

A NEWCOMER'S INTRODUCTION TO CANADA



Citizenship and
Immigration Canada

Citoyenneté et
Immigration Canada

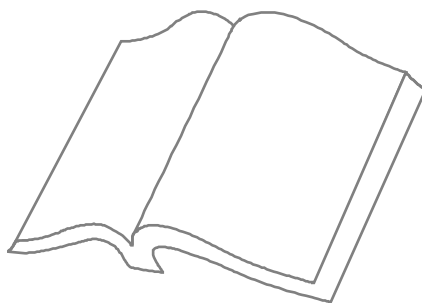
Canada

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Aussi disponible en français sous le titre *Le Canada et les nouveaux arrivants*.



About this Book



This book is about Canada and Canadians. It explains what your new country and its people are like, and how Canadians live. It tells you what to expect when you move here, and how to adapt comfortably to your new home.

A Newcomer's Introduction to Canada was written especially for newcomers, just like you. It is based on the experiences of newcomers from many parts of the world. Whether you are a man or a woman, whether you are single or married, and whatever your age, it will help make your experience as a newcomer easier.

This book contains six main sections:

1. **Welcome to Canada** introduces you to your new country and to some of the things you may experience in your first weeks and months;
2. **The Environment** is about Canada's land, resources and weather, and the importance of protecting the environment;
3. **Getting Settled in Your Community** gives you basic information about finding a place to live, shopping and community services;
4. **Finding a Job, Building a Future** tells you about employment and managing your money;
5. **Your Rights and Obligations** describes how you — and all Canadians — are served by our governments, protected by our laws and encouraged to contribute to society; and
6. **The Canadian Way of Life** explains social customs and expectations.

Each of these sections is outlined in detail in the Table of Contents.

This book was written as an introduction, not as a detailed guide. It offers general information on the Canadian way of life. There are suggestions at the end of most sections about where to find personal help and/or more detailed information.

You can learn more about the topics in this book from organizations in your community. Most cities have many different immigrant service agencies, cultural associations, libraries and other useful facilities. The people in those offices are there to help you — all you have to do is ask!

In addition, many provinces also publish newcomer's guides that contain specific information about how to contact the immigrant service agencies in that province. Newcomers to the province of Quebec should contact the ministère des Affaires internationales, de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles. As a result of the *Canada-Quebec Accord*, the province of Quebec has sole responsibility for the selection and integration of immigrants destined for that province.

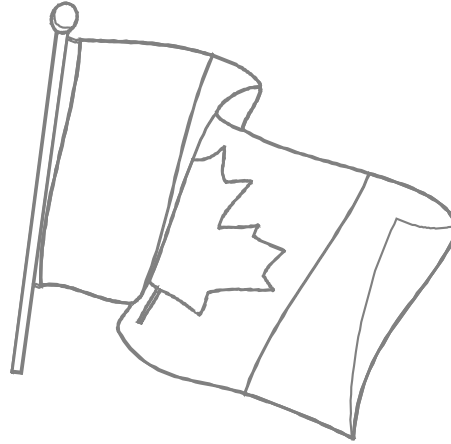
You can study *A Newcomer's Introduction to Canada* as a complete book. You can also read one chapter or section at a time to help you with specific needs. Either way, you should use this book to learn about Canada and its customs, laws and values.

A Newcomer's Introduction to Canada will not answer all of your questions, but it is a good place to start. Welcome, and good luck!

Table of Contents

Welcome to Canada	
A New Beginning	6
A Profile of Canada	8
The Host Program	11
The Environment	
Geography and Economy	12
Weather and Climate	14
Protecting the Environment	16
Getting Settled in Your Community	
Social Insurance Number	18
Food	18
Clothing	21
Housing	22
Shopping	27
Schools	30
Transportation and Travel	32
Health	35
Finding A Job, Building a Future	
Employment	39
Education and Training	45
Banking, Saving, Spending	46
Taxation	49
Your Rights and Obligations	
Government and Politics in Canada	51
Personal Rights and Freedoms	54
Children's, Women's and Seniors' Rights	55
Law and the Safety of the Person	58
Citizenship — Becoming a Canadian	61
The Canadian Way of Life	
Canadian Families	63
Interacting with Officials	65
Meeting People	67
Standards and Expectations	68
Afterword	70
Index	71

Welcome to Canada



This section tells you about Canada's peoples and values and the feelings you could experience as you adjust to your new life in Canada.

A NEW BEGINNING

Congratulations! You have taken a big step. Moving to a new country takes courage. It also creates exciting opportunities and new beginnings. Taking the time to learn what to expect — and what is expected of you — will help you succeed.

Your first year in Canada will be emotional and full of change. You may be looking for a place to live, a job, and schools for your children. You will probably make many new friends. Some of them will know how it feels to move to a new community or new country.

You will also face many challenges. For example, you may have to learn English or French or improve your language skills. You may need more education or training. Perhaps you will have to take a first job or home that is less than you expected.

Regardless of your situation, being a newcomer may mean giving up some familiar things for a new way of life. As a result, you may feel anxious or afraid, especially during the first few days and weeks.

These emotions are normal and even healthy. Almost all newcomers experience them as they settle in.

Feeling at home in a new country takes time. Some people adapt more quickly than others. However, many people go through the following three phases:

- **Phase One.** Just before or shortly after arriving in Canada you may have high hopes and expectations. This is an exciting time. Some people feel very confident and can deal easily with problems and stress.

- **Phase Two.** During the first six months you will have many good experiences and some less enjoyable ones as well. You may feel very happy about the challenges you have overcome. You will also find that some things you had hoped for have not come true. As a result, you may sometimes feel frustrated, confused and depressed. It is not uncommon to feel very positive one day and very negative the next.

All of this is normal. It can even be rewarding. Dealing with different experiences and feelings may teach you as much about yourself as about Canada and Canadians.

- **Phase Three.** Eventually you will become comfortable and more confident. For older people with strong traditional habits and customs, this may take several years. Others, especially young people, may adjust fairly quickly. Sooner or later most newcomers adapt and begin to feel at home.

The best way to adjust to your new community is to get involved! Try to speak English or French, even if you make mistakes. Understanding Canada's official languages will help you adapt more easily. As you talk with the people you meet, you will feel more in control of your new life.

Use each day as an opportunity to learn. Ask questions whenever you need help. Most people are pleased to help and will understand your needs.

You can get information from many different sources at no cost. For example:

- if you arrive in Canada by plane at Toronto, Vancouver or Montreal, information and services for immigrants are available in the airport;
- the telephone book tells you where to find immigrant service agencies, government offices and private services;
- larger communities will probably have cultural associations for people of your own ethnic background;
- the reference sections of public libraries are very useful (services in public libraries are free, and library staff can help you find what you need); and
- tourism information centres can help you explore your community and find your way around.

With time you will feel less like a newcomer and begin to think of Canada as your home.

A PROFILE OF CANADA

As a newcomer, you want to enjoy life in Canada without losing what is important to you.

You will change as you adapt to Canada. However, you do not have to give up your personal or cultural identity. You may keep your cultural traditions, provided they are not harmful to Canada as a whole or to any individual Canadian.

Canadians understand that Canada is a land of many cultures. In part, this is because Canada is a country made up of many peoples. It has been said that Canada is a “nation of immigrants”, because all Canadians — except the First Peoples — share common immigrant origins.

The First Peoples

Before the French and the English came to Canada there were groups of First Peoples in every region. Distinct nations of Indians lived on the East Coast, in the Central area, on the Plains and on the West Coast. The Inuit lived in the North.

The First Peoples in Canada developed unique cultures based on where and how each group lived. In the central plains, where groups of families cooperated in hunting buffalo, they would follow the animals and resettle often. The Indians of the Pacific Coast fished from the sea and were able to develop permanent villages. In the North, the Inuit lived by the sea in the winter and travelled inland in the summer.

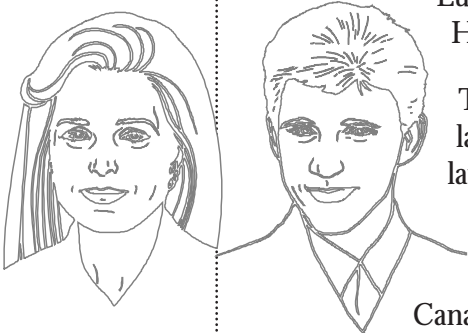
Over the years, the First Peoples have worked to raise awareness of their identity among Canadian governments and the general public. They have also worked to apply their distinctive rights to lands and resources and to govern themselves within Canadian society.

The Beginnings of Multiculturalism

European explorers first came to North America in the 15th and 16th centuries. However, the area that is now Canada was not settled until the 17th century.

The British and the French were the first two European groups to move here in large numbers. Each group brought its own language, system of government, laws and culture.

Canada was created in 1867 when Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick joined together. This act is celebrated each year on July 1 as Canada's official birthday. The name Canada may have come from the word “Kanata” in the language of the Huron-Iroquois Indians, which means a village or settlement.



The first Canadian *Immigration Act* was passed in 1869. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, advertising brought immigrants from Europe. Some settled in towns and cities, and others provided labour for factories, mines and lumber camps. Many were farmers who turned the western prairie into wheat fields.

The building of our national railways by immigrants joined the East and West coasts and opened the interior for settlement.

Immigration from Around the World

Not all immigrants came to Canada from Europe. Blacks came from Africa as slaves in the 18th and 19th centuries. When slavery ended in Canada, Blacks came here to escape from slavery in the United States.

Asians also immigrated to Canada. Many of the Chinese and Japanese immigrants settled in British Columbia and other parts of western Canada.

After both World Wars, people came as refugees from Europe. More immigrants also came to Canada from Africa, the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific Rim. All of these newcomers helped to build Canada's peacetime economy.

Canada's experience during and after World War II raised awareness of the needs of refugees and the need of families to be together. All of this has been reflected in Canada's immigration policies. Many people fleeing civil war, political unrest and natural disasters have come to Canada.

Today, Canada is home to immigrants from every part of the world. In 1992, people from more than 200 different countries came to Canada. The majority were Asians, Africans, South Americans and Central Americans. One out of every four people in Canada comes from an ethnic background other than English or French.

Canadian Values

Canada is a distinctive country. Our values and way of life influence every person who comes here to live. At the same time, newcomers influence Canada and our collective identity. We may have differences, but we share many important qualities that strengthen our society.

Optimism. Canada is a dynamic and democratic country. Canadians work to improve their lives and society. Some people face greater hardship than others, but most Canadians have faith and hope for the future.

Compromise and Cooperation. Most Canadians understand the value of compromise. In a country as large and diverse as Canada, people must be able to ignore small conflicts in order to live happily and peacefully.



Acceptance, Tolerance and Respect. Most people in Canada want fairness and justice for themselves and their families. And most are fair and just to others, no matter who they are or where they come from.

Some people may tell you that there is no racism in Canada. Others may say that racism is a very serious problem. The truth lies somewhere between. Some Canadians may make you feel unwelcome. However, the majority of Canadians are fair-minded. They will accept and respect anyone who accepts and respects them.

Ambition and Perseverance. Canadians understand that effort and discipline are usually rewarded. Canada is an economically stable country. However, unemployment and poverty exist and can affect anyone. People who were born in Canada — as well as newcomers — compete for jobs and work hard to succeed.

Individualism. Canadians believe that each person is responsible for his or her own success or failure. Canadians let people live as they wish, as long as they do not limit how others live.

Civil responsibility. Canadians appreciate their rights and freedoms. Most also want to contribute to our society. As a newcomer you should be aware of your rights and your responsibilities. The right to participate in Canadian society implies an obligation to help it succeed.

For some newcomers, working together means controlling anger from past experiences. This may not seem easy if your native country or people have a history of conflicts with another region or group. However, Canadian laws protect your old enemies just as they protect you. All people in Canada have the right to be treated fairly. All people in Canada must respect the rights and freedoms of others.

You may want to stay in close contact with people from your home country, to be informed of events there, and to stay involved with your native culture and traditions. All of these things are important and encouraged.

However, you cannot use Canada as a base to support conflicts in your former country. If you are ever invited to join any group for such a purpose, think twice. These activities are not permitted — by law and accepted moral standards.

THE HOST PROGRAM

One of the best ways to get settled in your community is to meet someone who lives there and can show you around. The Host Program may be able to help.

The Host Program introduces you to a Canadian. This person will help you learn about the Canadian way of life, including:

- shopping for groceries and other items;
- registering your children for school;
- using local transportation;
- arranging television, phone and utility services; and
- becoming comfortable with English and French.

Canadians who join the Host Program are caring volunteers. They enjoy helping others and understand the challenges of moving to a new country. They are proud of our country and culture, and they are interested in learning about yours.

Your Host Program volunteer will not provide you with living accommodations or money. However, he or she will be someone you can call or spend time with when you need advice or support.

The Host Program is a free service. To join, contact a local immigrant service agency.

For further information:

Your local library is an excellent source of information on Canada's history and native peoples.

Further information and resources are available from the provincial ministries of citizenship.



The Environment

This section describes Canada's land, economy and climate. It also tells you about the importance of protecting the environment.

GEOGRAPHY AND ECONOMY

Canada consists of ten provinces and two territories. The provinces are (from west to east): British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland/Labrador. The territories are the Yukon and the Northwest Territories (NWT). In 1999, the eastern part of the NWT will become a separate territory called Nunavut.

Physically, Canada is very large and diverse. Learning about its main features will help you to understand some of Canada's unique strengths. You will also understand some of the difficulties of travel, communication and business.

Distances

Distances in Canada are measured in kilometres. Canada is over 7,000 kms from east to west (from St. John's, Newfoundland to Victoria, British Columbia).

You would need seven days to drive from Halifax, Nova Scotia, to Vancouver, British Columbia. By airplane, the same trip would take about seven hours.

Where Canadians Live

Canada has more than 27 million people. More than 80 percent of all the people in Canada live in cities and towns within 250 km of the United States border.

Ottawa is Canada's capital. Canada's largest cities are Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver.



