

# U.S.–Canada Border Information

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## For United States Residents Traveling to Canada

**Passports for air travel are now required for travel to Canada. As early as January 1, 2008, U.S. citizens traveling between the U.S. and Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Bermuda by land or sea (including ferries), could be required to present a valid U.S. passport. Please refer to the U.S. Department of State's Web site [travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov) for the most current information on these requirements.**

### Native-born citizens of the United States):

- Passport not required (but is recommended)
- Proof of citizenship required (a birth certificate and photo ID)
- Proof of residence may be required

**Naturalized citizens:** naturalization certificate required

**U.S. resident aliens:** Alien Registration Receipt Card (Green Card) required

**Single parents, grandparents or guardians traveling with a minor** must show documentation of legal custody and provide proof of citizenship for each child (the minor's passport or a parent's passport that includes the child).

**When a child is traveling with only 1 parent that parent** should have a notarized letter of consent from the other parent or legal custody documents.

**When a child is traveling alone or with an individual other than a parent** the minor should have a notarized letter of consent with phone number(s) from both parents or a custody document.

**Legal Issues:** Persons with felony convictions, driving while intoxicated records or other offenses may be denied admittance into Canada. Contact the Canadian embassy or nearest consulate before travel.

### Canadian Goods and Services Tax (GST):

- 6 percent GST levied on most items sold and most services rendered in Canada
- 15 percent Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) (7 percent GST and 8 percent provincial component) charged on most goods and services in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Newfoundland
- Apply for GST/HST rebate on items including short-term accommodations (less than 1 month in 1 location)
- Claim a rebate on a minimum of \$200 of eligible purchases prior to taxes provided the goods are exported 60 days from purchase date
- GST/HST rebate not refundable on alcohol, food and beverages, tobacco, transportation, entertainment, automobile fuel and such services as dry cleaning
- Submit original receipts (amount must be at least \$50 before tax)

Free GST brochures with rebate form available in Canada at land border and airport duty-free shops, tourist information centres, customs offices, hotels. Allow 4 to 6 weeks for claim processing. For information contact: Visitor Rebate Program, Summerside Tax Centre, Canada Revenue Agency, 275 Pope Road, Suite 104, Summerside, P.E., Canada C1N 6C6; 902-432-5608 outside Canada; 800-668-4748 in Canada.

**Firearms:** Canada has strict laws regarding the importing, exporting, possession, use, storage, display and transportation of firearms. These are federal laws that apply across the country.

### Classes of Firearms:

- Non-restricted (most ordinary rifles and shotguns)
- Restricted (mainly handguns)
- Prohibited (full automatics, converted automatics, handguns with a barrel length of 105 m (≈4 inches) or less, and .25 or .32 caliber handguns, among others)

Certain handguns used in International Shooting Union sporting competition are classified as restricted even though they meet the prohibited handgun definition.

**Yes:** To bring a non-restricted or restricted firearm into Canada you must:

- Be 18 years of age or older
- Declare firearm(s) at first point of entry
- Get an Authorization to Transport (ATT) from a provincial or territorial Chief Firearms Officer before arriving at point of entry (Note: ATT not issued for hunting or self-protection purposes)

**No:** You may not bring into Canada a prohibited firearm or replica firearm, except replicas of firearms classified as antiques (a replica that looks exactly, or almost exactly, like a firearm but is not a firearm; it cannot discharge projectiles or discharges only harmless projectiles).

The Canada Border Services Agency is responsible for all customs procedures.

