

FLYING TO CANADA:

What you need to know



Canada's scenery and wide-open spaces offer general aviation pilots the ideal backdrop for adventure. To make sure your experience is pleasant and memorable, review this summary of what to consider before you fly.

The following information is for U.S. pilots. This isn't a legal document and does not cover all Canadian and U.S. regulations.

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Transport
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Canada



What you need to know before you fly

As with the U.S. Federal Aviation Regulations (FARs), the [Canadian Aviation Regulations \(CARs\)](#) require that you (the pilot-in-command) of an aircraft to be familiar with available information appropriate to the intended flight.

This includes:

- pilot and aircraft documentation
- weather, NOTAMs and flight planning
- aerodrome information
- class of airspace
- aircraft equipment
- general differences between flying in Canada and the U.S.
- border crossing procedures

Pilot documentation

You will need:

- your pilot certificate
- a valid medical certificate
- proof of citizenship (valid U.S. passport, foreign passport with a valid Canadian visa or a valid U.S. green card, or a NEXUS card for U.S. citizens)
- a pilot radio operator certificate (47 CFR § 87.89)

U.S. student pilot, recreational pilot, and sport pilot certificates **are not valid** in Canada. BasicMed is **not recognized** in Canada. US balloon and glider pilots **need a valid medical certificate** to operate in Canada.

If you want to fly a Canadian-registered aircraft, you need the right Canadian pilot licence, permit or rating, or a Canadian Foreign Licence Validation Certificate and a Restricted Operator Certificate – Aeronautical (ROC-A). If you possess an FCC Commercial Radio Operator License, contact the Contact the Radio Operator Certificate Centre spectrumcertificates-certificatsdsuspectre@ised-isde.gc.ca to obtain an equivalent ROC-A.

Aircraft documentation

You must be able to show:

- a standard airworthiness certificate (CAR 605.01(2))
 - » If you're operating a U.S.-registered aircraft under a Special Airworthiness Certificate – Experimental or Special Airworthiness Certificate you will need to [apply for a standardized validation](#)
- a registration certificate (FAR 47.3)
- an aircraft radio station license (47 CFR § 87.18)
- operating limitations, placards and instrument markings, approved flight manual, as required by regulations (FAR 91.9)
- weight and balance information
- proof of liability insurance (CAR 606.02)

The *Canadian Aviation Regulations* require pilots to carry proof of liability insurance on board when operating in Canadian airspace. This applies to all aircraft, including private and amateur-built aircraft. The type of coverage is based on the aircraft's gross take-off weight (CAR 606.02).

Ultra-light vehicles operating under FAR 103 are generally not allowed to fly in Canada.

Weather, NOTAMs and flight planning

The FARs require pilots to file and activate a flight plan for all flights crossing the U.S. – Canada border, including flights "with no landing" (FAR 91.707).

Pilots must:

- communicate with air traffic services when they cross the border
- squawk an assigned discrete transponder code

[NAV CANADA](#) is the private, not-for-profit corporation responsible for civil air navigation services in Canada. NAV CANADA provides:

- air traffic control (ATC) and information services
- flight advisory and information services
- weather briefings
- aeronautical publications
- ground-based navigation aids

[Buy aeronautical charts and publications from NAV CANADA](#)

[File, amend, delay or cancel your flight plan online with NAV CANADA](#)

[Download a local area weather manual from NAV CANADA](#)

Table 1: Contact information for NAV Canada Flight Information Centers

YOUR LOCATION	TOLL-FREE PHONE NUMBER (IN CANADA)
British Columbia Yukon	1-866-541-4101
Alberta Saskatchewan Manitoba The Northwest Territories Western Nunavut	1-866-541-4102
Ontario Southern New Brunswick Nova Scotia Prince Edward Island Newfoundland and Labrador	1-866-541-4104
Québec Northern New Brunswick	1-866-541-4105
Anywhere in Canada	1-866-WXBRIEF (1-866-992-7433)

Visual Flight Rules (VFR) navigation

VFR Terminal Area Charts (VTA):

- scale: 1:250 000 (3.5 NM/in.)
- similar to U.S. Terminal Area Charts (TACs) – available for major Canadian airports

VFR Navigation Charts (VNC):

- scale: 1:500 000 (7 NM/in.)
- similar to U.S. Sectional Aeronautical Charts

Canada Flight Supplement (CFS): civil/military publication of Canadian and North Atlantic aerodromes. Similar to the U.S. Chart Supplement.

Canada Water Aerodrome Supplement (CWAS): civil/military publication of water aerodromes shown on Canadian VFR charts.

Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) navigation

Enroute low (LO) and high (HI) altitude charts provide IFR navigation and aeronautical information in:

- low and high airway structure of Canadian domestic airspace
- airspace over foreign territory and international waters where Canada provides air traffic services
- other areas required for military use

Terminal Area Charts (TAC) provide aeronautical radio navigation information for congested terminal areas at a larger scale.

Canada Air Pilot (CAP) (IFR approach plates):

- contain aeronautical information related to IFR approach, arrival, departure and noise abatement procedures at Canadian airports
- have 7 volumes that provide coverage across Canada

CAP general pages (CAP GEN): explains the terminology, definitions and special procedures depicted on instrument approach procedure charts.



Canadian airspace

Canadian domestic airspace is divided into 7 classes.

