



Canada Border  
Services Agency

Agence des services  
frontaliers du Canada

# Entering Canada to Study or Work

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Canada

This publication provides an overview of the laws, restrictions, entitlements and obligations that apply to individuals entering Canada to study or work for a period of no more than 36 months. The information was accurate when it was published; however, legislative provisions and requirements can change at any time. The Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) makes every effort to provide timely updates to this publication and its Web site.

If you have information about suspicious cross-border activity, please call the CBSA Border Watch toll-free line at **1-888-502-9060**.

## **At your service**

The Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) operates at some 1,200 service points across Canada and 39 locations abroad. It employs approximately 13,000 public servants who handle over 12 million commercial releases and more than 95 million travellers each year.

The CBSA's role is to manage the nation's border by administering and enforcing over 90 domestic laws that govern trade and travel, as well as international agreements and conventions.

The CBSA delivers innovative border management through a network of dedicated professionals who work strategically with domestic and international partners to ensure Canada remains secure and responsive to new and emerging threats. The CBSA also intercepts, detains and removes those persons who pose a threat to Canada or who have been determined to be inadmissible.

Border services officers are at Canada's entry points to help you when you arrive in Canada. The CBSA is committed to providing efficient, courteous service. At designated bilingual offices, officers will provide service in the official language of your choice. If you require more detailed information that is not provided in this publication, please call the Border Information Service (BIS) at one of the telephone numbers listed in the section called "Additional information."

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## **Is this publication for you?**

You will find this publication helpful if you are a foreign national about to enter Canada to study or work for a period of no more than 36 months. You must produce documentation from Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), such as a temporary resident visa, study permit or work permit (where required), to be eligible for temporary residence status in Canada. Generally, you have to contact a Canadian embassy or consulate to obtain these documents before you arrive in Canada. In certain situations, citizens and permanent residents of the United States and residents of Greenland and of Saint-Pierre and Miquelon can apply for a permit at a CBSA office located at a port of entry. More information is available on CIC's Web site at [www.cic.gc.ca](http://www.cic.gc.ca).

This publication is not intended for individuals who have applied for or who have been granted permanent resident status in Canada or who will be working in Canada for more than 36 months. In such cases, see the publication called *Settling in Canada*, which is available on the CBSA's Web site at [www.cbsa.gc.ca](http://www.cbsa.gc.ca) under "Publications and forms" or by calling BIS at one of the telephone numbers listed in the section called "Additional information."

Should you change your immigration status with CIC after arriving in Canada, or if you decide to work for a period longer than 36 months, it is important that you notify the CBSA immediately since this may affect your resident status. Please refer to the publication called *Settling in Canada* for more information.

## **Before moving to Canada**

It is important that you prepare a list in duplicate of all the goods you are bringing into Canada as temporary resident personal effects. The list should indicate the value, make and model/serial number of the goods, where applicable.

You should describe each item of your jewellery on the list of goods you submit. Since jewellery is difficult to describe accurately, it is best to use the wording from your insurance policy or jeweller's appraisal and to include photographs that have been dated and signed by the jeweller or a gemologist. This information makes it easier to identify the jewellery when you first enter Canada, and later on when you return from a trip abroad with this jewellery.

## **When you arrive in Canada**

Upon your arrival in Canada, you should present your list of goods to the border services officer at the **first port of entry**. Based on your list, a *Temporary Admission Permit* (Form E29B) may be issued by the officer. In certain circumstances, a refundable security deposit may be required.

If you ship your goods by a commercial carrier, you may choose to have the goods cleared at the first point of arrival in Canada or have them sent in bond to the CBSA office nearest to your Canadian residence. The carrier will notify you when the goods arrive and then you can clear them through border services. In both cases, you are required to provide adequate identification and proof of your status in Canada (i.e. documentation issued by CIC such as your work permit or study permit), along with a list of goods you are importing.

If you are entering Canada to work, you should provide a letter of introduction from your employer.

