

Arbitrator: Drunk Driving Deserves a Suspension, Not a Demotion



A pair of First Class Fire Fighters were temporarily demoted one grade after pleading guilty to impaired driving and being required to drive a vehicle fitted with an interlocking ignition device for a year. Because fire department vehicles didn't have such devices, they couldn't drive on the job for a year. But the arbitrator said one-year demotion was too harsh a penalty and reduced it to a 2-day suspension with back pay. While driving is an important function, not being able to drive didn't render employees incapable of performing their overall duties as First Class Fire Fighters. The department appealed but the court said the arbitrator's ruling was reasonable and refused to overturn it [[The Corp. of the City of St. Catharines v. The St. Catharines Prof. Fire Fighters' Assoc.](#), 2017 ONSC 7638 (CanLII), Dec. 22, 2017].