

## **So You Want to Come To Canada, Eh – (Border Crossing 101)**

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Be Polite. Be Honest. Be Respectful. Volunteer Nothing.

Remember that entering a foreign country is a privilege, not a right.

### **Identification**

When you are crossing the border, you must have a valid passport or passport equivalent, such as an enhanced driver's license

Anyone under the age of 18 is classified as a minor; if you are traveling with children, you must have proper identification, such as a passport for each child.

If you are traveling with minors and you are not their parent or guardian, you should have written permission from their parents to take them out of the country. This letter should be dated and include contact information for both parents.

If you are with your own minor child but the other parent is not, you should have written permission from the other parent to take the child across the border. This letter should be dated and include their contact information.

### **Entering Canada**

Keep your travel documents accessible and make sure everyone in the car has the proper documents.

Have your vehicle registration available. If you are driving a rented vehicle, have a copy of the rental agreement.

If you are a traveller with a disability, feel free to request assistance from the CBSA upon your arrival. A border services officer will be happy to help.

You may bring the following with you, duty free:

- 200 cigarettes **or** 50 cigars
- Up to 53 fluid oz of wine **or** up to 287 fluid oz of beer or ale (approximately 24 cans or bottles) **or** 40 oz of hard liquor
- \$60 in gifts per recipient (excluding alcohol and tobacco). Gifts should not be wrapped

You must be 21 years of age to bring liquor into Canada. The legal drinking age in Alberta, Manitoba and Quebec is 18, in all other Canadian provinces and territories, the legal age is 19.

Although cannabis is legal in Canada, it is a serious criminal offence to bring it across the border.

All food, plants, animals, and related products must be declared. Pets may be brought with you providing that you have proof of ownership, signed documentation from your veterinarian accurately describing the animal and that its vaccinations are up to date. There are special rules for exotic pets. E.g. Lizards, parrots, snakes.

There are also special rules for service dogs. A service dog is defined as a dog that provides a distinct service to the individual it is assigned to and been certified and trained by an organization accredited by the International Guide Dog Federation or Assistance Dogs International. Service dogs do not include therapy animals, companionship animals, emotional support animals, or comfort animals.

Handguns, automatic and semi-automatic weapons and hand-held crossbows are illegal in Canada. Other banned weapons include mace, pepper spray, stun guns, tasers, belt buckle knives, knives that open with a spring action and brass knuckles.

Under Canadian law, you may not be allowed into the country if you have committed or been convicted of a crime. The Canadian Border Services website has more information both on the offences and how to overcome criminal convictions.

When entering Canada, proof of COVID-19 vaccination is not required at this time, neither are pre-entry and arrival tests nor will you need to quarantine. Although wearing a mask on planes and trains is not required, it is strongly recommended.

## **General Information**

Be prepared to answer questions and answer directly and politely. This is not the time or place for jokes.

Types of question may include:

- Where do you live?
- What is the purpose of your trip?
- How long will you be in Canada?
- Where will you be staying?

Custom officers are not required to have a search warrant or probable cause to search your vehicle.

Officers can examine your cell phones, tablets, laptops and any other digital device you are carrying. You must provide your password when asked, the password will be written down on a piece of paper. The device will be put in airplane mode to ensure that only information stored on the device can be accessed. If there is no issue, they will return your device and the paper with your password

At most overland border crossings, vehicles are chosen randomly for searches. This can add 30 to 60 minutes to your travel time depending on the crossing. Canadian and US Border Services are equally thorough in their searches.

Clean out your car before you leave home.

You should know what is in your car, and declare everything, (food, alcohol, tobacco and gifts.)

You cannot bring many fruits, vegetables or meats into Canada. The Canadian Border Services website has a [complete list of prohibited and restricted items](#).

You cannot bring firewood across the border.

Take off your sunglasses.

Roll down the front and back windows on the driver's side of your vehicle. If it's dark, consider turning on the interior light.

## **SCA specific Information**

Know the legal name of everyone you are traveling with.

If you are planning to stay with friends, you should know their legal names and be prepared to say how you know them.

Consider going online and printing out the event information.

Archery equipment swords and armour are all sporting equipment; however, you should tell the Border Service officer that you have them. You should also make certain that they are easily accessible in case the officer wishes to inspect them.

If you are flying, you need to check with the individual airline rules and restrictions for transporting these items.

## **Road Rules**

All speed limits are posted in metric. On most Canadian highways the speed limit is 90 to 110 kph which is 56 to 69 mph. City streets unless otherwise posted are 50 kph which is 31 mph.

Radar detectors are illegal.

Seat belts are mandatory everywhere in Canada, as are helmets for motorcycle riders and their passengers. Helmets must meet international standards.

Insurance is mandatory and you are required to have the vehicle registration with you. If the vehicle is rented, you must have a copy of the rental agreement.

## **Leaving Canada**

When you get to US Customs, you must declare total dollar value of everything you purchased while in Canada. All items received as gifts must be declared.

If you have been in Canada for 48 hours or more, there is an \$800 exemption for gifts and personal articles, including one liter of alcoholic beverages per person over 21 every 30 days.

Any purchases in excess of these amounts may be subject to duties and taxes.

US Customs and Border Protection has a zero-tolerance policy on illegal drugs. Any type, in any amount, may result in serious fines, seizure of vehicle, federal record and/or imprisonment.

Cuban cigars cannot be taken into the US.

If you have any questions the government websites are:

[Canadian Border Services Agency](https://www.cbsa.asfc.gc.ca) – cbsa.asfc.gc.ca

[US Customs and Border Protection](https://www.cbp.gov) – cbp.gov