

ONE WAY AMERICA

Your Guide to Canada

TELEPHONE: Country code (+1). Canada shares the North American Numbering Plan with the United States. Area codes vary by province and territory.

STANDARD TIME: Canada spans six primary time zones: Pacific, Mountain, Central, Eastern, Atlantic and Newfoundland. Standard time ranges from GMT/UTC -8 in the Pacific Time Zone to GMT/UTC -3:30 in Newfoundland. Daylight saving time applies in most regions, although there are exceptions.

WEIGHTS & MEASURES: Metric. Canadian road distances and speed limits are expressed in kilometres and kilometres per hour. Some measurements, particularly in everyday life and construction, may also be expressed informally in imperial units.

ELECTRICITY: 120v AC, 60Hz. Canada uses North American-style Type A and Type B electrical outlets, the same basic system used in the United States. U.S. electrical appliances can generally be used in Canada without a voltage converter.

INOCULATIONS/VACCINATIONS: No special vaccinations are generally required for travellers arriving from the United States. Routine vaccinations should be up to date. Additional vaccinations may be recommended depending on individual circumstances, travel history, destination and activities.

NATIONAL PUBLIC HOLIDAYS: National statutory holidays include New Year's Day, Good Friday, Victoria Day, Canada Day July 1st, Civic Holiday in most provinces and territories, Labour Day, National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, Thanksgiving, Remembrance Day, Christmas Day and Boxing Day. Public holidays vary by province and territory, and some holidays are observed differently across Canada. Quebec also observes Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day. Canada

OFFICE HOURS: Traditionally around 9.00am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday, although working hours vary by employer and industry. Flexible and hybrid working arrangements are common.

BANK HOURS: Generally Monday to Friday during standard business hours. Opening hours vary between banks and individual branches, with some branches offering extended evening or Saturday hours.

EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS: 911 – Police, Fire and Ambulance.

CANADIAN EMBASSY IN THE UNITED STATES:

Embassy of Canada to the United States 501 Pennsylvania Avenue NW Washington, D.C. 20001 USA
Telephone: +1 844-880-6519 Emergency consular assistance: Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

The Embassy provides consular services and assistance to Canadians living or travelling in the United States.

Part 1 – Background

Information on Canada

Background

Canada is the world's second-largest country by land area and is a federal parliamentary democracy and constitutional monarchy. It consists of ten provinces and three territories and extends from the Atlantic Ocean in the east to the Pacific Ocean in the west and northward to the Arctic Ocean.

Canada became a self-governing Dominion in 1867 and has since developed into a highly industrialised and multicultural country with close economic, social and geographical ties to the United States.

Canada has a high standard of living and a diversified economy based on services, manufacturing, natural resources, energy, agriculture and technology. Its extensive natural resources include oil and natural gas, minerals, forests and freshwater.

Geography

Canada occupies most of the northern part of North America and has coastlines on the Atlantic, Pacific and Arctic Oceans.

The country has an exceptionally varied landscape, including the Rocky Mountains in the west, the vast Prairie provinces, the Canadian Shield, the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Lowlands, extensive forests, Arctic tundra and numerous lakes and rivers.

The country shares the world's longest international land border with the United States. The two countries have extensive economic and commercial links and maintain significant cross-border movement of people and goods.

Canada's major cities include Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Ottawa, Winnipeg, Quebec City and Halifax.

Population

Canada has a population of more than 40 million people. The population is concentrated primarily in urban centres and along the southern border with the United States.

Canada is highly multicultural, with residents originating from communities around the world. Population size and demographics vary considerably between provinces and territories.

Climate

Canada has a wide range of climates because of its enormous geographical size.

The southern parts of the country generally experience four distinct seasons, while northern Canada has long, cold winters and short summers. Coastal British Columbia has a relatively mild climate, while the Prairie provinces can experience very cold winters and hot summers.

Winters can bring significant snowfall and temperatures well below freezing in many regions. Summers range from warm to hot, depending on location.

Natural hazards can include severe winter storms, flooding, wildfires, tornadoes, hurricanes and extreme cold.

Economy

Canada has a highly developed, market-oriented economy closely integrated with that of the United States.

Major sectors include financial services, manufacturing, energy, mining, agriculture, forestry, technology, tourism and professional services. Canada is a major producer and exporter of energy, minerals, agricultural products and forest products.

The United States is Canada's largest trading partner, and the two countries have extensive commercial integration across manufacturing, energy, agriculture and services.

Canada's major economic centres include Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Calgary and Ottawa.

Language

Canada has two official languages: English and French.

English is the most commonly spoken language in most provinces and territories. French is the principal language of Quebec and is also spoken in communities throughout the rest of Canada. Federal government services are available in both official languages. Canada+1

Religion

Canada has no official state religion and is religiously diverse. Christianity remains the largest religious affiliation, while Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Judaism, Buddhism and other faiths are represented throughout the country. A significant proportion of Canadians report having no religious affiliation.