**Yes:**

- You may import non-restricted firearms for legitimate purposes: sporting or hunting; use in competitions; transit movement; or personal protection against wildlife in remote areas (customs officer must agree that circumstances warrant firearm possession)
- Register weapons with U.S. Customs before departure
- Upon return you must show proof that you had the weapon before departure
- Under certain circumstances individuals and businesses may import firearms

**No:** Non-residents may not import prohibited items.

### Fees (in Canadian funds):

- Non-Resident Firearm Declaration – \$50 covers all firearms listed on declaration
- Possession and acquisition license – \$60 for non-restricted firearms; valid for 5 years
- Temporary Firearms Borrowing License (for non-residents) – \$30; may renew once in a 12-month period at no extra cost; \$30 thereafter (800-731-4000)
- Imported firearm registration fee – \$25 per firearm registered in Canada

**Prohibited:** Any large capacity cartridge magazine (limited to 5 rounds for semiautomatic rifles or shotguns, 10 rounds for handguns), any device designed to stop the sound of a firearm, any knife with a blade opened by spring pressure (e.g., switchblade), martial arts weapons (e.g., shuriken (shooting stars), nunchaku sticks), mace, blowguns, hand-held compact crossbows and any other weapons declared prohibited by regulation.

**Yes:** Hunters may bring in, duty-free, 200 rounds of ammunition; competition participants 1,500 rounds. Must show valid license or declaration to purchase ammunition. If planning to hunt in multiple provinces or territories, you must obtain a hunting license from each one.

**No:** Firearms forbidden in many of Canada's national and provincial parks, game reserves and adjacent areas.

**Parks and Hunting Regulation Information:** Newfoundland and Labrador 800-563-6353 or 709-729-2830; Prince Edward Island 888-734-7529 or 902-629-2400; Nova Scotia 800-565-0000 ext 998 or 902-425-5781; New Brunswick 800-561-0123 or 506-789-4982; Quebec 800-363-7777 or 514-873-2015; Ontario 800-668-2746 or 416-314-0944; Manitoba 800-665-0040 or 204-945-3777; Saskatchewan 877-237-2273 or 306-787-2300; Alberta 800-661-8888 or 780-427-4321; British Columbia 800-663-6000 or 250-387-1642; Northwest Territories (Western NWT) 800-661-0788 or 867-873-4059; Nunavut (Eastern NWT) 800-491-7910 or 867-979-1261; Yukon 867-667-5340.

**Note:** Provinces and territories also have their own laws regulating the transportation of firearms through their areas, usually in connection with their hunting regulations. For further information on the entry of firearms, applying for a license or to obtain authorization to transport a firearm, contact: Canadian Firearms Centre at 800-731-4000.

### Personal Baggage:

- Admissible into Canada on a temporary basis without payment of duty and taxes
- Customs may require a refundable security deposit at time of entry
- Deposits not normally required for health- or pleasure-related visits as long as all items are exported at trip's end

**Personal baggage that may be taken into Canada on a duty- and tax-free basis** includes clothing and personal items, sporting goods, automobiles, vessels, aircraft, snowmobiles, cameras, personal computers, food products and other items appropriate for the purpose and duration of the visit.

**Tobacco products** – Those meeting age requirements (18 years in Alberta, Manitoba, Northwest Territories and Nunavut, Saskatchewan, Quebec and Yukon Territory; 19 years in other provinces) may bring in 50 cigars, 200 cigarettes, 200 grams of tobacco and 200 tobacco sticks. **Alcohol** – Those meeting age requirements (18 years in Alberta, Manitoba and Quebec; 19 years in other provinces and territories) may bring in limited alcoholic beverages: 40 ounces (1.14 L) of liquor, 1.6 quarts (1.5 L) of wine or 9 quarts (8.6 L) of beer or ale (equivalent to 24 12-ounce bottles or cans).

- Generally, a minimum 24-hour stay is required to transport any liquor or tobacco into Canada
- Amounts exceeding the allowable quantities noted above are subject to federal duty and taxes, and provincial/territorial liquor fees
- Pay provincial fees at customs at the time of entry in all provinces and the Yukon Territory
- Illegal to bring more than the allowable alcohol quantity into the Northwest Territories and Nunavut

Articles purchased at Canadian duty-free shops are subject to U.S. Customs exemptions and restrictions; those purchased at U.S. duty-free shops before entering Canada are subject to duty if brought back into the United States.

**Prescription Drugs:** Persons requiring medication while visiting Canada are permitted to bring it for their own use. Clearly identify and carry in original packaging with a label listing the drug and its intended use. Have a copy of the prescription and prescribing doctor's phone number.

