

No trial without sheriff: Judge

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A murder trial in Vancouver has been suspended by a judge concerned about cutbacks in the sheriffs' service.

On Tuesday, there was no full-time sheriff for the second-degree murder trial of Gural Singh Brar in B.C. Supreme Court.

It was to have been the third trial for Brar, accused in the May 2006 fatal shooting of Sukhjit Singh Johal at a cabinet manufacturing plant in Richmond. B.C. Supreme Court Justice Sunni Stromberg-Stein said there was a "roving" sheriff for the entire seventh floor but no full-time sheriff.

"In my view, the court cannot sit today on this second-degree murder trial," she told the court. "The allegations involve violence in the workplace culminating in the death of one of the participants."

The judge noted that emotions may run high between two factions in the workplace and a sheriff was needed. She adjourned the case until today "in anticipation" that a sheriff might be available.