Education

Education in Canada is primarily the responsibility of the provinces and territories, so systems and requirements vary across the country.

Children generally attend elementary and secondary school before progressing to colleges, universities or other post-secondary institutions. Public schools are generally funded by provincial or territorial governments and are available to eligible residents.

English- and French-language education is available, with availability depending on the province, territory and local community. Canada also has a large network of private schools, colleges, universities and specialist educational institutions. Canada

Currency

The currency is the Canadian dollar (CAD), usually written as \$ in Canada.

The Canadian dollar is divided into 100 cents.

Banknotes commonly include \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50 and \$100 denominations. Coins include 5¢, 10¢, 25¢, 50¢, \$1 and \$2.

There are no general restrictions on bringing currency into Canada, although amounts of CAD \$10,000 or more, or the equivalent in foreign currency or monetary instruments, must be declared when entering or leaving Canada.

Health and Medical Care

Canada has a publicly funded healthcare system, administered primarily by the provinces and territories.

Eligibility, waiting periods and coverage vary depending on the province or territory and the individual's immigration or residency status. New residents should check the healthcare requirements and registration process in the province or territory where they will live.

Private health insurance is strongly recommended for people who are not yet eligible for provincial or territorial healthcare coverage and for services that may not be covered by the public system.

Utilities

Canada uses the same basic electrical system as the United States: 120 volts AC and 60Hz, with North American-style electrical outlets.

U.S. household electrical appliances can generally be used in Canada without a voltage converter. Travellers and movers should nevertheless check the rating label of specialist equipment before use.

Water, gas, electricity and other utilities are generally provided by local or regional companies. Availability of providers varies by province and municipality.

Television and Electronics

U.S. televisions and most modern electronic equipment are generally compatible with Canada's 120v, 60Hz electrical supply.

Cable, satellite and streaming television services vary by province and provider. U.S. residents relocating permanently should check whether their existing equipment and subscriptions are compatible with Canadian services.

Part 2 – Canada Import Customs Regulations

The following information provides general guidance for importing household goods and personal effects into Canada. Canadian customs, immigration, transport, food, animal and plant regulations can change, and requirements may vary depending on the individual's immigration status, country of origin and the goods being imported.

For a relocation shipment, professional customs advice should be obtained before packing and shipping.

Import of Personal Effects and Household Goods into Canada

Anyone moving to Canada should prepare a detailed inventory of the household goods and personal effects they intend to bring.

The Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) recommends preparing lists of goods being brought with you and goods that will arrive later. The list should include descriptions, values and, where applicable, make, model and serial numbers. Goods arriving later should be included on the original declaration. Canada Border Services Agency

Personal effects for settlers and certain other categories may qualify for duty- and tax-free entry where the applicable requirements are met.

The relevant customs document is the **BSF186 – Personal Effects Accounting Document**. It is used for settlers, former residents, seasonal residents and beneficiaries. Canada Border Services Agency+1

Settlers and New Residents

People establishing residence in Canada for the first time may qualify for duty- and tax-free importation of eligible personal and household effects under the applicable customs provisions.

Generally, eligible goods must have been owned, possessed and used abroad before arrival in Canada. There are specific rules concerning goods purchased before arrival, goods arriving later and certain categories of goods. Canada Border Services Agency+1

Typical household goods may include:

- Clothing and personal effects
- Furniture and furnishings
- Household appliances
- Books
- Musical instruments
- Personal computers
- Bicycles
- Jewellery
- Antiques and family heirlooms
- Personal collections
- Hobby equipment

A detailed inventory should be prepared before departure.

Goods to Follow

If some household goods will arrive after the person enters Canada, they should be declared as goods to follow when the person first arrives.

CBSA specifically recommends dividing the inventory into goods accompanying the traveller and goods that will arrive later. Goods arriving later may only qualify under the relevant duty- and tax-free entitlement if they were properly declared. Canada Border Services Agency

Returning Canadian Residents

Former residents returning to Canada may qualify for duty- and tax-free importation of certain household and personal effects.

The requirements generally include having lived outside Canada for the required period and having owned, possessed and used the goods abroad for the required period. The applicable rules differ

depending on the individual's circumstances. [Canada Border Services Agency](#)⁺¹

Seasonal Residents

Special provisions may apply to non-residents who own or lease a Canadian residence for seasonal use.

Eligible household furnishings and equipment may qualify for relief where the applicable requirements are satisfied, including ownership, prior use and restrictions on selling or disposing of the goods after importation. [Canada Border Services Agency](#)

Diplomatic Removals

Diplomatic missions and eligible diplomatic personnel may have specific privileges and exemptions when importing personal effects into Canada.

Requirements depend on diplomatic status and the applicable arrangements between Canada and the sending state. Diplomatic shipments should be arranged through the relevant embassy or mission and Canadian authorities before shipping.

Alcohol

Alcohol is subject to federal and provincial/territorial rules.