## **Personal and household effects**

When arriving in Canada for the first time, you can temporarily import your personal and household effects free of duty and taxes. These items include furniture, tableware, silverware, appliances and motor vehicles. Though these goods are not normally subject to duty and taxes at the time of importation, the CBSA may require that you post a refundable security deposit. The following conditions apply:

- The goods cannot be used by a resident of Canada;
- You are not permitted to sell or otherwise dispose of the goods in Canada; and
- You must take all non-consumable items with you when you leave the country at the end of your temporary residence.

Temporary residents should be aware that their vehicle may have to pass a provincial safety test.

## **Public health**

If you are suffering from a communicable disease upon your arrival in Canada, or if you have been in close contact with someone with a communicable disease, you are obligated to inform a border services officer or a quarantine officer, who can determine if you require further assessment. If you've been ill while travelling or become ill after your arrival in Canada, consult a Canadian doctor and inform the doctor that you have travelled abroad, where you were and what, if any, treatment or medical care you received (e.g. medications, blood transfusions, injections, dental care, surgery) before your arrival in Canada.

## **Alcoholic beverages**

If you meet the minimum age requirements of the province or territory where you enter Canada, you can include limited quantities of alcoholic beverages in your personal exemption. These items must be in your possession when you enter Canada.

Minimum ages for the importation of alcoholic beverages as prescribed by provincial or territorial authority are as follows:

- 18 years for Alberta, Manitoba and Quebec; and
- 19 years for Yukon, the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Ontario, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador.

You are allowed to import only **one** of the following amounts of alcohol free of duty and taxes:

- 1.5 litres (53 imperial ounces) of wine;
- 1.14 litres (40 ounces) of liquor;
- a total of 1.14 litres (40 ounces) of wine and liquor; or
- 24 × 355 millilitre (12 ounce) cans or bottles (maximum of 8.5 litres) of beer or ale

### **Note**

The CBSA classifies “cooler” products according to the alcoholic beverage they contain. For example, beer coolers are considered to be beer and wine coolers are considered to be wine. Beer and wine products not exceeding 0.5% alcohol by volume are not considered to be alcoholic beverages.

The quantities of alcohol you can bring in must be within the limit set by the province or territory where you enter Canada. If the value of the goods is more than your personal exemption, you will have to pay both duty and taxes, as well as, provincial/territorial assessments. In Nunavut and the Northwest Territories, you cannot bring in more than the quantities of alcohol allowed. For more information, check with the appropriate provincial or territorial liquor control authority **before** your arrival to Canada.

## **Tobacco products**

You are allowed to import, free of duty, **all** the following products as part of your personal exemption:

- 200 cigarettes;
- 50 cigars or cigarillos;
- 200 grams (7 ounces) of manufactured tobacco; and
- 200 tobacco sticks.

Duty and taxes will apply to excess quantities.



The law in Canada (also) limits the quantity of tobacco that can be brought in by an individual for personal use if the tobacco product is not packaged and stamped “**CANADA DUTY PAID • DROIT ACQUITTE**.” The limit is five units of tobacco products. One unit of tobacco products consists of one of the following:

- 200 cigarettes;
- 50 cigars;
- 200 grams (7 ounces) of manufactured tobacco; or
- 200 tobacco sticks.

## **Currency and other monetary instruments**

If you are importing or exporting monetary instruments equal to or greater than CAN\$10,000 (or the equivalent in a foreign currency), whether in cash or other monetary instrument, you must report this amount to the CBSA when you arrive or before you leave Canada. For more information, please refer to the publication called *Crossing the border with \$10,000 or more?* that is available on the CBSA’s Web site at [www.cbsa.gc.ca](http://www.cbsa.gc.ca) under “Publications and forms.”

## **Restrictions**

The importation of certain goods is restricted in Canada. The following are some examples of these goods. Make sure you have the information you require before you attempt to import these items.

### **Firearms and weapons**

Canada’s firearms legislation helps make the country safer for both residents and visitors.