Regional Characteristics

Canada has five main regions: Atlantic, Central, Prairies, West Coast and the North. Culture and population are different in each region.

The **Atlantic** region consists of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland/Labrador. Resources such as fishing, farming, forestry and mining are important to the Atlantic economy.

Central Canada consists of Ontario and Quebec. This is the most populated region of the country. Together, Ontario and Quebec produce more than three-quarters of all Canadian manufactured goods.

The **Prairies** include Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta. Much of the land in these provinces is flat and fertile. It is excellent for farming and rich in energy resources. In western Alberta the prairies end and the Rocky Mountains begin. The Canadian Rockies include some of the largest and most spectacular peaks in North America.

The **West Coast** consists of the province of British Columbia. It is famous for its mountain ranges and forests. Natural resources such as lumber, fruit and ocean life are important to the economy of this region.

THE ENVIRONMENT

The **North** consists of Canada's two territories: the Yukon and the Northwest Territories. Together they make up over one-third of Canada's land mass. Northern resources include oil, gas, gold, lead and zinc.

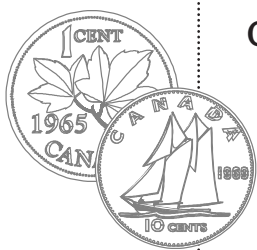
Canada's Economy

Canada has a diversified economy. Resource industries such as forestry, mining, energy, agriculture and fishing are an important source of jobs and wealth. However, Canada is also recognized as a world leader in high technology areas such as communications.

Canada's economy is responding to the challenge of global competition and changing needs. More and more jobs involve working with people and information. Service industries are increasingly important.

Currency

The dollar is the basic unit of money. The most common paper bills are the \$5, \$10 and \$20, but \$50 and \$100 bills are also used. Canadian coins include the penny (one cent), nickel (five cents), dime (ten cents), quarter (twenty-five cents), \$1 and the \$2 coin.



WEATHER AND CLIMATE

Most of Canada has four distinct seasons: spring, summer, autumn and winter. Temperatures and conditions differ from season to season in most parts of the country. In summer, Canada can be very hot. Winter can be so cold that you could freeze if you are not properly dressed.

Be Prepared

The best way to cope with Canada's changing weather is to be prepared. Read or listen to weather reports in newspapers or on radio and television. (If you have cable television, you may have a channel that broadcasts weather information all day and night.) You can then dress yourself and your children for comfort no matter what the day brings.

Canada measures temperature using the Celsius (Centigrade) thermometer. The United States uses the Fahrenheit scale.

Spring

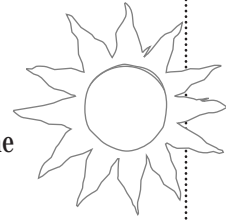
Spring is a rainy season in most parts of Canada. Average daytime temperatures rise steadily, but nights remain cool.



In southern Canada, the first flowers usually bloom in March. New leaves do not appear on the trees until April or May. However, spring may arrive up to two months earlier in Vancouver and Victoria. These cities on the southern West Coast have the shortest and mildest winter in Canada.

Summer

Summer officially begins on June 21. However, July and August represent summer for most Canadians. In summer the weather is usually very warm in most parts of the country. In southern Canada, daytime temperatures normally stay above 20 degrees Celsius, and can sometimes rise above 30 degrees.

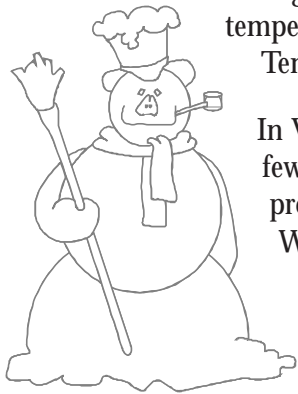


Autumn

Autumn in Canada is also called fall. You will know that autumn has begun when the first frost occurs overnight. Frost is common after the middle of September. In late September and October, the leaves of trees change colour and fall to the ground. Only trees with needles (coniferous trees) stay green all year around.

Autumn can be very rainy. Snow begins to fall during November in many areas except the southern West Coast.

Winter



During the winter months of December, January, February and March, the temperature usually stays below freezing (0 degrees Celsius) day and night. Temperatures in some parts of the country drop below -25 degrees Celsius.

In Vancouver and Victoria, the temperature drops below freezing for only a few days in December and January. In the rest of Canada, snow will probably be on the ground from late December to the middle of March.

Winter is colder and lasts longer the further north you go.

In the winter the wind-chill temperature is often much lower than the actual air temperature. The wind-chill temperature tells you how cold the air feels when it is windy. The wind-chill temperature is the one you should prepare for.

Winter conditions may last from November through April in many parts of Canada. You should be prepared for cold rain as well as snow in early and late winter.

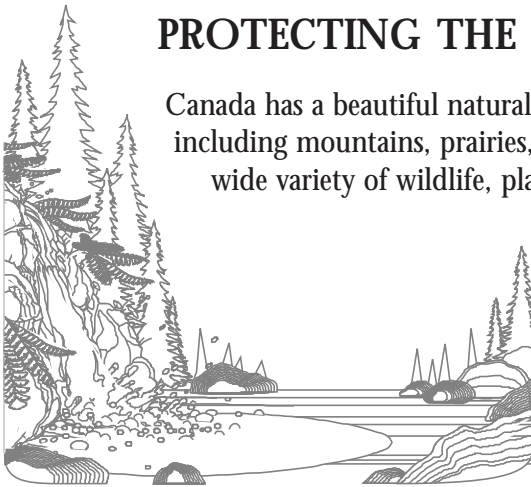
For further information:

Weather fact sheets are available from Environment Canada. The following are the most sought after:

- *Climate and Canadians* (AES-FS-9);
- *Weather Watches, Warnings and Advisories* (AES-FS-47);
- *Blizzards and Winter Hazards* (AES-FS-49);
- *Windchill* (AES-FS-53).

Contact Environment Canada, Enquiry Centre, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1A 0H3.
Telephone: 1-800-668-6767. Internet: <http://www.ec.gc.ca>

Environment Canada supplies weather forecasts each day to radio and television stations. This information is also published in newspapers.



PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

Canada has a beautiful natural environment. It contains many different landforms, including mountains, prairies, forests, lakes, rivers and rugged coasts. Canada has a wide variety of wildlife, plants and trees.

Because we have a lot of land and a small population, most of our country remains wild and unspoiled. However, it is becoming harder to preserve our environment as our population and cities grow. Pollution contributes to large-scale environmental problems such as acid rain. And the increased presence of people in natural areas threatens ecological systems in many ways.

Canadians are very concerned with environmental issues. They know that damage caused to the environment can be hard to repair. Because of this, many people are actively working to protect the environment.

You can do simple things every day to help protect the environment:

- Never throw waste paper or other garbage on the street, in parks or in other public places.
- Recycle and reuse as many products as possible. Recycle paper, glass and cans.
- Buy products that are made from recycled material or products that can be recycled after they are used. Look for the recycling symbol on things that you buy.

- Never pour paint, oil or other harmful chemicals down sinks or toilets, into sewers or on the open ground. Telephone your municipal government to find out where they can be taken for disposal.
- Walk, cycle or use public transportation whenever possible.

It is important to protect the environment. We must try to provide a healthy environment for all people, as well as animals, birds, fish, trees and plants.

For further information:

An Environmental Citizenship Kit (EPF-10) is available from Environment Canada. To obtain a copy, telephone 1-800-668-6767.

Several booklets are available to help you learn about protecting the environment:

- *Water Saving Devices* (1WD- WW- 3);
- *The 4Rs: Reduce, reuse, recycle, recover* (WMB-2E).

About environment and health:

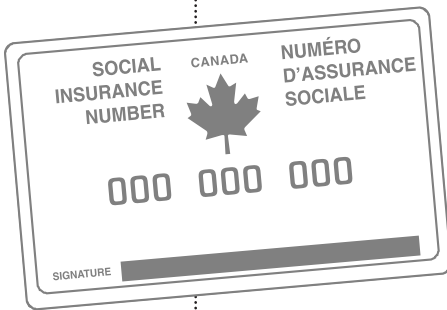
- *UV and You: Living with Ultraviolet* (15 DM-287)- FS- 9).

All of these booklets are available from Environment Canada, Enquiry Centre, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1A 0H3. Telephone: 1-800-668-6767. Internet: <http://www.ec.gc.ca>

Getting Settled in Your Community

This section tells you about some of the things you will need to know and do to start your new life in Canada.

SOCIAL INSURANCE NUMBER



One of the first things you should do after coming to Canada is to apply for a Social Insurance Number (SIN). This nine-digit number is used to identify people who earn money through work, pay taxes, contribute to pension plans and use government services. Most Canadians of working age have a SIN.

To apply for a Social Insurance Number, contact a Human Resource Centre.

Your Social Insurance Number should not be given to people who are not authorized to use it for identification purposes.

FOOD

Food and cooking in Canada may be different from what you were used to in your native country. Like everyone who moves to a new country, you will probably have to make changes in some of the ways you buy, store and cook food.

Where to Buy Food

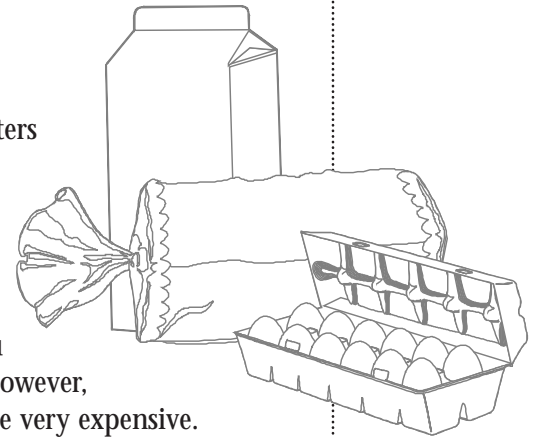
Most Canadians shop for food at large stores called supermarkets. In a supermarket, as in most stores, you select what you want from the counters and shelves. Your items can be collected and carried in a cart that is provided by the store. You then pay for them at a counter before leaving.

You can also purchase food at smaller grocery stores and specialty shops. In larger cities with well-established immigrant communities, you may find specialty food stores that sell food from your home country. However, some of your traditional foods may not be available in Canada or may be very expensive.

Other neighborhood stores, known as convenience stores, sell basic items like milk and bread. Convenience stores usually stay open longer than supermarkets and specialty stores but they can be more expensive.

Many Canadian cities have open-air markets. These are much like markets in other countries. They usually sell fresh fruits, vegetables and other produce that is grown nearby.

Many Canadians shop for groceries just once a week, although they may buy food such as milk and bread more often.



Getting a Good Price

How much you pay for food depends on what you buy and where you shop. Generally, food imported from other countries is more expensive than food grown and produced in Canada. Frozen fruits and vegetables can sometimes cost less than fresh fruit and vegetables.

Most supermarkets offer special prices on certain foods each week. Many stores sell their own brands of products, which may be less expensive.

Prices in supermarkets will usually be marked on the shelf or on the product. You cannot bargain with salespeople in supermarkets.

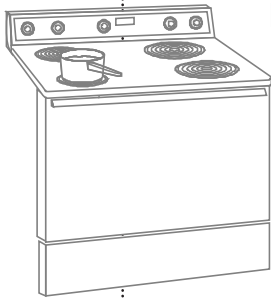
Storing and Handling Food Safely

In Canada, there are strict government rules for producing and selling food. Inspections ensure cleanliness, health and safety. For public health reasons, it is illegal to raise animals for food anywhere except on a farm.

People in Canada store food the same way you would in your native country. However, certain kinds of foods which are less common in your former home may need special treatment. For example, frozen foods such as vegetables, meats and prepared meals should always be kept frozen and well covered until they are used. They should never be put back into the freezer once they have been thawed.

If you have a baby, you can buy milk and infant formula from the store and prepare it in advance. These types of foods can be easily spoiled by bacteria in the air. If you choose to use bottles of milk or formula, prepare them with care and refrigerate them promptly. Place enough formula in each bottle for one feeding, and throw out leftovers. Reheating the same milk in a bottle several times can spoil the milk.

Water from the tap is safe to drink. Do not use water from lakes and rivers for drinking or cooking.



Preparing Meals

Most Canadians have three meals each day: a breakfast before leaving home for work or school; a mid-day meal called lunch; and a meal in the evening called dinner or supper.

Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating can help you make wise food choices from the food you can easily find in Canada. The *Food Guide* tells you about the four main food groups. It shows you how much you need from each group every day to stay healthy. You can get a copy of the *Food Guide* from your local public health office.

Canadian kitchens are equipped to make preparing meals easy and safe. They usually include an electric or gas stove and oven, a refrigerator, storage cupboards and a sink with hot and cold water. Nobody — especially children — should use kitchen equipment until he or she knows how.

In Canada, most household electrical appliances use 110-volt current.

Alcoholic Drinks

Depending on which part of Canada you live in, you must be 18 or 19 years old to buy or drink alcohol in any form.

Only licensed stores may sell alcoholic drinks. In most provinces, restaurants and bars sell alcohol to customers only. In addition, most provinces do not allow people to bring alcohol to bars or restaurants, or to drink in public parks or in cars. When you are driving, alcohol must be kept in the trunk of your car.

It is illegal to drive if you have been drinking alcohol. Two servings of any alcoholic drink within two hours will probably make you legally unable to drive. Penalties are severe for drinking and driving.

Disposing of Garbage

Both inside and outside your home, garbage should be put in bags and containers that close tightly. This will help prevent odours and stop insects and animals from getting into it. Garbage should be thrown away regularly.

If you live in a large apartment building, the person who takes care of the building (called the superintendent or caretaker) will tell you how to get rid of your garbage. If you live in a smaller building or house, you put out containers of garbage near the street on a certain day of the week. A garbage truck will come by to pick up the garbage.

To help reduce waste, some cities have recycling programs for glass bottles, newspapers, cans and other items. To find out if your city has a recycling program, contact your municipal department of public works.

