OK to Fire Millwright for Serious Violation of Zero Tolerance Lockout Policy



An oil company fired a red seal millwright for reaching inside a lockbox with a department lock on it to get the keys for equipment that had been locked out during a lockout tagout operation in violation of its 'zero tolerance.' The union claimed termination was too great a penalty and that the company should have imposed progressive discipline instead of automatically applying zero tolerance. The Alberta court sided with the company, agreeing that the violation was deliberate, highly dangerous and inexcusable for a person with the millwright's training and experience. Termination wasn't just a kneejerk reaction but a reasonable decision based on an investigation and careful consideration of all the circumstances, including the millwrights lack of honesty in explaining the violation [*Unifor Local 707A v Suncor Energy Inc.,* 2019 CanLII 78840 (AB GAA), August 11, 2019].