**Before** you attempt to import a firearm or weapon, contact the Canada Firearms Centre for information.

The following requirements apply to the importation of firearms and weapons:

- You must be at least 18 years of age;

- You can import non-restricted and restricted firearms provided all documentation and other requirements are met; and
- You generally cannot import prohibited firearms or any type of prohibited weapon or device, including silencers, replica firearms, switchblades, pepper spray and other weapons.

You must declare all weapons and firearms at the CBSA port of entry when you enter Canada. **If not, you could face prosecution and the goods may be seized.**

For more information on importing a firearm into Canada, see the publication called *Importing a Firearm or Weapon Into Canada*, which is available on the CBSA's Web site at [www.cbsa.gc.ca](http://www.cbsa.gc.ca) under "Publications and forms," or call BIS at one of the telephone numbers listed in the section called "Additional information." For information about applying for a Canadian firearms licence or to obtain an *Application for an Authorization to Transport Restricted Firearms and Prohibited Firearms* (Form CAFC 679) **in advance**, contact the Canada Firearms Centre:

Canada Firearms Centre  
 Ottawa ON K1A 0R2  
 Telephone: **1-800-731-4000** (toll-free in Canada  
 and the United States)  
 506-624-5380 (from all other countries)  
 E-mail: [cfc-cafc@cfc-cafc.gc.ca](mailto:cfc-cafc@cfc-cafc.gc.ca)  
 Web site: [www.cfc-cafc.gc.ca](http://www.cfc-cafc.gc.ca)

## **Explosives, fireworks and ammunition**

You require written authorization and permits to bring explosives, fireworks and certain types of ammunition into Canada. For more information, contact Natural Resources Canada:

Explosives Regulatory Division  
 Natural Resources Canada  
 1431 Merivale Road  
 Ottawa ON K1A 0G1  
 Telephone: 613-948-5200  
 Web site: [www.nrcan.gc.ca](http://www.nrcan.gc.ca)

## **Prohibited consumer products**

The *Hazardous Products Act* prohibits the importation of consumer products that could pose a danger to the public (e.g. baby walkers, jequirity beans that are often found in art or beadwork). Visitors and seasonal residents should be aware of consumer products that have safety requirements in Canada. Many of these safety requirements are stricter than requirements of other countries. For more information about prohibited and restricted consumer products, contact Health Canada:

Telephone: **1-866-662-0666** (toll-free in Canada)  
613-952-1014 (from all other countries)

Web site: **[www.healthcanada.gc.ca/cps](http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca/cps)**

## **Food products, plants and animals**

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) has a mandate to safeguard Canada's food supply and the plants and animals upon which safe, high-quality food depends. The CBSA inspects food, plants, animals and related products on behalf of the CFIA at all ports of entry into Canada. The controls, restrictions and prohibitions on the entry of plants, animals and their products, including food, mean you will need certificates or permits to import some of these goods.

Many products do not require a mandatory inspection, but if the goods you are importing need to be inspected, or if other actions are required, you may have to pay a fee.

Other Government of Canada departments and agencies such as Environment Canada, as well as some provinces, have special requirements for the importation of food, plants and animals. The *Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora* (CITES) alone has import and export requirements for some 30,000 wild animals (including fish), plant species and their products. Without the proper documentation, the CBSA may seize, dispose of or order the removal of certain food, plants, animals or their related products. Other imports

may require treatment before they can stay in Canada. Importers and other travellers are responsible for all costs related to disposal, quarantine or treatment.

For more information, call BIS at one of the telephone numbers listed in the section called “Additional information” or visit the CBSA’s Web site at [www.cbsa.gc.ca](http://www.cbsa.gc.ca). You can also call a CFIA Import Service Centre toll-free at the following numbers:

Eastern Canada: 1-877-493-0468

Central Canada: 1-800-835-4486

Western Canada: 1-888-732-6222

For information on Environment Canada’s import requirements, refer to the CITES Web site at [www.cites.ec.gc.ca](http://www.cites.ec.gc.ca).

## **Food products**

Canada has complex requirements, restrictions and limits on the importation of meat, eggs, dairy products, honey, fresh fruits and vegetables and other food from around the world. For example, root crops may be regulated and importing potatoes is prohibited. You can avoid problems by not bringing these kinds of goods into Canada.