For further information:

To get a copy of *Canada's Food Guide* contact your local public health office or Health Canada, Communications Branch, Brooke-Claxton Building, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1A 0K9. Telephone: (613) 954-5995.

Health Canada (federal) and provincial ministries or departments of health have information about all aspects of food, as do clinics, hospitals and doctors.

CLOTHING

Most Canadians wear the same fashions as Western Europeans or Americans, but you can usually wear whatever style of clothes you wish. Most people require different types of clothing for each season. This is especially true for winter and summer.

Keeping Warm in Winter

To keep warm and safe in winter, Canadians wear special clothes. Proper winter clothing is very important whenever you are outside. You will often hear Canadians say, "Bundle up!" or "Cover up!" This is a friendly reminder to dress warmly.

For adults and older children, winter clothes include: warm boots; a thick, windproof coat; a scarf around the neck and/or across the face; lined gloves; and warm undergarments. A hat covering the ears is an important part of dressing for winter because people lose a lot of body heat from their heads. Children under 5 years old usually wear a snowsuit, a zippered, lined garment that is worn with boots, mittens and a hat over normal indoor clothing.



Severe cold weather (below -15 degrees Celsius) can cause frostbite to your fingers, toes, nose and ears. Frostbite is often painless at first, but it feels and acts like a serious burn when you warm up again.

Keeping Cool in Summer

From June through August, most areas of Canada are very warm. To keep cool in summer, most Canadians wear lightweight clothes. In casual situations, both men and women often wear shorts, lightweight shirts and sandals.

Most shops and restaurants will not let anyone in who is not wearing a shirt or shoes.

Autumn and Spring

The cool weather of spring and autumn requires light clothing that will keep you dry and warm. Many people wear sweaters with jackets that keep out wind and rain.

For further information:

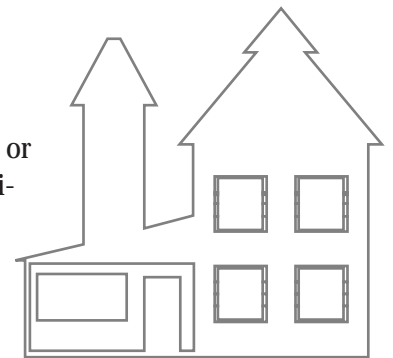
Advertisements delivered to your door or appearing in daily newspapers are useful guides to prices, quality and styles of clothing. Some stores produce seasonal catalogues. These will allow you to look at the styles and prices of clothes for all ages and all members of the family.

HOUSING

Canadian cities and towns offer many different types of housing. People refer to where they live as their home, whether it is owned or rented. Your home may be a house, town house (row house), semi-detached house, condominium (owned apartment), rented apartment or room.

The cost of housing in Canada varies in each city and region. Rents and home prices are generally higher in Vancouver and Toronto than in other cities. Housing costs also depend on your location within the city.

Do not worry if your first home in Canada is not all you would like it to be. Many Canadians start out with basic housing, then work to get a better place. One out of every two Canadians moves every three years.



Looking for a Home

Apartments for rent (and other homes) are advertised in the classified section of newspapers. They may be listed by their location within a city; by the number of bedrooms they contain; and/or by their general size and features.

A furnished apartment should contain at least: bed(s), table(s), chairs, lamps, curtains and basic kitchen equipment. Furnished apartments cost more than unfurnished ones.

A bachelor apartment is a small apartment designed mainly for one person (two at the most). It will contain one general-purpose main room with a kitchen and sleeping area, plus a separate bathroom.

Some apartments are larger than others. Ask the person you are renting the apartment from how many people can live in it.

Some cities have special apartments or houses for people with very low incomes or special needs.

Almost all apartments have several basic features. These include:

- a lockable front door opening to the street or a common hallway;
- a bathroom with a toilet, sink, and shower or bath;
- closets for storing clothes; and
- a kitchen or kitchen area with a sink, counter, shelves or cupboards, and appliances such as a refrigerator and a stove with oven.

An apartment advertised with two appliances means that the stove and refrigerator are supplied. Newer or more expensive apartments often have other appliances, such as a dishwasher or air conditioner. Clothes washers and dryers may also be included.

Your apartment will be equipped with basic utilities, including:

- water from taps that is safe to drink;
- sewage disposal that pipes waste from bathrooms, kitchens and laundry rooms;
- electricity;
- a heating system powered by natural gas, oil or electricity; and
- telephone service (information on how to use the telephone is given on page 26).

You can buy a telephone or rent one from the telephone company. You may have to pay a deposit on your rented telephone. However your telephone will not work until you are connected by the telephone company.

In some provinces, you may have to pay to get your home or apartment connected to electricity.

Your apartment may have cable television. This will let you get many more television channels than are otherwise available. You may have to call the cable television company to be connected. You may also have to pay a monthly fee.

The person you rent your apartment from may include the cost of some utilities (such as heat and electricity) in your monthly rent. You will probably have to pay extra for other utilities such as your telephone and cable television. The utility company will bill you for these directly.

Choosing a Place to Live

You have the right to live anywhere you choose. Discrimination on the basis of race, colour, creed, sex, age or disability is not allowed by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Provincial landlord and tenant laws also protect you against such discrimination.

Decide how much you can pay, how many rooms you need and where you want to live. Read the “apartments for rent” section of the daily newspaper and mark the listings that most closely match your needs.

Location is important. You will want to be as close as possible to the services you need. For example, if you have children, try to find a home that is near schools. An apartment that is near stores is desirable, especially if you do not have a car. Since you may not find an apartment within walking distance of where you work, look for one that is close to a public transportation system.

When you have chosen several apartments that seem to meet your needs, telephone and make appointments to see them. Ask the landlord (the person renting the apartment) any important questions. For example, you should ask what utilities and services are included in the rent and whether you can control the heat. You may also want to know how many people can live with you and whether you can keep pets.

Expect to look at several apartments before deciding. But remember, unless you leave a deposit, the landlord does not have to hold an apartment for you. An immigrant service agency can help you select a location in the city.

Signing a Lease

Once you agree to rent an apartment you may be asked to sign a lease for one year. Most apartments are leased by the year, although some are rented monthly.

If your apartment requires a lease, your landlord will give you a special form. This is a printed document of one or two pages with space to write in the number of rooms, utilities and options such as parking or storage space. Leases may also state whether pets or additional people are allowed.

Read your lease carefully before you sign it. Pay special attention to the parts that state exceptions and additions. You should know which utilities you will pay for, which ones will be paid by the landlord, and what penalty you may have to pay if you leave before the lease is over. The lease may use legal terms and seem hard to understand. If you need help, contact a group that helps immigrants or someone you know and trust. Once you sign a lease it is a legal contract.

In most cases the landlord will do a credit check. This will tell the landlord if you have enough money to pay the rent and if you have a history of paying your bills on time.

Rents are normally paid by cheque on the first of each month. Some landlords may ask for a series of cheques in advance, each one dated for a different month of the year.

You may have to pay the first and last month's rent in advance. You may also be asked for a damage deposit. This will normally be returned to you when you move out. It is a form of insurance for landlords in case a tenant causes unreasonable damage. Look at your apartment carefully and tell the landlord about any damage that is already there before you move in.

Protecting Yourself and Your Possessions

Your landlord is responsible for insuring the building. However, if you damage your rented apartment, you will probably have to pay for the repairs. It is your own responsibility to insure your possessions against fire, theft and other loss.

Your apartment or house should have smoke detectors. If it does not, buy some from a department or hardware store. Smoke detectors make a loud noise when they come in contact with smoke or fire. Most smoke detectors use batteries. Keep fresh batteries in them and make sure that they work.



Home Comfort

Apartment buildings have insulated walls, double windows and doors, and are equipped with central heating. The heat in most apartments is controlled by a thermostat. If your home is too warm in winter, adjust the thermostat instead of opening a window. If there is no thermostat in your apartment, ask your landlord to adjust the heat.

Your apartment may have a hot water heater or space heaters that you can control. Using such systems often and at high temperatures uses more energy and can be expensive. This is very important to remember if the cost of heating or electricity is not included in your rent.

Air conditioners should be used with windows closed. As with heaters, using them for long periods at high settings can be expensive. They should be used only when necessary.

Learn how to operate all of these systems safely — ask someone who knows how they work. Never let children use them on their own.

How to Use the Telephone

When you are connected to the telephone service you will be given a telephone book. Telephone books have white, yellow and sometimes blue pages:

- white pages list all the phone numbers of people and businesses in your city in alphabetical order;
- yellow pages list all the business phone numbers of people and business in your city by type of service; and
- blue pages list the phone numbers of federal, provincial and municipal government offices in your city in alphabetical order.



Basic telephone service is a set cost each month. No extra payments are charged for the calls you make within your own city.

You can use your telephone to talk with people almost anywhere in the world. However, you do have to pay extra for each call you make to people outside your local calling area. These are called long-distance calls. They can be very expensive, and the bill must be paid every month.

The cost of long-distance calls depends on how far away you are calling, the time of day when you are calling, and how long your call lasts. The white pages contain details on how to use your telephone for local and long-distance calls.

Postal Services

Most cities have daily mail service, Monday through Friday. Letters will normally be delivered to your home or apartment. In smaller towns, rural areas and some newer neighbourhoods in large cities, letters may be delivered to a central post office or local postal box. Packages may be delivered in the same way, or a card may be delivered that tells you where to pick up the packages.

Your Rights and Responsibilities

As a tenant you have legal rights. Laws protect you from unfair rent increases or from being forced to move without cause. Your landlord normally cannot go into your apartment without your permission.

However, you have a responsibility to take care of your apartment and to respect the rights of other tenants. Avoid loud noises, especially at night. Most cities have laws that ban loud noises after a certain hour.

For further information:

Rents are controlled in many provinces and cities. Rent Review or Rent Control offices can provide information about how and what rents are controlled.

Human Rights Commissions in all provinces are sources of help in cases of discrimination.

Most cities have tenants' groups that are listed in the government section of the telephone book. Such groups can give you help and support.

Fact sheets for newcomers on "Housing" and, "Budgeting, Banking and Saving" are available from Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Public Affairs Branch, Journal Tower South, 365 Laurier Avenue West, 19th Floor, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1A 1L1. Fax: (613) 954-2221.

Additional information is available from immigrant service agencies.

SHOPPING

Shopping in Canada may seem challenging at first, but you will soon adapt. In fact, getting used to new stores and new products can be a lot of fun.

Choosing a Place to Shop

Going shopping usually means going to a mall or shopping centre. These are large buildings containing a large number of separate stores. You buy and pay for products at each store. Many of these stores sell only one type of product, such as shoes, books or clothing. Supermarkets, banks, pharmacies and restaurants are also located in malls.

Malls often contain department stores. These are larger stores that sell a variety of products, from furniture and appliances to clothing and hardware (tools and equipment for the home). Malls have places to park cars and are usually on bus routes. They offer convenient, one-stop shopping.

You may prefer to shop in small, independently owned and operated stores. You can look up the products you need in the yellow pages of the telephone book to find the names and addresses of stores that sell the items you are looking for. In smaller villages and towns there are small general stores which sell many products.

Smart Shopping

Smart shopping means choosing carefully and finding value — buying a good product at a good price. Stores compete with one another to attract customers, so it is wise to shop around and compare prices.

Canadian stores regularly have sales when prices on some goods are lowered for a short time. They also have feature items or advertised specials at lower prices to encourage people to buy. To get the best value, check prices at different stores before you buy.

Smart shopping also means budgeting — planning to spend and save your money to meet all of your needs. If you know how much money you can afford to spend before you go shopping, you are more likely to shop wisely. There are laws that protect buyers from unsafe or dishonestly advertised goods and services, but you must protect yourself from overspending.

What to Expect in the Store

Many Canadian stores are self-serve. However, people who work in the stores will help you find what you are looking for. Many store clerks will be glad to answer any questions about the products they sell. However, even if a store clerk spends a lot of time helping you, you do not have to buy anything.

Items in the store will usually have a sticker or tag on them that tells you how much they cost. In many cases, the marked price will not include sales taxes which must also be paid. You may pay as much as 20 percent more in federal and provincial taxes, depending on the province.

Items that you select from a store shelf should be paid for at the cashier. The location of the cashier may not always be obvious, especially in larger stores. Be careful to pay at the right place — ask someone if you are not sure.

Whenever you buy something, the cashier will give you a receipt to prove the item has been paid for. Your purchase will then be placed in a bag so you can continue shopping or leave the store.

You should always keep your receipts. The receipt normally lets you return an item that is defective or does not fit. Some stores do not provide refunds, and some will not allow refunds or exchanges on items that are discounted or marked “final sale.” It is important to check the store’s refund and exchange policy before you buy.

Shopping for Cars and Houses

Buying a very expensive item such as a car or house can be difficult, even for people who have lived in Canada for a long time. You should get information or help from someone who knows what to do.

Bargaining

Bargaining for a better price is not common, but there are exceptions. For example, almost everyone bargains for a better price when buying a car or a house. The owners of some stores may also lower their marked price on certain goods. People who sell things privately are usually prepared to bargain. Informal markets where people bring things to sell, such as garage sales and flea markets, are also good places to bargain and look for low-priced items.

Buying Stamps and Sending Mail

You can buy stamps, weigh packages and get more information on sending mail from your local post office. You will probably find a post office in one of your local stores, as well as at certain corner stores and pharmacies. Telephone Canada Post for more information. The number will be listed in the blue pages of your telephone book.



To mail letters and small packages, place them in one of the red Canada Post mail boxes you will find outside some offices, stores and near main streets. Large packages should be mailed at a post office.

Shoplifting

As in your native country, failing to pay for an item in a store is theft. In Canada, this type of theft is called shoplifting. Most stores have alarms, cameras and other security systems that will identify shoplifters.

Anyone in Canada who is caught shoplifting can be prosecuted under the law. For newcomers, shoplifting can also lead to deportation.