You need to use 2-way radio communication:

- when operating in Class A, B, C or D airspace, or
- for Class E airspace during IFR flight

Table 2: Names and descriptions of different airspace classes

TYPE OF CLASS	DESCRIPTION
Class A	Controlled high-level airspace. IFR only.
Class B	Controlled low-level airspace (above 12,500 feet ASL, up to but not including 18,000 feet ASL). IFR and Controlled VFR (CVFR) only. VFR aircraft require an ATC clearance before entry.
Class C	Controlled airspace. IFR and VFR permitted. ATC provides separation for IFR and VFR flights, when necessary. VFR aircraft require an ATC clearance before entry.
Class D	Controlled airspace. IFR and VFR permitted. ATC provides separation for IFR aircraft only. VFR aircraft must establish two-way communication with the ATC facility before entry.
Class E	Controlled airspace. IFR and VFR permitted. ATC provides separation for IFR aircraft only.
Class F	Special-use airspace. May be controlled or uncontrolled. May be a restricted or advisory area.
Class G	Uncontrolled airspace.

For detailed information on terminal control areas, control zones and transition areas, refer to the:

- [NAV CANADA Designated Airspace Handbook](#)
- [Transport Canada Aeronautical Information Manual](#)

Transponder requirements

The U.S. Government requires aircraft to be equipped with a Mode A and Mode C transponder to cross the U.S. border in either direction (inbound or outbound).

If you do not have a transponder, you must contact the U.S. Transportation Security Administration (TSA) for a waiver.

When operating in transponder airspace (all Canadian Class A, B, and C airspace, as well as some Class D and E airspace (CAR 601.03)), your aircraft must be equipped with a Mode C transponder (CAR 605.35).

[Find more information in NAV CANADA's Designated Airspace Handbook](#)

Emergency locator transmitters (ELTs)

Canada has large areas that are very sparsely populated.

Emergency locator transmitters are required for general aviation aircraft (CAR 605.38). Satellites only monitor emergency beacons that operate on 406 MHz.

We **strongly recommend** visiting general aviation aircraft that don't have a 406 ELT should carry a 406 capable PLB (Personal Locator Beacon).

Differences between flying in Canada and the U.S.

- Radar coverage and air traffic control services in Canada are limited to the southern part of the country and along busy air traffic routes. Outside of these areas it may be difficult to access enroute weather information or other air traffic services that are normally available throughout the continental U.S.
- A flight plan or a flight itinerary is required for all VFR flights, except for flights within 25 NM of the departure aerodrome (CAR 602.73)
- VFR weather minima differ from US flight visibility and cloud clearance requirements (TC AIM-RAC Table 2.2 and TC AIM-RAC 2.7.4)
- Mandatory frequencies (MF) are designated for use at some uncontrolled aerodromes, or aerodromes that are uncontrolled between certain hours. Aircraft must be equipped with a functioning 2-way radio and follow reporting procedures as specified in CARs 602.97 to 602.103 inclusive (TC AIM-RAC 4.5.4, 4.5.6 and 4.5.7)
- Traffic circuit procedures for uncontrolled Canadian aerodromes are slightly different than traffic pattern procedures at U.S. non-towered airports (TC AIM-RAC 4.5)
- Take-off visibility minima apply for all IFR flights (TC AIM-RAC 9.19)
- All IFR flights are required to file an alternate. Alternate minima are in the CAP-GEN
- General aviation aircraft are subject to RVR minima to conduct an IFR approach (TC AIM-RAC 9.19.2)

Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA)

[Learn Canada's entry requirements](#)

[Make sure everyone on board has the right travel documents and ID](#)

[To avoid fines, learn about Canada's rules for importing certain items including firearms](#)

[Find a list and map of all airports of entry](#)

If you are coming to Canada on a private or company-owned aircraft carrying up to 15 people, you can report to the Canada Border Services Agency in 2 ways:

- by telephone through the Telephone Reporting Centre, or
- in person at staffed Airports of Entry

You can call the Canada Border Services Agency for free at 1-888-226-7277.

Telephone reporting

If you want to report to the Canada Border Services Agency by phone, you must:

- provide advance notice of your arrival
- tell the Canada Border Services Agency about your passengers and goods

Telephone Reporting Centre: 1-888-226-7277

Call between 2 and 48 hours before you arrive. Then land your aircraft at your reported Airport of Entry during regular office hours.

Once you arrive, call 1-888-226-7277 again for further instructions.

[More information on telephone reporting](#)

Airports of Entry

If you plan on reporting directly at an Airport of Entry, you must [read the policy for requesting access to airports](#).

Transport Canada contacts

Our regional offices offer services in many different sectors such as certification of people, products and organizations, aircraft registration and leasing, training and licensing of personnel, etc. Most of these services can be requested and delivered by email.

Atlantic region

Email: aviation.atl@tc.gc.ca

Toll-free: 1-800-305-2059

Toll-free fax: 1-855-726-7495

Ontario region

Email: aviation.ont@tc.gc.ca

Toll-free: 1-800-305-2059

Toll-free fax: 1-877-822-2129

Pacific region

Email: aviation.pac@tc.gc.ca

Toll-free: 1-800-305-2059

Toll-free fax: 1-855-618-6288

Prairie and Northern region

E-mail: aviation.pnr.rpn@tc.gc.ca

Toll-free: 1-888-463-0521

Quebec region

E-mail: aviation.que@tc.gc.ca

Toll-free: 1-800-305-2059

Toll-free fax: 1-855-633-3697

For questions about the Civil Aviation Program or its services, or to report issues or concerns, [use our online form to contact the Civil Aviation Communications Centre](#).

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Cat. No. T52-4/53-2022E-PDF
ISBN 978-0-660-44440-6