**Gifts:** Items not exceeding \$60 (CAN) in value, excluding tobacco, alcoholic beverages and advertising matter, taken into or mailed to Canada are allowed free entry. Gifts valued at more than \$60 are subject to regular duty and taxes on the excess amount.

**Pets and Plants:** You must have a certificate for a dog or cat age 3 months and older. It must clearly describe the animal, declare that the animal has been vaccinated against rabies within the past 36 months, and have a licensed veterinarian signature.

- Collar tags are not sufficient proof of immunization
- Be sure the vaccination does not expire while traveling in Canada
- The certificate is also required to bring the animal back into the United States

**Exempt From These Rules:** Assist dogs; healthy puppies and kittens under 3 months old with a health certificate, signed by a licensed veterinarian, indicating that the animal is too young to vaccinate.

Plants or plant material must be declared. For information, contact: Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), 59 Camelot Dr., Ottawa, ON K1A 0Y9; 613-225-2342.

### Radio Communication Equipment

- Cell phone, PCS phone, citizens band (CB) or Family Radio Service radio allowed without prior registration
- Use of aircraft, marine or amateur radio allowed without prior authorization
- All other types of radio transmitting stations allowed with authorization letter from Industry Canada's Radiocommunication and Broadcasting Regulatory Branch

**Special Permits:** A CITIES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species) permit is required for any endangered species brought into Canada, including those kept as pets, and for any items made from them (e.g., coats, handbags, shoes). For information contact: Environment Canada, Canadian Wildlife Service at 819-997-1840.

An Export Permit may be required to take out of Canada objects more than 50 years old (e.g., fossils, archaeological artifacts, fine and decorative art, technological objects or books and archival material). Contact: Movable Cultural Property Program of Canadian Heritage, 15 Eddy St., 3rd Floor, Hull, Quebec, Canada K1A 0M5; 819-997-7761.

An Import Permit may be required for the importation of clothing, textiles, steel and certain agricultural products in excess of minimum quantities. For information contact: Department of Foreign Affairs and Int'l Trade, Export and Import Controls Bureau, Tower C, 4th Floor, LB Pearson Bldg, 125 Sussex Dr., Ottawa, ON K1A 0G2.

#### Vehicles

- Vehicles entering Canada for touring, including trailers not exceeding 8 feet 6 inches (2.6 m) in width are generally subject to quick and routine entry procedures.
- To leave or store a car, trailer or other goods in Canada while you leave the country you must pay import duty and taxes or present a valid permit. Canadian Customs officials issue permits at point of entry.
- You may not store a vacation trailer in Canada during the off-season.
- Vehicle registration cards required for Canadian travel.
- If driving a car other than your own, you must have written permission from the owner to use it.
- If driving a rented car, you must possess a copy of the contract.
- A valid U.S. driver's license is valid in Canada for time period specified by the individual provinces and territories.
- In all Canadian provinces and territories it is illegal to use radar detectors.
- Seat belts required for the driver and all passengers throughout Canada.

**Headlights:** Driving with vehicle headlights on for extended periods after dawn and before dusk is a statutory requirement in provinces and territories.

- In Alberta, British Columbia, New Brunswick, Ontario and Prince Edward Island, lights must be turned on when light conditions restrict visibility to 500 feet (150 m).
- In Manitoba, lights must be turned on when light conditions restrict visibility to 200 feet (60 m).
- In Alberta, Yukon Territory, Northwest Territories and Nunavut, headlights must remain on at all times.
- Elsewhere in Canada, driving with headlights on during all hours of the day is advised.

## FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY LAWS IN CANADA

When an accident involves death, injury or property damage, Canadian provinces and territories require evidence of financial responsibility. You may be asked to show this evidence at any time.

U.S. motorists should obtain from their own U.S. insurance companies a yellow Non-Resident Inter-Province Motor Vehicle Liability Insurance Card (accepted as evidence of financial responsibility throughout Canada). Those not carrying proper proof may be subject to a substantial fine (minimum \$575). Fine varies in each province. If renting a vehicle, check with the rental car company.