For further information:

Many stores provide free catalogues of their products. They often advertise sales. Advertising supplements are often included with newspapers or delivered free to your door. Catalogues and advertising help you to learn about price and quality before buying.

If you feel you have been the victim of false advertising or any other illegal sales practice, you can get help from several organizations. These include provincial departments or ministries of labour and industry, or private consumer protection associations. Their telephone numbers are listed in the telephone book. Many city newspapers also employ a person who tries to solve consumer problems for their readers.

SCHOOLS

Getting a good education is more important today than ever before. It is the best thing you can do to build a better future for your children and yourself.

Canadian School System

Most children attend public schools. Public schools are completely funded by governments through tax revenue. Boys and girls attend the same schools and share the same courses and classes. Schooling in Canada is provided in English and in French.

The rest of Canadian children attend private schools, which are supported mainly by fees paid directly by parents. Some private schools enrol only boys or girls.

By law, children must attend school from age 5 to 16. Children are usually in school between 8:30 or 9:00 a.m. and 3:30 or 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, from September to the middle of June.

There are several different levels in the Canadian education system. The first is called Elementary School. In most provinces Elementary School includes Kindergarten through grades 7 or 8.

From grades 8 or 9 through 12 or 13, children go to Secondary School or high school. High school students must take certain courses for several years, such as English or French and mathematics. Some courses help students get a job after they graduate from school. Other courses prepare students for college or university. In Canada, teenagers usually make these choices for themselves, with the advice of their teachers, guidance counsellors and parents.

Schools usually offer extra activities at the end of the normal school day (i.e. after 3:30 or 4:00 p.m.). These include sports, games, music and clubs.

Most elementary and high schools encourage parents to take part in school activities. Parent nights are organized from time to time. These are chances for parents to discuss their children's progress with teachers. You may wish to bring an interpreter or friend with you.



After graduating from high school, many young adults continue their studies through post-secondary education. Three general types of post secondary education are available:

- formal training to prepare students for a skilled trade;
- community college or cégeps (collèges d'enseignement général et professionnel) which offer one to three-year Diploma programs in technical or academic subjects; and
- university, which offers multi-year Degree programs in arts, sciences, business and other academic and professional fields.

Governments use taxes to support post-secondary education. However, all post-secondary institutions also charge tuition fees.

Enrolling Your Child in School

You should enrol your child in school as soon as possible. The first step is to arrange to visit your local school. (Telephone your school board to find out the name and location of the elementary or high school in your area.) Bring your child's:

- birth certificate;
- immigration landing papers;
- passport;
- health (medical) records; and
- school records.

The school will decide which grade your child should attend. If the school feels that your child needs lessons in English or French, he or she may be enrolled in special classes.

Children with Special Needs

Children with mental and/or physical disabilities also have a right to a free public education. Classes for these students are often held within the regular schools. However, some schools are designed especially for students with particular needs, such as children who are blind or deaf.

Religion and Schools

A large number of religions are practised in Canada. For this reason, religion does not play an active role in most regular public schools. Public schools usually teach world religion as a subject instead of providing religious instruction.

School Vacations

Most schools are closed on all national holidays. In addition, all schools are closed between Christmas and New Year's Day, and most are closed for one week in March. The March holiday is known as Spring Break.

However, the most important school holiday occurs during the summer. Elementary schools and high schools are closed between the middle of June and early September. In universities, regular classes usually end in April.

For further information:

General information for students is contained in *It's Your Right: Student's Guide*. A publication catalogue is also available. Write to Canadian Heritage, Communications Branch, 25 Eddy Street, 10th Floor, Hull, Quebec, Canada K1A 0M5. Telephone: (819) 997-0055.

For information about primary and secondary schooling, contact your local school board. The number will be listed in the city or municipal services section of the telephone book.

For information about post-secondary education, contact local universities, colleges, technical colleges and institutes, or your provincial department of education. They publish annual lists of courses available to the public. They also employ professional counsellors who can answer your questions and provide advice.

A fact sheet on "Education" is available to help newcomers learn more. Contact Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Public Affairs Branch, Journal Tower South, 365 Laurier Avenue West, 19th Floor, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1A 1L1. Fax: (613) 954-2221.

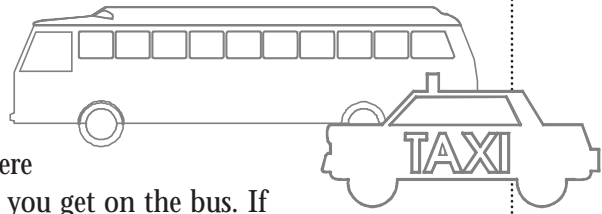
TRANSPORTATION AND TRAVEL

Learning how to travel within and outside your community will help you feel more in control of your daily life. Canada's buses, trains and other forms of transportation may be very similar to those in your native country. However, finding your way around may take time. Do not be worried if you sometimes get lost, and try to feel at ease about asking for help.

Urban Transportation

Most cities have excellent public transportation systems. Large cities such as Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver have several different systems, such as buses, streetcars, subways and trains. In smaller communities, buses and taxis are more common.

Buses and streetcars travel throughout larger cities on regular routes. Stops are located every few blocks along these routes. They are usually located near street corners, and are marked by signposts that show the numbers of the buses that stop there. Drivers will stop there when they see someone waiting. You pay the driver when you get on the bus. If you pay with money you need the right amount (the driver cannot give change). You can also pay with tickets or a pass you buy in advance.



Subways (underground trains) and other forms of rapid transit are usually designed to take people to and from the city centre. They travel along central routes to serve large areas of the city. Subways usually stop at all stations. Passengers buy tokens or tickets in the subway station.

Monthly passes for both buses and subways may be bought at convenience stores, bus stations and other locations. Special rates may be available to students and seniors.

Most towns and cities also have taxis (private cars for hire). You can call for a taxi by telephone or approach one directly at a taxi stand. Taxi stands are often located outside shopping malls, large office buildings, hotels, airports, train stations and bus stations. In some cities you may also get a taxi on the street by raising your hand to show the driver you need a ride. Taxis charge for time and distance travelled and can be quite expensive.

Depending on the weather and how far you must travel, walking or cycling are excellent and economical ways of getting around. Some cities have special paths for people who ride bicycles or walk.

Travelling Between Cities

Canada is a large country — over 7,000 kilometres from east to west. Cities and towns are often far apart. Before you travel in Canada, ask someone how far it is to the place you want to go. This will help you choose the best form of transportation.

Your decision on how to travel between cities will depend on how much time you have and how much money you can spend. In general, slower forms of travel cost less than faster ones.

Telephone bus stations directly for information on schedules and fares. For information on trains and air travel, call the train station, airline or a travel agent. Travel agents do not charge customers for most services.

Driving

Each province or territory is responsible for licensing drivers of cars, motorcycles and other motor vehicles. You may use your provincial licence in any province. To qualify for a driver's licence you must:

- be a certain minimum age;
- pass a test of your knowledge of rules and regulations (many road signs and rules may be different from those in your native country);
- have your vision checked and approved;
- get a beginner's licence (a legal training certificate); and
- pass a road test (an actual driving test).

Driving a car is a privilege. People who abuse this privilege by driving without a licence or by breaking the rules may lose their licence.

Identification

You do not need a passport or a pass to travel within Canada. Still, it is a good idea to always carry at least two pieces of identification. Common forms of recognized identification include:

- a driver's licence (a legal necessity when driving);
- permanent resident papers or a citizenship card;
- a social insurance (SIN) card;
- a birth certificate; and
- credit cards.

In addition, write down the name and telephone number of the people you want contacted in case of an accident or other emergency.

For further information:

Your local transit authority can provide you with information on buses and other forms of public transportation. Ask someone for the name of the transit authority in your community. Their number will be listed in the white pages of your telephone book.

Brochures and schedules are available from intercity transportation companies. These will be listed under Buses, Trains and Airlines in the yellow pages of your telephone book.

For information on drivers' licences and regulations, call your provincial ministry of transportation. The number will be listed under Provincial Governments in your telephone book.

HEALTH

Canada has one of the finest health care systems in the world. Excellent hospitals, clinics or doctors' offices are located in most communities. Their services are usually available free of charge to all residents of Canada registered under the national health insurance program. This program is funded by governments (and paid for through taxes) but it is very costly. It is important to use it wisely.

Do not hide the fact that you or any member of your family is sick. This is very important when the disease or condition can be passed to others. It is important to respect and protect yourself, your family and other members of the community.

Medicare

Canada's national health insurance program, sometimes known as medicare, pays for most necessary medical services.

You must have an official health card from the province you live in to qualify for medicare. To get one, get an application form from a doctor's office, hospital or pharmacy. Your medicare card will be accepted throughout Canada. However, you must register again if you move to another province.

Your medicare card allows you to get to medical services from a licensed medical doctor (MD). Medicare does not pay for prescription medicines. Medicare coverage is a little different in each province. There may be a fee for getting medicare in some provinces.

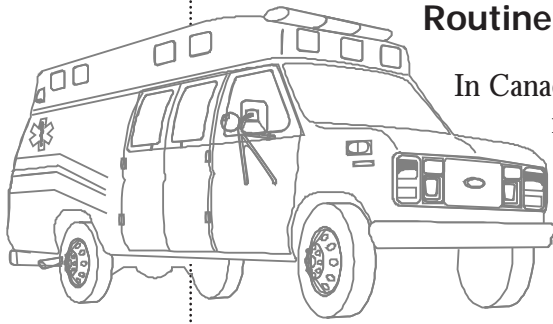
It is important to use the medical or health service that matches your condition.

Medical Emergencies

If you or a member of your family is seriously injured or suddenly becomes very sick, go to the emergency department of the nearest hospital.

If a life is in danger, call your local emergency telephone number. In many Canadian cities you can dial 9-1-1 to get ambulances and other emergency services immediately. In other communities, dial "0" and ask the operator to send an ambulance. If your doctor decides that you did not need an ambulance, you will be required to pay for it. In some provinces, you must pay part of the ambulance fee even if the service is required.

Interpreters may be available at larger urban hospitals. However, make sure that every member of your family knows enough English or French to call for help in an emergency.



Routine Medical Services

In Canada, most people choose one doctor to help them with ordinary medical problems. By using one doctor, you will be treated by someone who knows your medical history. This can be an advantage in both emergency and routine situations. There are more men than women doctors. However, among younger doctors there are now as many women as men.

To choose a doctor, ask friends or co-workers to recommend one they know and trust. You can also look in the yellow pages of the telephone book — they list the names of doctors and their specialties, and may identify the languages they speak. Agencies that help newcomers often have names of available doctors.

Doctors limit the number of patients they accept, so the first doctor you call may not be able to take you as a patient. However, the doctor's receptionist can usually tell you of another doctor nearby who is accepting new patients.

In most cases, patients make an appointment to visit a doctor. It is important to arrive on time. Some clinics will see patients on a first-come, first-served basis.

It is your right to choose your doctor. You may change doctors at any time. If you disagree with your doctor, you may also seek another opinion from a different doctor. People sometimes do this if they have been advised to have an operation, or if they have been told they have a serious condition.

Public Health

Public health laws protect all Canadians in many ways. For example, they ensure that the food you buy is clean and meets approved standards; that restaurants and food stores are properly maintained; and that children are immunized from serious diseases. Polio, diphtheria, mumps, measles and chicken pox have been eliminated or reduced because of high public health standards.

Your children must be routinely inoculated against serious diseases that easily spread to other people. These are called infectious diseases, and include diphtheria, polio and tetanus. Your child cannot go to school without an immunization card to prove that his or her inoculations are up to date. You can arrange inoculations through your doctor or through public health clinics. Children with infectious diseases should stay home.

Schools teach health from a scientific and non-religious point of view. Children learn about cleanliness, nutrition and other ways to maintain good health. They also study human biology, including reproduction and the avoidance of sexually transmitted diseases.

Medicines

Medicines (drugs) are strictly controlled. Many kinds of drugs for minor conditions like headaches and colds are available in the self-serve sections of pharmacies. The pharmacist can help you choose the proper ones.

Medicines for more serious conditions are available only by prescription. Your doctor must write a prescription which explains how to use the medicine. You give it to a licensed pharmacist to get your prescription. You should only take prescription medicines that the doctor has prescribed just for you. Sharing medications can be very dangerous.

Prescription medicines can be expensive. They are usually paid for by the patient. In large cities, herbal medicines may be available in special stores.



Pregnancy

If you are or think you may be pregnant, call your doctor as soon as possible to arrange an examination. Almost all births in Canada take place in hospitals.

Child birth and child care courses are available at most local hospitals and clinics. You should register for these courses if you are pregnant or have recently had a baby. They will help you learn about special foods, products and services for new mothers.

AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Diseases

Like many other countries, Canada has recognized the threat of AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome). This fatal disease is spread through the exchange of blood or semen. All people can get the disease, no matter what their social or ethnic group or sexual preference is.

Canadians learn about AIDS through television and radio announcements, schools, information distributed on the job and other communication programs. People are becoming more aware of the risks of having sex with different partners without using a latex condom.

There are pamphlets available on many topics, such as sexually transmitted diseases, at hospitals, clinics and doctors' offices. These pamphlets are useful sources of information on how to prevent illnesses and where to go for treatment.

Mental Illness

There is professional medical help available for emotional or other mental problems. Your doctor may recommend psychiatric counselling, which, like other medical services, is paid for by medicare.

Death

All deaths must be officially certified by a licensed physician. Without this certification it is impossible to process wills, inheritances, insurance claims and related legal matters.

In most parts of Canada, bodies may only be buried in recognized cemeteries. You must arrange burials through a professional mortician called a funeral director. A funeral director will arrange burial or cremation according to your wishes and religious practices.

For further information:

Health information and advice are available free from public health nurses or at any hospital. Public health nurses and hospital staff can direct you to special programs such as nutrition or pre- and post-natal courses.

Health Canada (federal) and provincial departments or ministries of health provide printed health information, usually in a variety of languages. Drug stores also carry pamphlets on a number of different health topics.

