

Intellectual Property Weekly Abstracts Bulletin

— Week of May 9

May 11, 2016

Industrial Design Decisions

An industrial design registration for a helmet face shield is found to be valid, but not infringed

[AFX Licensing Corporation v. HJC America, Inc., 2016 FC 435](#)

The Federal Court has found that while the Plaintiff AFX's industrial design is valid, the Defendants have not infringed it.

AFX's industrial design is for a "Helmet Face Shield", which purports to protect the visor, or face shield, portion of a snowmobile helmet. The Court sought to answer whether the industrial design was valid, infringed, and whether AFX has violated subsection 7(d) of the Trademarks Act in misrepresenting the design as valid.

Although AFX asked the Court to only consider the "outwardly moulded projection" of the face shield and not the whole, the Court held that the registration protects the entire design. This was because AFX did not restrict coverage of the registration to only a portion of the design. Upon review of the prior art, the Court found that the shield entered a crowded field in which the notion of an outwardly moulded viewing area was already present in some forms and where the general contouring and shape of a helmet face shield was also well-defined. Thus, the degree of difference necessary for a newer design to evade the protection afforded is small.

It was also stated that face shield design is contingent on helmet design, and on its own, it has little to no use. This was found to diminish the designer's scope to introduce 'sparks of originality' into the product's design.

In sum, the Court held that an informed consumer would conclude that there are significant substantial differences between the two face shields, and thus no infringement was found.

When asked to assess the validity of the registration, the Court turned to the prior art and found that the registration met the degree of originality necessary to uphold its registration. The design was also held to not be purely utilitarian, contrary to

the Industrial Design Act. On finding the registration to be valid, the Court held that the allegation of holding out the industrial design to be valid contrary to subsection 7(d) of the Trade-marks Act, moot.

Supreme Court Leave Decisions

Leave to appeal dismissed for the expungement of the SPEED QUEEN mark
Whirlpool Canada LP v. Alliance Laundry Systems LLC (SCC #36782)

The Supreme Court has dismissed Whirlpool's leave to appeal from [2015 FCA 232](#), a 2-1 decision delivered from the bench of the Federal Court of Appeal.

As we previously summarized the week of November 2, 2015, Alliance had successfully appealed a decision of the Federal Court ([2014 FC 1224](#) and summarized here) that upheld a decision of the Registrar of Trademarks ([2013 TMOB 218](#)) which confirmed the registration of Whirlpool's trademark SPEED QUEEN. The registration was expunged as a result of the appeal.

The Supreme Court provided the following summary of the leave to appeal:

Intellectual property – Trade-marks – Proof of use – Evidence – Evidence necessary to establish use of a trade-mark – Whether the Court of Appeal substantially compromised the jurisdiction of the Registrar of Trademarks and transformed a simple, summary and expeditious administrative procedure into an adversarial process.

At the request of the Alliance Laundry Systems LLC, the Registrar of Trade-Marks forwarded a notice under s. 45 of the Trade-marks Act, R.S.C. 1985, c. T-13, to Whirlpool Canada LP, the registered owner of registration no. UCA15837 for the trademark SPEED QUEEN, requesting proof of use of the mark between October 5, 2008 and October 5, 2011. At the outset, Whirlpool Canada conceded that the registration should be amended to delete all but two wares (washing machines and dryers), and all services. It submitted an affidavit from Whirlpool Corp.'s Director/General Manager indicating that SPEED QUEEN had been used by Whirlpool Canada and its licensees (including Whirlpool Corp.) in association with washers and dryers in Canada in the normal course of trade within the relevant period; total sales figures for SPEED QUEEN washers and dryers in Canada in 2001-2010, an unspecified portion of which were affirmed to have occurred in the relevant period; a licensee's invoices dated shortly after the relevant period, said to be representative of the invoices issued during the relevant period; that Whirlpool Canada had retained direct or indirect control of the character and quality of SPEED QUEEN washers and dryers marketed and sold by its licensees in Canada since it acquired the mark in 2004. He also provided undated photographs of what appeared to be commercial, coin-operated washers and dryers prominently displaying the mark.

The Hearing Officer was satisfied that the affidavit had showed use of the mark during the relevant period within the meaning of s. 4(1) of the Trade-marks Act. The Federal Court dismissed Alliance's appeal, but the Federal Court of Appeal allowed Alliance's further appeal. It ordered that the Registrar of Trade-marks expunge registration no. UCA15837 in association with Whirlpool Canada's washers and dryers.

By

Chantal Saunders, Beverley Moore, Adrian J. Howard

Expertise

Intellectual Property, Copyright, Trademarks, Patents, Licensing

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.