The minimum liability insurance requirement is \$200,000 in all provinces and territories except Quebec, which requires \$50,000. Should the courts' judgments exceed these figures, motorists held accountable are responsible for paying the full amount.

If traveling in Quebec, discuss your collision, disability and bodily injury coverages with your insurance agent. Since Quebec's minimum requirement does not include bodily injury, coverage of \$200,000 or more is recommended. Consider additional coverage (i.e., trip accident policy).

## For United States Residents Returning to the United States

Everyone who seeks entry into the United States – whether foreign visitors, U.S. citizens, or U.S. lawful permanent residents – must be inspected at the point of entry. Random searches may be conducted by U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents.

#### U.S. Exemptions for a Stay in Canada No Less Than 48 hours

- You may bring back tax- and duty-free articles not exceeding \$800 in retail value
- Any amount over the \$800 exemption is subject to duty
- The exemption is allowed once every 30 days
- A family (related persons living in the same household) may combine its exemptions (a family of 6 is entitled to \$4,800 worth of goods duty-free on 1 declaration, even if articles claimed by 1 member exceed that individual's \$800 amount)
- Exemptions based on fair retail value (keep receipts of all purchases as proof of fair retail value)

- Exemptions apply to articles acquired only for personal or household use or as gifts, but not intended for sale
- The exemption may include 100 cigars, 200 cigarettes and 1 liter of liquor per person over age 21 (customs enforces state liquor laws)
- All articles claimed under this exemption must accompany you on your return

#### U.S. Exemptions for a Stay in Canada Less Than 48 hours

- You may bring back tax- and duty-free articles not exceeding \$200 in retail value
- The exemption may include no more than 50 cigarettes, 10 cigars, 4 fluid ounces (150 milliliters) of alcoholic beverage or 150 milliliters of perfume containing alcohol
- A family may not combine purchases
- If purchases exceed the \$200 exemption, you lose the exemption and all purchases become subject to duty
- All goods must be declared
- All articles claimed under this exemption must accompany you on your return

#### Gifts

- Gifts up to \$100 fair retail value may be sent to friends or relatives in the United States provided no recipient receives more than 1 gift per day (need not be included in the \$800 exemption)
- Gifts containing tobacco products, alcoholic beverages or perfume containing alcohol valued at more than \$5 retail are excluded from this provision
- Write on outside of package the contents, retail value and "Unsolicited Gift"

**Prohibited:** Articles considered detrimental to the general welfare of the United States are prohibited entry: narcotics and dangerous drugs, drug paraphernalia, obscene articles and publications, seditious or treasonable matter, lottery tickets, hazardous items (fireworks, dangerous toys, toxic or poisonous substances) and switchblade knives. Any goods originating in the following countries are prohibited: Balkans, Burma, Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Liberia, Libya, North Korea, Sudan, Syria and Zimbabwe. Please note embargoes are not limited to these countries.

Restricted items include automobiles, biological materials (disease organisms and vectors for research), ceramic tableware, cultural treasures, firearms and ammunition, articles bearing marks or names copying or simulating trademarked articles or trade names (watches, cameras, perfumes), pirated copies of copyrighted articles (books, CDs, DVDs, audio- and video-tapes, computer programs), agricultural goods (plants and animal products) and pets, wildlife and fish.

You may bring into or take out of the United States an unlimited amount of money, however, if you transport more than \$10,000 you must file a Form 4790 with U.S. Customs. Failure to comply can result in civil, criminal and/or forfeiture penalties. Monies include currency, traveler's checks, U.S. or foreign coins in circulation, money orders and negotiable instruments or investment securities in bearer form. For a currency reporting flier contact: U.S. Customs, P.O. Box 7407, Washington, D.C. 20044.