The Health Care in Canada video is available in many languages. Your local immigrant service agency may have a copy.

Finding a Job, Building a Future

This section contains information on employment, education and how to manage money.

EMPLOYMENT

In Canada, most adults work outside the home.

Full-time jobs are common. However, a growing number of people have part-time jobs or temporary contracts. Women make up a large portion of the work force. Increasingly, they have important, senior positions.

Canadians often change jobs and careers several times. This is often a personal choice. Sometimes people must change jobs because the economy itself changes. Today, there are more new jobs in service occupations than in manufacturing.

For these and other reasons, getting a job is not easy. Many people are looking for work. Unemployment in Canada affects a large number of people — not just newcomers.

This situation may surprise you, especially if you come from a country where careers can last a lifetime. However, if you prepare yourself well and keep trying, you will eventually find a job.

Looking for a Job

Information about jobs is available from many sources. Newspapers have classified advertisements that list jobs by occupation. Stores needing workers often put a sign in the window. People you meet may know of a business that is hiring. It is important to ask people and keep aware of opportunities.

The Human Resource Centres (HRCs) of Human Resources Development Canada offer useful information and services for people seeking work. These offices operate as labour exchanges. Employers list jobs at the HRC so unemployed workers can register and be made aware of available work.

You can often get help finding a job from volunteer or immigrant service agencies. Some of these are specially designed for newcomers. In large cities, there are usually associations of people who share your background and language who can help you. You can find these associations and agencies listed in the telephone book.

A good résumé, also known as a curriculum vitae (CV), is an important tool in your search for a job. A résumé is a summary of your qualifications and work experience. It should be clear, concise and contain the following information:

- your name, address and telephone number;
- a history of where you have worked and the type of jobs you have done; and
- a list of your education and training.

Networking is also important for finding a job. This means talking to people you know or meet about the kind of job you are looking for. The people you talk with may tell you about a job, or about other people with ideas and information. Most jobs are not advertised and are filled through personal contacts.

HRC offices and non-governmental or volunteer agencies can help you learn how to prepare a résumé, to network, and to promote yourself and your abilities.

Remember: looking for a job is itself a full-time job. Do not become discouraged. Almost everyone who is looking for work has many failures before they succeed.

Qualifications and Experience

Training and education, as well as speaking English or French, will improve your chances of getting the kind of job you want. There is information on job training in the next section of this book.

If you are a professional, such as a doctor, lawyer, nurse or engineer, you may not be able to practise your profession in Canada. In most cases you must re-qualify. Qualifications vary by profession and province.

Like other Canadians, you may also have to re-qualify if you move from one province to another. This may mean studying and writing qualifying exams. The process may take up to a year. If you do not take steps to re-qualify, you may have to start again at the bottom of your profession.

In some professions there are limits to the number of places available for training. In addition, those who have graduated from Canadian schools usually get preference. For information on requirements and opportunities, contact your local immigrant service agency or the relevant professional association.

Qualifications alone may not get you the job you want. Employers look for experienced people who will become productive immediately. They may not want to hire someone without Canadian experience or who seems unable to cope with Canadian ways.

Because of this, many newcomers take a first job outside their trade or profession. This often means working for lower wages than they expect or can eventually earn. You may want to look for a basic job that will help you learn or improve your English or French.

Starting with a job that does not meet your expectations should not limit your potential. Many people who are now professionals, business people, senior industrialists, academics and public servants once worked as waiters, manual workers, cleaners and at other lower-paying jobs.

Discrimination and Exploitation

Canada promotes equality in the workplace. The law protects people from discrimination based on who they are. However, it does not interfere with an employer's right to decide who is the best person for a job.

Laws and customs are changing to ensure equal pay and opportunities for men and women. However, women are still sometimes not paid fairly. Women hold only a small percentage of the highly paid, influential positions.

Each province has a Human Rights Commission that checks reported acts of discrimination. If you feel that you have been discriminated against because of your race, creed, origin or sex, keep a written record of the facts. Then, seek advice from the Human Rights Commission.

Some people may try to take advantage of you. You, your friends or a member of your family may meet dishonest people — some of whom might speak your language or even come from your country.

Each province has labour laws designed to protect workers. If an offer seems contrary to law, custom or your conscience, check with someone you trust. No honest business person will object if you take advice from a lawyer or friend before risking your time or money.

If you feel that you are being exploited, or that the employment information you have been given is false, contact Human Resources Development Canada or your provincial department of labour. These departments can sometimes arrange to have a person explain the situation in your own language. You may also wish to contact the Human Rights Commission.

National (general) Holidays

Canadians have several holidays each year. They provide opportunities to rest from work or school and to spend time with family and friends.

Depending on which province you live in, nine or ten official holidays are celebrated each year:

- Christmas Day, December 25;
- Boxing Day, December 26 (observed in most provinces);
- New Year's Day, January 1;
- Good Friday (Easter), which occurs in March or April;
- Victoria Day, May 24, the Queen's official birthday (not a holiday in Quebec);
- Canada Day, July 1, celebrating the birth of the country in 1867;
- The first Monday in August (a local holiday observed in most provinces);
- Labour Day, the first Monday in September;
- Thanksgiving Day, the second Monday in October; and
- Remembrance Day, November 11 (not a full-day holiday for most people).

There are also local and provincial holidays such as Quebec's Fête nationale du Québec on June 24.

Government offices, banks and most businesses close for official holidays. However, many services and businesses, such as theatres and restaurants, remain open. If you are required to work on an official holiday, your employer must give you equivalent time off at a later date or pay you overtime.

In addition to official holidays, your employer must provide you with a paid vacation. Two weeks is required by law in most full-time jobs. Your vacation may increase to three weeks or more once you have been working for the same company for several years.

Sometimes you may need to be away from work for religious reasons. Your employer will usually make suitable arrangements. For example, a colleague may agree to work for you if you agree to work for him or her some other time. You may also be able to use part of your normal vacation time in advance.

Income Security

Once you are employed, you are eligible to receive several types of income protection and social benefits. You must help pay for some of these benefits through deductions on your pay cheque.

Your employer normally deducts contributions to an Employment Insurance fund from your pay cheque. If you lose your job, contact a counsellor at your nearest Human Resource Centre. Employment Insurance benefits are not paid to workers who quit without a good reason, who are fired for a good reason or who have not worked for a certain period of time.

You must continue to look for another job while you are collecting Employment Insurance benefits. Human Resource Centres may be able to offer you an employment training program.

Workers' Compensation and income support, or disability pension payments, may be available to people who can no longer work because they have been injured on the job. You may be required to support this program — deductions may be made automatically from your pay cheque.

Trade Unions

Nearly 30 percent of all workers in civilian jobs are members of unions. In a unionized job or industry, labour and management follow laws, regulations and practices established through a bargaining process.

It is not necessary to join a union to get all jobs. However, in some jobs, you must join the union when you accept the job. Membership in a union requires the payment of union dues which are deducted from your pay cheque.

Volunteer Agencies

Canada has many organizations that depend on volunteers. Many Canadians and newcomers give their time and talent to these organizations. Working as a volunteer is an excellent way to get job experience, make contacts and show your skills. Volunteer work is well respected and can give you Canadian references and experience. It can also help you to meet new people.

Employment Laws

A variety of federal and provincial laws apply to people who operate their own business or work for an organization. For example:

- Minimum wage laws ensure that employees receive at least basic compensation for their work.
- Laws protect employees against employers who treat them unfairly. Employees can object to unjust treatment based on sex, age, race, religion or disability.
- Safety standards protect employees from unsafe machinery or workplaces.
- Child labour laws control the hours and types of work that can be offered to minors.
- Full-time employees must receive holidays.
- Employers must deduct income taxes and certain compulsory payments such as Employment Insurance, Worker's Compensation and the Canada Pension Plan (in Quebec, the Quebec Pension Plan). Self-employed people must also contribute to the Canada Pension Plan.
- If you employ members of your family, you still must observe these laws and regulations.

If you are self-employed, some business expenses can be deducted from your taxable income. Tax laws and regulations are complicated. You should get advice on this subject from National Revenue or a certified accountant.

For further information:

Human Resource Centres are listed in the government section of the telephone book. Ethnic, national and religious organizations that offer help to newcomers are found in your telephone book.

The Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC) has a book for newcomers interested in starting their own business in Canada. It is called *Starting a Business in Canada: A Guide for New Canadians*. In addition, the BDC offers a wide range of management training, counselling and planning services for entrepreneurs. To obtain the book or more information telephone 1-888-INFO-BDC (1-888-463-6232) or write to: Head Office, 5, Place Ville-Marie, Suite 400, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H3B 7E7.

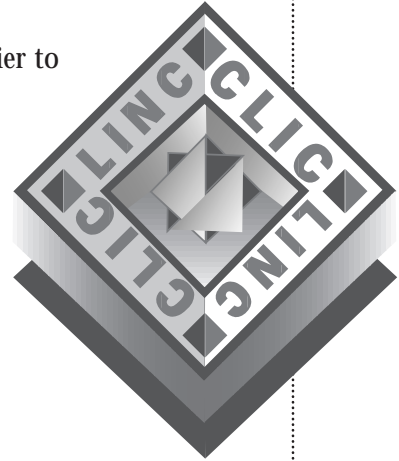
Fact sheets are available to newcomers on "Employment" and "Health and Income Security". Contact Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Public Affairs Branch, Journal Tower South, 365 Laurier Avenue West, 19th Floor, Ottawa, Ontario Canada K1A 1L1.
Fax: (613) 954-2221.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Language Training

English and French are the two official languages of Canada. It is much easier to get help and adapt to life in Canada if you speak English or French.

If you are interested in expanding your knowledge of French or English, there is a program paid for by the federal government which may be able to help you or a member of your family. This program is called *Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC)*. To qualify for this program you must be a permanent resident or someone who has been allowed to remain in Canada waiting for permanent resident status and who has not become a Canadian citizen. An immigrant service agency or your local immigration office should be able to help you enrol in a LINC course.



If you require advanced training to help you get job skills or use the skills that you already have there is a program called Labour Market Language Training (LMLT). This training can be either in a classroom or on the job. Talk to your local immigrant service agency or contact a Human Resource Centre or an immigration office.

Job and Skills Training

In addition to language training there are a number of other ways that you can train for a new job or improve the skills that you already have. Universities and colleges are some of the places where you can improve your skills or learn new ones. There are also private schools that allow you to complete a degree faster than at a university or college. An immigrant service agency or your local Human Resource Centre should be able to give you a list of educational institutions in your area.

Trade and vocational training is different in every province. Generally, training is offered at community colleges or vocational centres. It is sometimes available at work through government-funded training courses designed for particular regions or certain groups of people, such as newcomers or Aboriginal peoples.

Qualifications for trades such as hairdressers, electricians and carpenters are controlled in each province. A tradesperson begins at the apprentice level and then, after training, on-the-job experience and examinations, progresses to journeyman. If you move to another province you may have to re-qualify.

In Canada, it is very difficult to find employment if you have not completed high school or earned an equivalent diploma. Canadians are starting to realize that learning does not finish when they receive a diploma or certificate — it is continuous. It is common to see older Canadians going back to school part-time to keep their skills fresh.

For further information:

The Hot 100, A Quick Guide to Federal Programs and Services for Youth offers comprehensive information on more than 100 federal government programs and services for youth in the area of education, training, employment, business opportunities and travel.

To obtain a copy, contact Human Resources Development Canada, Public Enquiries,
140 Promenade du Portage, Phase IV, Hull, Quebec, Canada K1A 0J9.
Telephone: (819) 994-6313.

BANKING, SAVING, SPENDING

Your first Canadian pay cheque may seem large. However, the cost of living may be much higher here than in your native country. Learning how to budget, save and spend your money wisely will help you live securely and plan for the future.

Budgeting helps you avoid overspending and debt. An immigrant service agency can help you develop your budget. For example, divide your monthly income into essentials such as rent, food, clothing, transportation and education expenses (books, paper, etc.). Then decide how much you should spend on entertainment and luxuries. Make choices — including the choice not to buy now.

Gross vs. Net Income

The salary your employer has agreed to pay you will be stated in gross terms. Your take-home or net salary will be less than the gross amount. Normally, a large portion of the amount you earn will be deducted automatically from your pay cheque to pay for taxes and government insurance and benefits programs. In addition, your employer may require you to contribute to private company pension plans, union dues, group life insurance and other non-government programs.

The total of all these deductions can be between one quarter and one third of your total pay cheque. In other words, the amount you actually receive may be only 65 percent to 75 percent of your gross salary. You should remember that each of these deductions pays for a benefit, either in terms of job security, life insurance or a pension.

Necessities vs. Luxuries

Paying for basic food, shelter and clothing will probably take most of your income. Rent will take a large portion and so will food. If you eat regularly in restaurants or buy luxury foods, the cost of feeding your family will be much higher than if you shop in supermarkets. Careful shopping can also keep your clothing expenses low.

Luxuries are things you do not absolutely need. Cars, clothes, travel and long-distance telephone calls can be necessities or luxuries, depending on your business or point of view. Alcohol and cigarettes may also be considered luxuries. They are expensive because they are heavily taxed.

Owning and operating a car is costly. In addition to the cost of the vehicle, you must pay for licensing and insurance, gasoline, oil, parking fees and maintenance.

Borrowing Money

You can borrow money for any lawful purpose. This includes getting an education, buying property, or setting up and running a business. Of course, all borrowed money must be repaid in full, plus interest.

Many people get loans from banks. In Canada, the federal government regulates banks. Institutions other than banks also lend money. There are businesses that do nothing else. However, some lenders and businesses increase their profits by increasing the amount of interest they charge. Before you borrow money, get advice from people you trust.

Credit Cards

Credit cards are obtained from banks. You can also get credit cards from department stores or gasoline companies. Store or company credit cards usually charge more interest than bank credit cards.

Credit cards are convenient but they do have risks. Many credit cards have an annual cost which you pay whether or not you use them. In addition, most credit cards charge you a much higher rate of interest than bank loans. If you pay only the minimum payment due, all you are doing is paying the credit card company interest on money it has loaned to you. You are not paying off your debt.