Importation requirements, duties, taxes, quantities and permits can vary depending on the province or territory and the circumstances of the importer.

Alcohol should not be included in a household goods shipment without checking the applicable requirements in advance.

Food

Food is not universally prohibited, but strict rules apply.

Canada requires travellers to declare food, plant and animal products entering the country. The requirements vary depending on the type of product, its country of origin and the province or territory involved. [Canadian Food Inspection Agency](#)⁺¹

Certain foods may be permitted for personal use subject to quantity limits, while other products may require permits or may be prohibited.

Do not assume that food which can legally be transported within the United States can automatically be imported into Canada.

Plants and Seeds

Plants, seeds, soil and related products are regulated because of the risk of introducing pests and diseases.

Many plants and plant products require documentation or may be restricted or prohibited.

All plant material should be checked against current Canadian requirements before being packed into a household shipment. Canadian Food Inspection Agency

Pets

Pets can generally be imported into Canada subject to animal-health and import requirements.

Requirements vary according to the species, country of origin, age of the animal and other circumstances. Dogs, cats and other animals may require specific documentation, vaccination records or health certificates.

Pet owners should check the current Canadian Food Inspection Agency requirements before travel or shipment. Canadian Food Inspection Agency+1

New Furniture, Household Goods and Gifts

New goods may be subject to duties and taxes unless they qualify under a specific exemption.

Invoices, receipts and proof of purchase should be retained for recently purchased goods.

New furniture and household goods should be clearly identified on the inventory and valued accurately.

Motor Vehicles

Motor vehicles are subject to Canadian import requirements in addition to customs requirements.

A vehicle should not be shipped to Canada until its eligibility has been confirmed. Requirements can involve Transport Canada, the Registrar of Imported Vehicles (RIV), provincial authorities, safety standards, emissions requirements and customs procedures.

Vehicles imported as part of a personal relocation must be declared and documented appropriately. The vehicle may also be subject to taxes, duties or other charges depending on the importer's circumstances and the vehicle's origin.

The BSF186 specifically provides for vehicles and other conveyances to be declared as part of personal effects, but eligibility for importation must still be established. Canada Border Services Agency

Firearms and Weapons

Firearms, ammunition and other weapons are subject to strict Canadian controls.

Anyone intending to bring a firearm into Canada must understand the applicable import, declaration, licensing and transportation requirements before travelling.

Firearms must be declared to a border services officer and the required documentation must be provided. Some firearms and weapons are prohibited or restricted. Canada Border Services Agency

Do not pack firearms, ammunition or weapons into a household goods shipment without obtaining specialist advice and confirming that the item is legally importable.

Drugs and Medication

Prescription and other medications are subject to Canadian import requirements.

Travellers should carry medicines in their original packaging and have appropriate prescriptions or supporting documentation. Certain controlled or regulated substances are subject to additional restrictions.

Medication should be checked with the appropriate Canadian authorities before being included in a shipment.

Works of Art and Antiques

Works of art, antiques and collectibles can generally be imported subject to normal customs requirements and any applicable cultural-property or wildlife regulations.

Items should be accurately described and valued on the inventory.

Objects made from materials originating from endangered species may be subject to CITES restrictions.

Endangered Species and CITES

Canada regulates the international movement of endangered species and products made from protected animals and plants.

Items such as ivory, certain furs, skins, feathers, coral and other wildlife products may require permits or may be prohibited.

Old pianos and other antiques may contain ivory components, so specialist advice should be obtained before shipping.

Other Restricted or Prohibited Items

Additional restrictions may apply to:

- Firearms and ammunition
- Certain knives and weapons
- Narcotics and controlled substances
- Food and animal products
- Plants and seeds
- Soil
- Certain pesticides and chemicals
- Wildlife products
- Endangered species
- Commercial quantities of goods
- Certain telecommunications equipment
- Goods subject to Canadian product-safety requirements

Requirements should be checked before packing because an item that is legal to own in the United States may still be restricted from importation into Canada.

Fumigation and Wooden Packing Materials

Canada regulates wooden packaging material because of the risk of introducing plant pests.

Wooden crates, pallets, dunnage and other non-manufactured wood packaging entering Canada from countries other than the continental United States generally must comply with Canada's phytosanitary requirements, including applicable treatment, debarking and ISPM 15 marking requirements. Canadian Food Inspection Agency¹

Processed wood products such as plywood and certain other manufactured wood materials may be exempt.

Movers should ensure that wooden packing materials used for international shipments meet the current Canadian requirements before the shipment leaves the country of origin.

Disclaimer

Although every care is taken to ensure that the information in this Canada Relocation Guide is accurate and up to date, One Way America cannot accept liability for any inaccuracies, omissions or changes in Canadian law or regulations.

Customs, immigration, health, transport, pet, food and import requirements can change. Readers should confirm current requirements with the relevant Canadian authorities before making travel arrangements or shipping household goods.

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