While some agricultural products of Canadian origin (fruits, some plants with phyto-sanitary certificates, meats, etc.) may be brought into the United States, many are restricted to prevent the introduction of plant and animal pests and diseases. All must be declared at the U.S. border. Write to APHIS, Dept. of Agriculture, 6505 Belcrest Rd., Hyattsville, MD 20782, for a free copy of *Traveler's Tips*. Write to U.S. Customs, P.O. Box 7407, Washington, D.C. 20044 for other helpful leaflets: *Visiting the U.S.: Requirements for Non-Residents, Know Before You Go, Importing a Car, and Pets, Wildlife and U.S. Customs.*

## For Canada Residents Traveling to the United States

**Passports for air travel are now required for travel to the U.S. As early as January 1, 2008, Canada residents traveling between the U.S. and Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Bermuda by land or sea (including ferries), could be required to present a valid passport. Please refer to the U.S. Department of State's Web site [travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov) for the most current information on these requirements.**

#### Native-born citizens of Canada:

- Passport not required (but is recommended)
- Proof of citizenship required (a birth certificate and photo ID)
- Proof of residence may be required

If traveling to the United States with a child, carry documentation proving your custodial rights. A person under age 18 traveling to the United States alone or with only 1 parent or another adult, must have certified documentation proving that the trip is permitted by both parents.

United States Customs permits Canadian residents to bring, free of duty, for personal use and not intended for sale: clothing, personal items and equipment appropriate to the trip, including 200 cigarettes, 50 cigars or 2 kilograms of tobacco, or proportionate amounts of each, and 1 liter of alcoholic beverage.

Visitors in the United States for at least 72 hours who have not claimed this exemption in the preceding 6 months may bring gifts totaling \$100 (US) retail value. Perfume containing alcohol and valued at more than \$5 retail, tobacco products and alcoholic beverages excluded from the gift provision.

Use of cell phones and General Radio Service Station (CB) is unrestricted.

## For Canada Residents Returning to Canada

The Canada Border Services Agency allows Canadian residents to bring, free of duty and taxes, goods valued up to \$200 (CAN) any number of times a year, provided the visit to the United States is 48 hours or more and all goods accompany the purchaser (written declaration may be required).

You may claim a \$50 (CAN) exemption on goods, excluding alcoholic beverages and tobacco products, if returning after an absence of 24 hours or more and are not using any other exemption. If bringing back more than \$50 worth of goods, the regular duty and tax rate is levied on the entire value. This exemption may apply any number of times in a year.

If returning after 7 days or more in the United States (not counting departure day from Canada) you may claim up to a \$750 (CAN) exemption on goods. Goods, other than alcohol and tobacco products, need not accompany you (written declaration may be required).

Permitted within the \$200 and \$750 exemptions: up to 50 cigars, 200 cigarettes, 200 tobacco sticks and 200 grams (6.4 oz) of tobacco, and up to 1.14 liters (40 oz) of liquor or 1.5 liters (1.6 qts) of wine or 8.5 liters (9 qts) of beer or ale (or its equivalent of 24 12-ounce bottles or cans). You must meet the minimum age requirement of the province or territory entered to claim alcohol or tobacco products.

**Special Tariff:** When exceeding the \$200 or \$750 exemption, a special rate of 7 percent combined duty and taxes is levied on the next \$300 value in goods (except tobacco and alcohol) exceeding the maximum exemptible amounts, provided goods are of U.S. origin. Regular duties apply on any additional amount. A 15 percent Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) (7 percent Goods and Services Tax (GST) and 8 percent provincial component) is charged on most goods and services supplied in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Newfoundland and Labrador. For information contact the Canada Border Services Agency before departing Canada. All extra goods must accompany you.

All exemptions are individual and may not be combined with those of other people. You may be asked to verify the length of your visit. Dated receipts normally constitute proof. Gifts (excluding alcoholic beverages, tobacco products and advertising matter) up to \$60 (CAN) retail may be sent from abroad free of duty or taxes. For gifts valued at more than \$60 (CAN), duty and taxes apply to amount exceeding \$60. Gifts sent from abroad do not count against personal exemptions; gifts brought back must be included in exemptions.

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