A Word to the Wise

In Canada you will see many things that you might like to own. Through advertising, companies encourage you to buy their products, even if you do not really need them or cannot afford them. Some salespeople and acquaintances may try very hard to sell you things. You may feel pressured to borrow and spend money. It is important to be careful and informed.

Some stores have special programs that let you pay up to one year later for things that you buy. These are called deferred payment programs. They may be advertised with slogans like “Do not pay until...” Be careful to read all the details of the purchase agreement. If you fail to pay on time, you will be charged interest from the day you actually took the item home from the store.

For further information:

School boards, colleges and universities offer personal financial management courses which are independent of any financial institution. Fact sheets are available for newcomers on “Housing” and “Budgeting, Banking and Saving”. Contact Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Journal Tower South, Public Affairs Branch, 365 Laurier Avenue West, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, K1A 1L1. Fax: (613) 954-2221.

TAXATION

Canada's Tax System

As a newcomer to Canada, you may wonder how the Canadian income tax system works. Many of the benefits we enjoy in Canada are made possible by taxes. For example, Canada's tax system pays for roads, public utilities, schools, health care, law enforcement and many other important things.

Your Income Tax Return

Income tax applies to all Canadian residents. If you have questions about your residency status, contact your local taxation office.

In Canada, taxes are deducted from most types of income you receive. Each year, residents of Canada submit an Income Tax Return. This tells the government how much money you earned that year and determines how much tax you owe the federal and provincial governments. Like all Canadians, you are responsible for giving the government true information, and for calculating how much you should pay.

You have to submit an Income Tax Return if you lived in Canada for part or all of the year. In some cases you must pay the government when you submit your return. However, you may have already paid more than you owe through deductions on your pay cheque. In this case you may be eligible for an income tax refund.

If you lived in Quebec during the year, you may also have to file a separate provincial tax return.

The deadline for submitting your completed income tax return is April 30. If you submit your forms late and you owe tax, you will be charged a penalty plus interest.

The image shows a sample of a T1 General 1996 Individual Income Tax Return form. The form is titled "T1 GENERAL 1996" and "Individual Income Tax Return". It includes sections for "Step 1 - Identification", "Enter your social insurance number", "Enter your date of birth", "Your language of correspondence", "If this return is for a deceased person", and "Check the box that applies to your marital status on December 31, 1996".

Child Tax Benefit

The Government of Canada helps parents provide for their children through the Child Tax Benefit. If you have children who are under 18 years of age, you may be eligible for this program. It provides tax-free monthly payments for parents with children. It also provides financial support for low-income working families.

You must submit an Income Tax Return to apply for the Child Tax Benefit or the GST credit (described below), as well as other tax credits.

Goods and Services Tax (GST) Credit

Whenever you buy something, the Goods and Services Tax (GST) will be added to the price. The GST does not apply to food you prepare yourself and to certain other products. However, people with low incomes may be able to get all or part of this tax refunded through the GST credit. You may apply for the credit whether or not you have an income, but you must file an income tax return. More information about the GST credit is contained in your income tax return.

For further information:

The following guides are available from your Revenue Canada income tax services office:

- The *Declaration of Taxpayers' Rights* describes your rights and responsibilities concerning income tax.
- The income tax guide called *Newcomers to Canada* contains complete information about residency.

These publications are also available from the International Tax Services Office, 2204 Walkley Road, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1A 1A8. Telephone: 1-800-267-5177, or (613) 952-3741.

Income tax returns and complete income tax information are contained in an income tax package. These are available from any post office or tax services office.

The information sheet called "Your Child Tax Benefit" can help you find out if you qualify for this benefit program. Telephone: 1-800-387-1193.

An information brochure on the Canada Deposit Insurance Corporation called *Protecting your Deposits: CDIC INFORMATION* is available at all banks, trust and loan companies, or telephone 1-800-461-2342.

Your Rights and Obligations

This section is about Canada's governments, legal system and individual rights.

GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS IN CANADA

Canada is governed by an organized system of laws. These laws are created by governments which are chosen freely by the people and which function according to the principles of parliamentary democracy.

The Constitution is this country's fundamental law. It establishes our government and legal system as well as individual rights and freedoms.

Canada has three levels of government: the federal government, provincial and territorial governments, and municipal governments.

Federal Government

The federal government is responsible for a wide variety of national matters. These include foreign policy, national defence, trade and commerce, criminal justice and social benefits. The federal government and the provincial governments share control of immigration, agriculture and other areas.

The federal government has three main parts: the Executive, the Legislative and the Judicial.

The Executive consists of the Governor General, the Prime Minister and the Cabinet. Government departments are also part of the executive.

- The Governor General is the official representative of Queen Elizabeth II. Canada is a constitutional monarchy, and the Queen is Canada's official head of state.
- The Prime Minister is the leader of the political party that elects the most representatives (Members of Parliament) in the federal election.



- The Cabinet is composed of leading members of the governing party. They are appointed by the Prime Minister to lead government departments and to help set the agenda for Parliament.

Parliament is the Legislative Branch of government. It has two chambers: the House of Commons and the Senate.

- Members of the House of Commons are called Members of Parliament, or MPs. They are elected by Canadian citizens over the age of 18. They have primary responsibility for proposing and voting on laws.
- Members of the Senate are called Senators. They are appointed by the Governor General on the advice of the Prime Minister. They review and suggest changes to proposed legislation. However, Senators have more limited legislative powers than MPs.

The Supreme Court of Canada is the highest body of the Judiciary (and the highest court of appeal).

Provincial and Territorial Governments

The provincial governments control education, health, social services and municipal government. They share many powers with the federal government.

Provincial governments have the same basic structure as the federal government. In the Executive Branch, the Queen's representative is known as the Lieutenant-Governor. The leader of the governing party is called the Premier.

Each of the ten provinces has a parliament. In most provinces, the parliaments are called Legislatures. In Quebec, the parliament is called the *Assemblée nationale*.

These houses function like the House of Commons of Canada, but they do not include a senate.

The governments of the Yukon and Northwest Territories both have elected legislative assemblies. However, they have fewer powers than the provinces.

Municipal Government

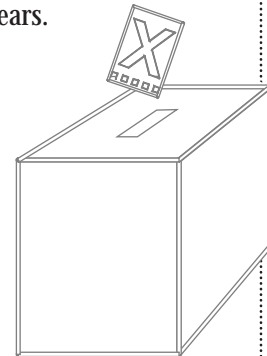
Municipal governments are concerned with local matters. These include schools, water, sewage, garbage collection, transit and fire protection services. Larger towns and cities have their own police forces. Municipal governments have a much simpler structure than the federal and provincial governments.

Elections

Canadians elect members to the House of Commons at least once every five years. The exact date of a federal election is determined by the Prime Minister.

Citizens over the age of 18 are eligible to vote in federal elections. This right is guaranteed in the Constitution by section 3 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Elections in Canada are by secret ballot. Your vote will not be revealed to anyone. You do not have to tell anyone which party or candidate you supported.



The voting process at the provincial level is very similar to the federal voting process.

For further information:

Schools, colleges and universities offer non-degree interest courses in Canadian history and government.

A booklet called *How to Become a Canadian Citizen* and a fact sheet on “Government in Canada” are available to help newcomers learn more.

Contact Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Public Affairs Branch, Journal Tower South, 365 Laurier Avenue West, 19th Floor, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, K1A 1L1.
Fax: (613) 954-2221.

PERSONAL RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms establishes the basic principles and values by which Canadians live. The Charter is a fundamental part of Canada's Constitution.

The Charter defines and guarantees personal rights in seven key areas:

- Fundamental Freedoms;
- Democratic Rights;
- Mobility Rights;
- Legal Rights;
- Equality Rights;
- Official Languages of Canada; and
- Minority Language Education Rights.

The Charter protects you even before you become a Canadian citizen. Two of the Charter's most significant passages are articles 2 and 7. Article 2 states: "Everyone has the following fundamental freedoms:

- (a) freedom of conscience and religion;
- (b) freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication;
- (c) freedom of peaceful assembly; and
- (d) freedom of association."

Some of these fundamental freedoms are not absolute. They cannot be used to compromise the rights of other individuals. For example, the courts have disallowed the publication of "hate literature" (printed material promoting hatred against a particular group) even when defended under article 2 (b). Similarly, the right to free speech does not let you yell "Fire!" in a crowded theatre when there is no fire.

Article 7 states: "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of the person and the right not to be deprived thereof except in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice."

You have a responsibility to understand and uphold the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This means defending your own rights and protecting the rights of others. For example, your right to practise any religion means that you must tolerate others' beliefs.

For further information:

You can get a copy of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* from Canadian Heritage. They also have books called *It's Your Right: Student's Guide* and *It's Your Right: Teachers' Guide*. Write to Canadian Heritage, Communications Branch, Ottawa, 25 Eddy Street, 10th Floor, Hull, Quebec, Canada K1A 0M5. Telephone: (819) 997-0055.

A booklet called *Guide to Your Rights: What is Discrimination?* is published by the Canadian Human Rights Commission. You can get a copy by writing to Canadian Human Rights Commission, 320 Queen Street, Place de Ville, Tower "A," Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1A 1E1.

The Human Rights Commissions in each province are a source of information and advice about your rights.

CHILDREN'S, WOMEN'S AND SENIOR CITIZENS' RIGHTS

In Canada, most people are careful to respect the safety, well-being and interests of others. The issue of personal security is especially important to women, children and senior citizens.

Children's Rights

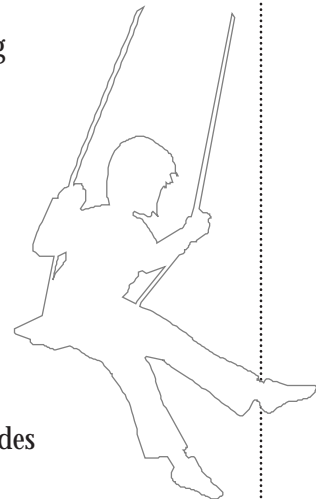
Like parents in all countries, Canadians care deeply for their children. Keeping them safe, healthy and happy is important.

In Canada, providing proper care for your children is not a moral issue, it is the law. Police, doctors, teachers and children's aid officials will take action when children are being abused. This includes any form of harm or abuse — physical, psychological or sexual.

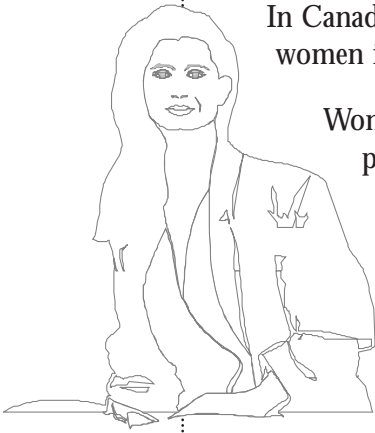
Physical abuse can be defined as any intentional physical contact that causes injury. For example, spanking a child long enough or hard enough to cause bruises, or with anything other than an open hand, is a form of abuse. Psychological abuse includes terror and humiliation. Sexual abuse includes any form of sexual contact between an adult and a child.

Neglect is also a form of child abuse. Parents who fail to protect and provide for their children are guilty of neglect. By law, children under 12 years old cannot look after themselves.

All forms of child abuse are serious crimes. They are deeply offensive to Canadians. Children can be separated from their parents in serious cases.



Women's Rights



In Canada, women have the same rights and opportunities as men. Equality for men and women is protected by the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

Women are leaders in all areas of Canadian society. Women are involved in all professions and choose all kinds of work. Today, very few jobs are filled only by either men or women.

Most people would like to establish greater equality between men and women in our society. Special groups and programs exist to help promote equal opportunities for women. Status of Women Canada is a federal government agency that monitors and promotes the rights of women.

Most Canadian men respect women as equals — socially, on the job and in the home. However, discrimination and violence against women remain serious problems in our society. Both types of behaviour are against the law.

The abuse of wives by their husbands is a crime. (It is also a crime for wives to abuse their husbands.) As with child abuse, this type of abuse can be physical, psychological or sexual.

If you are abused by your husband, seek help. Shelter and legal protection are available for you and your children. The law also protects men who are abused by their wives.

Information about your legal rights and local shelters is easy to obtain. Check the telephone numbers listed near the front of your telephone book under “Distress Centres,” “Child Abuse,” or “Sexual Assault.” Call a local immigrant service agency for more help. Your rights and privacy will be respected.

Senior Citizens' Rights

Canada has more senior citizens than ever before. (A senior citizen is a person 65 years of age and older.) Today, more than one in ten Canadians is older than 65. That proportion will continue to increase. For this reason, Canada and Canadians are becoming more aware of the needs of seniors.

It is common for senior citizens to live on their own. Many seniors prefer to live independently, instead of with their adult children or in an institution. Some senior citizens are not able to live on their own. Others may find that living by themselves in a large house is too lonely or too much work. In these cases, many seniors choose to move to a senior citizens' residence. These are homes with rooms, apartments and services especially designed to meet seniors' needs.

Older people who need special care may move to a nursing home that provides trained staff and nurses. However, many Canadians still care for older family members in their own homes.

Governments provide a small income to retired people. The Old Age Security (OAS) pension and the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) are the most common forms.

An Old Age Security pension cheque is mailed each month to all persons aged 65 and over who meet residence requirements. (Some people elect to receive OAS cheques at age 60, at a reduced rate.) To qualify for a full OAS pension, you must be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident. In addition, you must have lived in Canada for 40 years after the age of 18. OAS is a taxable benefit. If you have been in Canada for less than 40 years you qualify for a partial OAS pension. You may also be able to collect old age security benefits from your former country.

In addition to OAS, programs are available to help seniors with special needs. For example, if you are a senior with little or no other income, you may be eligible for the Guaranteed Income Supplement. If you are between 60 and 64 and your spouse is a low-income or deceased pensioner, you may qualify for the Spouse's Allowance (SPA). GIS and SPA are only available to those who can prove that they are in need. SPA and GIS are not taxable.