You can import certain meat and dairy products from certain states in the United States. Before entering Canada with these products, contact BIS at one of the telephone numbers listed in the section called “Additional information” or refer to the Automated Import Reference System (AIRS) section on the CFIA’s Web site at [www.inspection.gc.ca](http://www.inspection.gc.ca).

The CFIA and Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada have set limits on the quantity and/or dollar value of certain food products that you can bring into Canada duty-free or that you can include in your personal exemption. Unless you have an import permit from Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada for quantities over and above the established limits, you will have to pay duty based on a rate ranging from 150% to 300% of the value of the goods.

The following are some examples of the limits that apply to personal importations of food products from the United States:

- 2 dozen eggs;
- 20 kilograms of dairy products not exceeding \$20 in value (e.g. cheese and butter);
- 3 kilograms of margarine or butter substitutes; and
- 20 kilograms of edible meats and meat products, including turkey and chicken.

Within this limit, more CFIA and Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada restrictions apply as follows:

- a maximum of one whole turkey or 10 kilograms of turkey products;
- a maximum of 10 kilograms of chicken; and
- a maximum of 5 kilograms of edible meats and meat products from cattle, sheep, goat, bison and buffalo.

### **Note**

All meat and meat products have to be identified as products of the United States.

You also need permits to import some types of food controlled by CITES, such as caviar. For more information, contact the CITES office at one of the telephone numbers listed in the section called "Endangered species."

### **Plants**

Plants are potential carriers of insects and disease. For this reason, border services officers help the CFIA control the entry into Canada of plants, including houseplants, and the earth, soil, sand or other related matter in which they are planted or packed.

Houseplants are defined as plants commonly known and recognized as such, which are grown or intended to be grown indoors. Bonsai plants are not considered to be houseplants. If you are importing houseplants from the continental United States as part of your baggage or household effects, you do not need phytosanitary certificates or import permits. For all other plants

from the United States, you may require a phytosanitary certificate from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and an import permit from the CFIA.

To import plants from other parts of the world, you may require an import permit from the CFIA in advance. You may also require a phytosanitary certificate issued by the phytosanitary authorities of the country of origin (e.g. plant protection/quarantine authorities).

You also need permits to import some types of plants controlled by CITES, such as orchids and cacti. For more information, contact the CITES office at one of the telephone numbers listed in the section called “Endangered species.”

## **Animals**

Since animals may harbour pests or diseases that are harmful to people, other animals, crops and forests, the CBSA assists the CFIA and other government departments and agencies to control the entry of animals into Canada.

You may import kittens and puppies younger than three months old from any country and ferrets younger than three months old from the United States without submitting any documentation; however, these animals must be examined by a CFIA-authorized veterinarian if they appear unhealthy. Although there are no documentation requirements, you may wish to carry proof of birth to verify the age of the animal.

If you use an **assistance dog** that is certified as a guide, hearing or other service dog, you can import it without any restrictions as long as you are accompanying the dog to Canada.

You may import cats and dogs from any country and ferrets from the United States that are older than three months if you are accompanying the animals and you provide a certificate signed and dated by a licensed veterinarian for each pet. The certificate must clearly identify the animal by breed,

age, sex, colouring and any distinguishing marks. It must also show that the animal has been vaccinated against rabies within the last three years. Animal tags are not accepted in lieu of certificates. Ferrets of any age from any country other than the United States require an import permit issued by the CFIA. Unaccompanied dogs between the ages of three and eight months from any country have specific documentation requirements. These requirements can be found on the CFIA's Web site at **[www.inspection.gc.ca](http://www.inspection.gc.ca)**.

You need permits to import certain animals controlled by CITES, such as butterflies. If you plan to import animals other than cats, dogs and ferrets from the United States, or animals of any kind from other countries, contact BIS at one of the telephone numbers listed in the section called "Additional information" or refer to the AIRS section on the CFIA's Web site at **[www.inspection.gc.ca](http://www.inspection.gc.ca)**. You can also consult the CITES Web site or contact the CITES office at one of the telephone numbers listed in the section called "Endangered species."

