

Jean-Marie Fontaine

Partner and National Co-Leader, Transportation & Logistics Group

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Jean-Marie Fontaine is a national leader of the Shipping Group and specializes in the field of Maritime law as well as non-marine insurance regulation and compliance.

Jean-Marie serves as Partner and Co-Leader, Transportation & Logistics Group in Montréal.

Jean-Marie serves as regional group manager for the Insurance and Tort Liability and Environmental, Municipal, Expropriation and Regulatory groups in Montréal.

Jean-Marie's practice encompasses:

- cargo claims
- collisions
- spills
- disputes relating to shipbuilding and charter party contracts
- the arrest of ships and cargos

He also has expertise in the drafting of logistics and warehousing agreements, charter party contracts, the purchase, sale and financing of ships and marine insurance policies. He is also recognized for his expertise in the importation and registration of vessels.

Jean-Marie advises insurers, brokers and other intermediaries in the insurance market on regulatory and compliance issues and frequently represents clients before the Autorité des marchés financiers.

He also acts as counsel representing clients in aviation and land transportation matters, and advises in matters involving a variety of compliance, regulatory and litigious issues, ranging from the transportation of dangerous goods to the carriage of passengers.

Jean-Marie appears before the Superior Court of Québec, the Federal Court, the Federal Court of Appeal, the Québec Court of Appeal, as well as before the Supreme Court of Canada. He also pleads before the Canadian Transportation Agency.

In his role as regional group manager, he supports the Group Head by executing group strategy at the regional level, advancing client service and business development efforts, and contributing to national priorities related to talent, innovation and firm-wide collaboration.

Experience

- He has handled a number of cases at the forefront of transportation law, including:
    - Leidos Holdings, Inc. (NYSE: LDOS), a Fortune 500 science and technology leader, in its US$380 acquisition of Gibbs & Cox., the largest independent and privately-owned naval architecture and marine engineering firm in the United States and in Canada.
    - Aimia Loyalty Solutions in its merger with Kognitiv Corporation to form a technology-forward loyalty solutions provider.
    - *Ecu-Line N.V. v. Z.I. Pompey Industries & al.*: A decision of the Supreme Court of Canada regarding the applicability of a foreign jurisdiction clause in the context of a marine cargo claim
    - *Phoenix Bulk Carriers v. Kremikovski Trade*: A decision of the Supreme Court of Canada defining the circumstances where property that can be arrested in an admiralty action and specifically dealing with the arrest of cargos
    - *Boutique Jacob v. Pantainer & al.*: Before the Federal Court of Appeal in which the International Group of P&I Clubs and four major shipping lines intervened on behalf of ocean carriers in a landmark decision dealing with limits of liability in multi-modal transportation
    - *Kent Trade and Finance Inc. v. a major US financial institution & al.*: A decision of the Federal Court of Appeal giving effect to foreign choice of law clauses and maritime liens incorporated in ship supply contracts
    - *T.Co. Metals v. Fednav & al.*: A decision issued by the Federal Court of Appeal in 2012, regarding the scope of arbitration clauses in voyage charter parties
- Jean-Marie has represented the Canadian Shipowners Association before the Canadian Transportation Agency in a review of proposed increases to pilotage tariffs

Insights & Events

- Author, "Key takeaways from BLG's 37th Annual Maritime Law Seminar", BLG Article, December 2025
- Author, "Final U.S. Trade Representative Chinese ship fees provide relief for Canadian shipowners", BLG Article, May 2025
- Author, "Supply Chain Uncertainty: Navigating rail shutdowns and possible port strikes", BLG Article, August 2024

- Author, "Interest and increases: Developments in the law on limits of liability in Canada", BLG Article, January 2024
- Author, "Foreign owners be aware of ITF “inspections”", BLG Article, December 2023
- Author, "Labour strike on Canada’s West Coast: The impact on marine industry stakeholders", BLG Article, July 2023
- Author, "Canada proposes to amend the Canada Transportation Act and the Canada Marine Act to improve transparency and accountability", BLG Article, July 2023
- Author, "On-board audio recordings: Supreme Court of Canada rules they may be disclosed in a lawsuit", BLG Article, December 2022
- Business insurance trends, Part 3: Cyber insurance, smart equipment, shipping and a plug for insurance reviews, BLG Perspective, December 2021
- BLG Talks Transportation, BLG Perspective, December 2021
- 5 more insurance industry trends: Product recall, municipal, cargo and business interruption insurance, BLG Perspective, November 2021
- Business insurance trends: Climate change litigation, D&O risk, force majeure and transport insurance, BLG Perspective, October 2021
- Author, "The Suez Canal, cargo groundings and strikes: A perfect storm for delays", BLG Article, April 2021
- Full steam ahead: Recent developments in maritime autonomous technology, BLG Perspective, February 2021
- Trends to watch in 2021 – Supply chains: ensuring resiliency, BLG Perspective, January 2021
- 32nd Annual Maritime Law Seminar Webinar, BLG Video, December 2020
- Author, "Canadian ports remain open amidst COVID-19 pandemic", BLG Article, March 2020
- Author, "Temporary Speed Restrictions on the Gulf of St. Lawrence", BLG Article, July 2019
- Co-Author, “Aircraft repossession and enforcement of security in Canada”, Lexology, May, 2019
- Co-Author, “Aviation Finance & Leasing in Canada”, Lexology, May, 2019
- Co-Author, “Insurance considerations for aircraft financing and leasing in Canada”, Lexology, May, 2019
- Author, "Liability for Damage to Underwater Cables Under Canadian Maritime Law," Submarine Telecom Forum Magazine, March 2018
- Author, "Latent Defects Limited Warranties and Maritime Law", BLG Article, October 2017
- Author, "Delivery of a PIN Code is Not Proper Delivery of the Goods Under a Bill of Lading", BLG Article, October 2017
- Author, "Cruise Lines In Difficulties Trying To Appoint Counsel In Québec Small Claims Proceedings", BLG Article, June 2017

Beyond Our Walls

Professional Involvement

- Member, Canadian Bar Association
- Member, The Canadian Maritime Law Association

Community Involvement

- President, Saint-Anne-de-Bellevue Rugby Club
- Member, Grunt Club Inc.
- Executive Member, Montreal Youth of Shipping

Awards & Recognition

- Recognized in the 2027 edition (and since 2015) of *The Best Lawyers in Canada* (Railroad Law, Insurance Law and Maritime Law) and recognized in 2025 as 'Lawyer of the Year' (Maritime Law).
- Recognized in the 2027 edition (and since 2016) of *Chambers Canada – Canada's Leading Lawyers for Business* (Transportation: Shipping (Nationwide - Canada)).
- Recognized in the 2026 edition (and since 2022) of the *Legal 500 Canada* as a "Leading Lawyer" (Transport: Shipping).
- Recognized in the 2026 edition (and since 2022) of *The Canadian Legal Lexpert Directory* (Transportation (Road & Rail)) and since 2015 (Shipping and Maritime Law).
- Recognized in the 2026 edition (and since 2022) of *Lexpert Special Edition: Infrastructure.*
- Recognized in the 2026 edition (and since 2020) of *Doyle's Guide: Leading Transport Lawyer Rankings – Canada*.
- Recognized in the 2024 edition (and since 2023) of *Who's Who Legal: Canada* (Transport Shipping).
- Recognized in the 2018 edition (and since 2017) of *Chambers Global – The World's Leading Lawyers for Business* (Transportation: Maritime Law).

Bar Admission & Education

- Québec, 2000

- LLB (Civil Law and Common Law), McGill University, 1998

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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.

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