Some provinces supplement the federal pensions. Provinces may also offer extra benefits, such as prescription drug plans.

Many businesses such as banks, theatres and stores offer special rates for senior citizens. City buses usually have lower rates for seniors (restrictions may apply).

For further information:

If you are a victim of abuse, you can get information, understanding and advice by calling the local “crisis” or “distress” centre. The number is listed in the first few pages of most telephone books.

You can get information about services for women, families, children and senior citizens from federal and provincial departments of justice, health and social services. The telephone numbers are listed in the government pages of your telephone book. Information is also available from help lines and advocacy associations.

To obtain information about the Child Tax Benefit, telephone Revenue Canada at 1-800-387-1193.

To enquire about or apply for senior citizens’ benefits, contact Human Resources Development Canada at 1-800-277-9914 (English) and 1-800-277-9915 (French).

LAW AND THE SAFETY OF THE PERSON

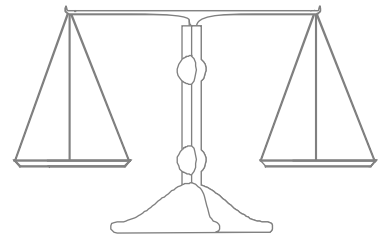
Canadians believe strongly in justice and the rule of law. Every person in Canada is equal under the law, no matter who they are or what they do. Everyone is entitled to fair treatment.

This fundamental right is constitutionally guaranteed by article 15(1) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It states: “Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, or mental or physical disability.”

Your Right to Fair Treatment

The Charter ensures that all people are treated fairly by the legal system.

For example, articles 8 and 9 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms protect you from being stopped, searched or arrested without a valid reason.



Article 8 states: “Everyone has the right to be secure against unreasonable search or seizure.” This means that nobody can enter your home without your permission unless they:

- identify themselves as peace officers (i.e. police or taxation officers); and
- show you a warrant which specifically names either you or your home.

Article 9 states: “Everyone has the right not to be arbitrarily detained or imprisoned.” This means that a police officer or other authority must have a valid reason for stopping or arresting you. It also means that you cannot be detained (not allowed to leave) for an unreasonable time (normally, no more than 24 hours) without being formally charged.

If You Are Detained or Arrested

Your right to fair treatment continues if you are detained or arrested. It is protected under articles 10, 11 and 12 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Article 10 states that you must be told why you are being detained by the police and that this action must be approved by a judge. It also means that you must be informed of your right to contact and hire a lawyer. Specifically:

- you must be given the opportunity to make at least one telephone call to tell your lawyer (or some other person chosen by you) where you are and what you have been charged with; and
- you may be assisted by a lawyer. If you cannot afford a lawyer, Legal Aid will supply one for you. Legal Aid is a government-funded service.

Article 11 means that if you are charged with an offence your case must be processed:

- within a reasonable time; and
- in an unbiased and correct manner that does not compromise your rights or your chance to a fair defence. This objective is supported by Article 14 of the Charter, which states that you may request an interpreter to help you understand and speak in court.

Article 12 states: “Everyone has the right not to be subjected to any cruel or unusual treatment or punishment.”

Your rights cannot be taken away. However, it is very important to know and understand your rights. If you do not, you may unintentionally give up the chance to exercise them.

Canadian Law

One federal criminal code applies throughout Canada. In other words, criminal laws are the same in all provinces. However, there are two different civil codes that deal with such matters as contracts, wills and property transactions. In Quebec, laws in these and related areas are based on the *Code Napoléon* for civil law. In all other provinces, these laws are based on *British Common Law*.

Canada has no secret laws. If you are accused of breaking the law, you cannot argue that you did not know the law. Ignorance is not a valid excuse.

Sexuality and the Law

Canadian law permits both heterosexual and homosexual relationships between consenting adults. An adult is a person 18 years or over. Sexual preference is a matter of personal choice, not public law.

An adult who is accused of having sexual relations with a person under 18 cannot argue that the young person seemed older. The accused must prove that he or she took all reasonable steps to find out the young person's age.

Children under 12 can never give legal consent to sexual activity.

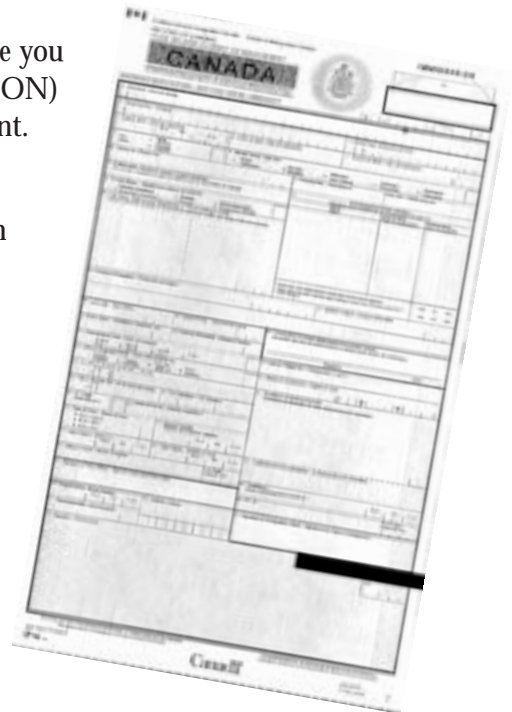
Your Legal Status as a Newcomer

Neither your employer nor your sponsors can have you deported. Your Record of Landing IMM 1000 (CON) 01-95B belongs to you — it is your own document.

A specific process must be followed to change the status of any permanent resident or visitor. It is an open, unbiased legal process in which you may participate, on your own or through a lawyer.

For further information:

You can get a copy of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* from Canadian Heritage, Communications Branch, 25 Eddy Street, 10th Floor, Hull, Quebec, Canada K1A 0M5. Telephone (819) 997-0055. They also have books called *It's Your Right: Student's Guide* and *It's Your Right: Teachers' Guide*.



For information on justice and the law, you can get a copy of *Canada's System of Justice* from the Department of Justice, Communications Branch, 23 Wellington Street, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1A 0H8. Telephone (613) 957-4222.

A booklet called *Guide To Your Rights: What is Discrimination?* is published by the Canadian Human Rights Commission, 320 Queen Street, Place de Ville, Tower "A" Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1A 1E1. Telephone: (613) 995-1151, (613) 996-5211 Fax: (613) 996-9661.

The Human Rights Commissions in each province are a source of information and advice about your rights.

CITIZENSHIP — BECOMING A CANADIAN

Once you have been in Canada for at least three years, you may wish to become a Canadian citizen. Canadian citizenship allows you to participate in all aspects of life in Canada. As a Canadian citizen you may:

- vote and run for political office in federal and some provincial elections;
- travel outside Canada on a Canadian passport;
- enjoy full economic rights; and
- be eligible for some pension benefits.

Requirements and Prohibitions

You should check the laws of your former country before you study to become a Canadian citizen. If your former country does not recognize dual citizenship, you could be detained if you return to visit. In some cases this could mean staying to complete compulsory military service. Your Canadian citizenship may not be able to protect you if your country has legal claims on you. To become a Canadian citizen, you must:

- speak and understand either English or French;
- be 18 years old or older to apply on your own behalf;
- be a permanent resident;
- have knowledge of Canada, including its history and geography;
- have resided in Canada for a total of three of the four years preceding your application;
- understand your rights and responsibilities as a Canadian citizen; and
- take an oath (or affirmation) of citizenship.

A Citizenship Judge will determine whether you meet these requirements.

You cannot become a Canadian citizen if you:

- are considered a risk to Canada's security;
- are under a deportation order;
- are in prison, on parole from prison or on probation; or
- have been found guilty of a serious crime within the past three years.

You do not need a lawyer to help you become a Canadian citizen.

Responsible and Active Citizenship

As a responsible citizen, you will be expected to obey Canadian laws. You must also respect the spirit and provisions of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. However, it is also important to be an active citizen. Active citizenship means getting involved in your community and your country. Regardless of your interests, contributing to your society will be personally rewarding. It will be appreciated by others who, like you, are proud to be Canadians.

For further information:

A booklet called *How to Become a Canadian Citizen* is available at any Citizenship Court or by contacting Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Public Affairs Branch, Journal Tower South, 19th Floor, 365 Laurier Avenue West, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1A 1L1
Fax: (613) 954-2221.

The Canadian Way of Life

This section describes Canadian families and social customs.

CANADIAN FAMILIES

Canada is a country of diversity. As a newcomer you will discover many different people, opportunities and lifestyles. This diversity is reflected in all aspects of Canadian family life.

Different Families, Different Lifestyles

In Canada there are many different types of families. All types of families may involve marriages between people of different ethnic groups.

Many people in Canada find that it takes two incomes to raise a family and achieve their goals. This is true of people at all income levels, from factory workers to doctors and owners of companies.

One-parent families are fully accepted and increasingly common. Most single parents who raise children on a full-time basis are women.

Many adult children who have completed their education do not live with their families. Many people believe it is important to live by themselves for several years. Most married couples choose to live apart from their parents.

The divorce rate in Canada is moderate in comparison to other western industrialized countries. Divorce is socially accepted. Many divorced people marry again. Counselling is available to help overcome marital difficulties.

Marriage, Divorce and the Law

Canadian law views marriage as a legal agreement or contract between two people. Married people are considered equal partners. The laws governing marriage apply to all Canadians.

Ministers, priests, rabbis and other recognized church leaders can perform legal marriages. Religious rules and customs pertaining to marriage are matters of personal choice.

Many unmarried couples live together. In most provinces, unmarried heterosexual couples who have lived together for a certain period of time have legal status as common-law couples. The person an unmarried person lives with can be called his or her partner.

Canadian law does not recognize marriage between same sex couples. However, the legal status of common-law homosexual couples is less clear. It is different in each province.

Divorce is possible at the request of either the wife or husband (or both). Such a request will normally be approved by the courts if both persons have agreed to end the relationship. Divorce will also be approved if one partner has been harmed through cruelty, adultery or a similar injustice. If a couple with children becomes divorced, the court usually orders the person with the highest income to help support the children and the other spouse financially.

Birth Control and Family Planning

Birth control is widely practised and is a matter of personal choice. Condoms are available in any drug store, or from vending machines in many public washrooms. Latex condoms are very important for preventing sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) such as AIDS.

Women can get a prescription for oral contraceptives from a doctor. (Birth control can be discussed with a doctor in confidence.) Many other forms of birth control for women are also available.

Family planning information is available from government departments of health and public health offices. Abortion is legal but available only from a doctor.

The Generation Gap

Teenagers sometimes have difficult relationships with their parents. They explore and test their independence in ways that can challenge their parents' values and traditions. This is called the generation gap. Parents from all backgrounds can find this stage in parenting stressful.

As newcomers, you and your children may have a similar experience. Try to understand that your children face their own problems as they adjust to a new way of life.

Your children live in two worlds. Your attitudes, beliefs and habits are already formed, but theirs are not. Their ideas are being shaped by what they see and experience in Canadian society. At home, you naturally expect them to behave much the way you were taught. At school and in the community, their teachers and fellow students expect them to live by Canadian ways. It is not unusual in this situation for children to grow distant or to rebel against their parents. They may even criticize the old ways.

Help is available. Teachers, doctors, public health workers, social workers and other counsellors in your community are familiar with your situation. With patience and understanding, any problems you may be having in your relationship with your children can probably be solved.

For further information:

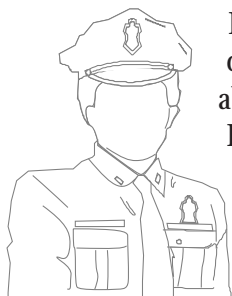
You can obtain free, confidential information and advice on families and relationships from many sources. These include your doctor, any hospital or medical clinic, your local school or public health nurse, or the municipal or provincial departments of health and/or social services. Other parents may be able to help as well.

INTERACTING WITH OFFICIALS

Understanding social customs will help you communicate with other people.

Knowing what to expect can be very useful when you are talking with public officials and supervisors on the job. However, there is usually no need to worry about making mistakes. Most Canadians do not insist on strict formality.

Except for matters of law, there are few situations where your inexperience would not be excused.



Authority

In Canada, a person's authority is related to his or her position and responsibility. Women occupy the same range of positions as men and have the same kinds of authority. People do not have authority just because of their name, status, social class or sex.

It is a good idea to treat all persons with courtesy and respect, especially people with authority. However, you should not act too humble. Most Canadians value confidence and sincerity, regardless of their position.

Interacting with a Police Officer

Some newcomers may be nervous around police officers, based on bad experiences in other countries. However, police officers are trained to serve and protect the public — including you. They operate within strict regulations and follow established procedures.

Some people think that police officers sometimes act unfairly toward specific ethnic or national groups. However, Canadians expect honesty and fairness from the police and other public servants. Procedures exist for reviewing charges of misconduct.

Police officers will normally treat you in a formal, impersonal manner. They may be either men or women. The following guidelines will help you if you are ever questioned by the police.

- Address the policeman or policewoman as “officer”.
- Accept the police officer's authority. Do as he or she says, but remember your rights.
- Be ready to show identification. If a police officer asks you for identification, take it out of your wallet or purse and give it to the officer. If you are stopped by the police when you are driving a car, the officer will probably ask you for your driver's licence, proof of insurance and car registration.
- Communicate as clearly and directly as possible. In some countries, looking directly at another person's eyes when you are speaking to them is considered rude. In Canada it is a sign of confidence and respect. A police officer will appreciate this. Looking away from the officer may make the officer feel that you have something to hide.
- Try to tell the officer the facts about what has happened or is happening.
- Do not accuse anyone without a good reason. You may later be asked to prove what you have said with physical evidence. (Physical evidence confirms your report. It can include objects, injuries or people.)
- Never try to give money to a police officer to ignore something you may have done that is against the law. Canadians do not bribe police officers — it is a serious crime.