## **Endangered species**

Canada signed CITES, which is an international agreement to protect wild animals and plants and their parts or derivatives from over-exploitation in international trade. CITES operates through a system of import/export permits. However, you can import certain goods controlled under CITES (except for live animals) without a CITES permit if they are for non-commercial purposes only and they are part of your clothing or accessories and contained in your personal baggage.

It is always best to check whether the goods you intend to import are exempt. For more information, contact the CITES office:

Telephone: **1-800-668-6767** (toll-free number in  
Canada)  
819-997-1840 (from all other countries)  
Fax: 819-953-6283  
Web site: **[www.cites.ec.gc.ca](http://www.cites.ec.gc.ca)**

## **Prohibited goods**

You cannot import prohibited goods such as obscene material, hate propaganda and child pornography into Canada.

## **Used or second-hand mattresses**

You cannot import used or second-hand mattresses into Canada unless you have a certificate that verifies the mattresses have been cleaned and fumigated in the country of export. A letter, or any other document that clearly demonstrates that this requirement has been met, is acceptable if it is signed by a person qualified in cleaning and fumigating.

## **Health products (drugs)**

In Canada, health products may be regulated differently than they are in other countries. For example, what is available without a prescription in one country may require a prescription in Canada. Canada, like many other countries, has restrictions on the quantities and types of health products that can be brought in. For more information on health products and importing them into Canada, please consult Health Canada's Web site at [www.hc-sc.gc.ca](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca).

## **Cultural property**

Certain antiquities or cultural objects considered to have historical significance to their country of origin cannot be brought into Canada without the appropriate export permits. Before you import such items, contact Canadian Heritage:

Movable Cultural Property  
Canadian Heritage  
15 Eddy Street, 3rd floor  
Gatineau QC K1A 0M5  
Telephone: 819-997-7761  
Fax: 819-997-7757  
Web site: [www.pch.gc.ca](http://www.pch.gc.ca)



## **Items imported for commercial use**

If you import goods that you will use in a trade, such as vehicles or farm equipment, or other capital equipment for use in construction, contracting or manufacturing, you may have to meet several government requirements. You must also pay the goods and services tax and any applicable duty on these items.

## **While you are in Canada**

### **Personal exemptions**

Temporary residents are eligible for the same personal exemptions that apply to residents of Canada. These allow you to import certain goods duty- and tax-free after a short trip abroad. You can find complete details in the publication *I Declare*, which is available on the CBSA's Web site at [www.cbsa.gc.ca](http://www.cbsa.gc.ca) or by contacting BIS at one of the telephone numbers listed in the section called "Additional information."

### **Renewing your temporary admission permit (goods)**

Temporary residents should pay attention to when the temporary admission permit for their goods is due to expire. A few days before it expires, visit your local CBSA office and arrange for a renewal.

The border services officer will want to know if you still have in your possession all the non-consumable goods you brought with you to Canada and whether your address or telephone number has changed.

## Leaving Canada

Once you have completed your studies or work in Canada and you are about to return to your permanent place of residence, advise the nearest CBSA office when and how your personal effects will be exported from Canada. The border services officer will tell you what steps you should take. Be sure to leave a forwarding address with the CBSA. Any refunds you are entitled to will be mailed by cheque to the address you provide.

## Additional information

If you have any questions, contact the Border Information Service (BIS) line. This is a 24-hour telephone service that automatically answers all incoming calls and provides general border services information.

You can access BIS free of charge throughout Canada by calling **1-800-461-9999**. If you are calling from outside Canada, you can access BIS by calling 204-983-3500 or 506-636-5064 (long-distance charges will apply).

If you call during regular business hours (8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. local time, Monday to Friday, except holidays), you can speak directly to an agent by pressing "0" at any time during the recording.

You can also visit the CBSA's Web site at **[www.cbsa.gc.ca](http://www.cbsa.gc.ca)**.

Think recycling!



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