president of Overseas Express Consolidators (Canada) Inc. in Montreal, told JOC.com on Thursday. "This has been further compounded by the severe derailment in Southern Ontario where oil spilled, tankers ignited and caught fire. This brought CN to a halt in this corridor. Regular cargo flows from Vancouver into Eastern Canada and from Eastern Canada to the West coast experienced severe delays."

At the same time Prince Rupert is functioning normally, Bibeau said. The port "is running relatively fluid with an average five-day dwell," Bibeau said.