Remember: police officers are there to serve you. If you need help, do not hesitate to contact them.

Interacting with Public Officials

Public officials will normally treat you in a polite but impersonal manner. Public officials follow established procedures — they do not make rules. They may not be prepared or able to become personally involved with your situation. Do not respond to them in a personal or emotional way.

Never try to bribe a public official. Bribery and other forms of corruption are illegal, and offensive to most Canadians.

MEETING PEOPLE

Canadians accept a wide range of social behaviour, but most people expect politeness. You can keep your own traditions. You should also learn how Canadians show respect.

Meeting and Greeting

In business, men and women usually shake hands on meeting for the first time. Adults meeting each other in public may shake hands if they do not meet often.

Shaking hands is also common for first meetings in social situations. Less formal greetings are used between family and good friends. Men and women often embrace and kiss lightly when meeting if they are related or good friends. Men may formally embrace old friends or family but almost never kiss other men in public.



In informal settings, such as a party or bar, most young people will simply exchange greetings such as “Hi!” or “How are you?”

Visiting

Visiting someone without an invitation is not common — and sometimes not welcome. Arrangements are usually made in advance, except between very close or informal neighbours and friends.

Canadians who live in cities are usually friendly to their neighbours in a casual way. People who live in the same apartment building or housing complex may become friends, especially if they have children of the same age. Almost all Canadians would respond quickly to their neighbours’ needs in an emergency.

Being polite in social situations does not mean accepting everything that is offered or proposed. It is acceptable to say “No, thank you.” However, if you do want something, say “Thank you,” and accept it the first time you are offered.

For further information:

Newspapers publish daily and weekly columns about manners and politeness. Libraries can recommend many books on social behaviour.

STANDARDS AND EXPECTATIONS

Some of Canada’s standards for public behaviour may be different from those in your former country. Some of our attitudes and customs may be more conservative than you are used to, while others may seem more liberal.

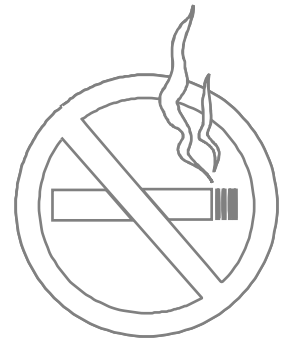
For example, Canadians may seem impersonal to newcomers from some countries. To others we may seem too familiar and even embarrassing. Seeing women wear trousers or shorts can be shocking to newcomers from certain countries.

Regardless of your personal views, it is important to understand and accept Canadian standards. Many Canadians have very clear expectations and are offended when they are not met.

Unlawful Public Behaviour

The following acts are considered very offensive in many countries. Some of these acts, such as spitting, are not uncommon. However they are all illegal and not accepted by most Canadians.

- Urinating or defecating anywhere except in a public or private toilet is not permitted.
- Spitting is not accepted in most situations.
- Smoking is not permitted in federal buildings, in elevators, on most Canadian airlines, and on buses and other public transportation. Smoking is also not allowed in many banks, shops, restaurants and other public places. Most of these anti-smoking measures are firmly enforced.
- Littering (dropping waste paper and other garbage in public places) is not accepted.
- Canadian customs and laws insist that women’s breasts are always covered in public. Everyone except young children must wear bathing suits when swimming at public beaches and pools.



Important Social Standards

Social practices — not laws — govern many types of behaviour. Some traditions are well established and politely but firmly enforced.

- **Lining up or queuing.** People normally line up or queue according to the principle of first-come, first-served. Others will strongly resent you if you push ahead in line-ups.
- **Smoking.** The majority of Canadians do not smoke. In private homes, you should always ask permission from your host or hostess to smoke.
- **Being on time.** You should always arrive on time — at school, at work and for any appointment. People who are always late may be fired from their jobs or suspended from school.

Many Canadians will not wait more than 10 to 15 minutes for someone who has arranged to meet them for business. Your supervisors and co-workers will be angry if you are always late for work. For social invitations, people expect that you will arrive within half an hour of the stated time.

Sometimes you cannot avoid being late. If this happens, telephone the person who was expecting you, apologize, and make new arrangements.

Modesty and Discretion

Some activities are normally accepted in public if they are done with modesty, discretion and consideration for others. To determine what is appropriate you should consider where you are and who is there.

- **Kissing or holding hands in public.** Showing moderate affection in public offends very few people in Canada. However, passionate kissing or touching are considered impolite and offensive.
- **Breast-feeding or diapering babies.** Most Canadians understand the needs of mothers and babies. Some large stores and other public buildings have special areas where these needs can be met. You may breast-feed or diaper a baby in public places if you are discreet.

For further information:

If you have questions about social standards or customs, contact an immigrant service agency for advice.

Afterword

This book has discussed some of the ideals on which Canada has been built.

It has talked about important Canadian values like optimism, acceptance and cooperation. It has described Canada as Canadians understand it and as we hope you will experience it: as an open, productive and multicultural society committed to building a future that benefits everyone.

These values and ideals are clearly represented in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The Charter guarantees equal opportunities and defends the dignity of all people. The Charter protects each member of our society, and it needs to be supported by each member of our society. Every person — newcomers and established Canadians — must apply and defend its provisions. Because the real strength and value of the Charter come not from its words but from the actions they inspire.

Welcome to Canada. Welcome home.

Subject Page

A

advertising, illegal	28-29
airport services (for newcomers)	7
alcohol	20
animals (for food)	19
apartments (see housing)	23
appliances (household equipment)	20, 23
arrival in Canada	6

B

baby food	20
bargaining	19, 29
birth certificates	31, 34
birth classes	37
birth control	64
breast feeding	69
budgeting (managing money)	46
buses	32-34

C

Human Resource Centres (HRCs)	39, 43-44
Canada's economy	12-14
<i>Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating</i>	20-21
Canada Pension Plan	44
Canadian Constitution	51, 53-54
Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms	24, 53-56, 58-60, 62, 70
fundamental freedoms (article 2)	54
Canadian climate <i>see</i> climate	
Canadian geography	12-13
Canadian history	53
Canadian <i>Immigration Act</i>	9
Canadian lifestyles	63
Canadian values	9, 70
cars	28, 33-34, 47
child abuse	55-56
child labour laws	44
child tax benefit	50, 58
citizenship	61-62
climate	14
dressing for	21-22
temperature	14-15
weather forecasts	14-16

INDEX

climate (cont'd)	
wind chill	.15
clothing	.21-22
colleges see education and training; schools	
cold weather	.14-15
Constitution	.51, 53-54
consumer protection	.29
cooking	.18, 20
credit cards	.34, 47
credit check	.25
cultural associations, information	.7
cultural identity	.8
currency (<i>see also</i> money)	.14

D

damage deposit, housing	.25
deportation	.29, 60, 62
disabled persons	
pensions	.43
schools	.31
discrimination	.24, 41
divorce	.63-64
doctors	.35-38
drinking and driving	.20
driver's licence	.34, 66
drugs, prescription	.35, 37

E

economy	.12-14, 39
education and training (<i>see also</i> schools)	.30-32, 40
general	.30
job and skills training	.40, 45
language training	.45
post secondary (colleges and universities)	.30-32, 45
elections	.53, 61
electricity (and electrical current)	.23-25
emergencies	
medical services	.35-36, 38
telephone numbers	.35-36
employment	
education and training	.40, 45
employment insurance	.43-44
experience	.40-41, 43, 45
finding a job	.39-40

employment (cont'd)	
Human Resource Centres	.39, 43-44
income security	.43-44
law (including rights and regulations)	.41-42, 44, 49, 51
minimum wage	.44
networking	.40
qualifications	.40-41, 45
résumés	.40
self-employment	.44
trade unions	.43
trades and professions (qualifications)	.45
unemployment	.39
women	.39, 41, 56

English see languages, official

equality	
among people	.41, 54
between men and women	.56

F

families/family life	.63
divorce	.64
marriage	.64
relationships, parents and children (generation gap)	.60, 65
family planning	.64
First Peoples (Indians and Inuit)	.8
flea markets	.29
food	.18-20
baby food	.20
Canada's Food Guide	.20-21
cost	.19, 47
preparing, storing and handling	.19-20
French (see languages, official)	
frostbite	.22

G

garage sales	.29
garbage (household waste)	.16, 21, 52, 68
geography of Canada	.12-13
physical size and distances	.12
regional characteristics	.13
resources	.13-14

government	51-52
branches of (executive, legislative, judiciary)	51-52
Cabinet	51-52
Governor General	51-52
House of Commons	52
levels of	52
municipal	52
Prime Minister	51-52
provincial and territorial	52
Senate	52
Supreme Court of Canada	52
grocery shopping	27-28
GST (Goods and Services Tax)	50
Guaranteed Income Supplement	57

H

health/health care	35-38
baby food	20
birth control	64
card	35-36
death (burials)	38
doctors	35-38
education (schools)	30-32, 36
emergencies	35-36
food storage	19-20
immunization (inoculation)	36
law	35-36
medicare (public health insurance)	35, 38
medicines	35, 37
mental illness	38
pregnancy	37
prescriptions	35, 37
school children	36
sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) including AIDS	37, 64
vaccinations (immunization)	36
history, Canadian	53
holidays	32, 42, 44
HOST Program	11
housing	22
buying a house	28-29
cost of	22
damage deposit	25
finding a home	22-23
fire safety	25

housing (cont'd)	
heating and air conditioning	.23, 25
homes (and apartments), types of	.22-24
insurance	.25
landlord-tenant relationships	.24
lease	.24-25
rent payments	.23-25
utilities	.23-25
Human Rights Commission	.27, 41

I

identification documents	.34
immigration	.9
history in Canada	.8-9
immunization	.36
income	.43-44
deductions (standard deductions from a pay cheque)	.44
gross vs. net income	.46
income support programs (social assistance)	.43
Child Tax Benefit	.50
Employment Insurance	.43-44
Guaranteed Income Supplement	.57
Old Age Security	.57
Spouse's Allowance	.57
Workers' Compensation	.43
income tax return	.49
Indians and Inuit	.8
information services and resources	.7
inoculation	.36
insurance	
employment	.43-44
household/personal possessions	.25
medical (medicare)	.35

J

jobs *see* employment

K

kitchens	.20, 23
----------	---------

L

landlord-tenant relationships	.24
languages, official	.6-7, 45
law (criminal and civil, general)	.58-61

laws

and government . . . . .	.51
child abuse . . . . .	.55-56
consumer protection . . . . .	.28-29
divorce . . . . .	.63-64
drinking and driving . . . . .	.20
education . . . . .	.30
health . . . . .	.36
labour/employment . . . . .	.41, 44
marriage and divorce . . . . .	.63-64
noise . . . . .	.26
public behaviour . . . . .	.68
school attendance . . . . .	.30
sexuality . . . . .	.60
smoking . . . . .	.68
wife abuse/spouse abuse . . . . .	.56
leases, housing . . . . .	.24-25
Legal Aid . . . . .	.59
littering . . . . .	.68
libraries . . . . .	.68
LINC (Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada) . . . . .	.45
LMLT (Labour Market Language Training) . . . . .	.45
loans . . . . .	.47

M

mail . . . . .	.26, 29
markets . . . . .	.19, 29
marriage . . . . .	.64
meals . . . . .	.19-20
medicine <i>see</i> health	
meeting and speaking with people in positions of authority . . . . .	.66-67
meeting and speaking with friends and acquaintances . . . . .	.67
lining up . . . . .	.69
modesty . . . . .	.69
punctuality . . . . .	.69
standards . . . . .	.68
money (see also budgeting) . . . . .	.46
multiculturalism . . . . .	.8
municipal government . . . . .	.52

O

official languages <i>see</i> languages, official	
Old Age Security . . . . .	.55-57

P

parent-children relationships	65
passports	34, 61
police	65-66
meeting and speaking with police	65-66
procedures (detention and arrest)	59
your rights	58
the role of the police	66
pollution prevention	16
population	13, 16
postal services	26
provinces and territories, governments of	52

Q

Quebec Pension Plan	44
---------------------	----

R

racism (see also discrimination)	10, 24, 41
recycling	16-17
refugees	9
religion	
marriage	64
schools	31
work	44
renting (housing)	22-25
rights and responsibilities	61
children's rights	55
civil	10
education	45
employment	44
general	51
housing (renting and leasing a home)	26
legal	54, 58-59
personal rights and freedoms	54-55
senior citizens' rights	57
women's rights	56

S

schools (see also education and training)	30-32, 40
documents for enrolment	31
funding	30
health (requirements)	36
parent involvement	30
post-secondary institutions (colleges and universities)	30-32, 45
registrations (enrolment)	31
religion in	31
special needs	31
types of schools	30
vacations (holidays)	32
seasons of the year	14-15
senior citizens	55, 57
sexual preference	37, 60
sexuality and the law	60
shoplifting	29
shopping	27
advertising	27
bargaining	19, 29
budgeting	46
cars and houses	28
consumer protection	29
deferred payments	47
food	20
malls	27
receipts/proof of purchase	28
sales tax	28
“smart” shopping	28
types of stores	19
smoking	68
social assistance (see income support programs)	
social behaviour	67-68
Social Insurance Number (SIN)	18
Spring Break	32
supermarkets	19, 27, 47

T

taxes and tax credits	50
taxis	32-33
telephones	23, 26
emergency numbers	35
television	24
temperatures (see also climate)	14-15

tenant-landlord relationships	24
training (see also education and training)	40, 45
transportation and travel	32
buses	32-34
cars	32-34
documents	61
driving	34
subways	32
taxis	32-33
travel agents	33
travelling between cities	33

U

unions, trade	43
universities (see education and training; schools)	

V

vaccinations (inoculations or immunization)	36
values (social values)	9
voltage (see also electricity)	20
volunteer activities	11, 43
voting process (see also elections)	53

W

water, drinking	20, 23
weather	14
wife abuse (spouse abuse)	56
women	56
abuse of	56
equality	56
rights	56
in the workforce	41
work	39
Workers' Compensation	43