



Canada Border
Services Agency

Agence des services
frontaliers du Canada

I Declare

A guide for residents of Canada returning to Canada

BSF5056(E) Rev. 08

Canada

This publication provides an overview of the laws, restrictions, entitlements and obligations of Canadian residents returning from travel outside Canada. The information provided was accurate when it was published; however, legislative provisions and requirements can change at any time. The Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) makes every effort to provide timely updates to this publication and its Web site.

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

Serving residents of Canada

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

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

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

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

Table of Contents

	Page
Is this publication for you?	4
Before you leave	4
Identification	4
Protecting your valuables	5
Jewellery	6
Modifying an item outside Canada.....	6
Repairs or alterations to your vehicle/ vessel/ aircraft.....	7
For your health and safety	8
Public health	8
Health products (drugs).....	8
Currency and monetary instruments.....	9
Restrictions	9
Firearms and weapons	9
Explosives, fireworks, and ammunition.....	10
Vehicles.....	11
Goods subject to import controls.....	13
Prohibited consumer products.....	14
Food products, plants and animals	14
Endangered species	18
Prohibited goods	19
Used or second-hand mattresses	19
Cultural property	19
Personal exemptions	20
What are your personal exemptions?	21
Who is eligible for these exemptions?.....	22
Do you spend part of the year outside Canada?.....	22
What conditions apply to your personal exemptions?	22
Alcoholic beverages	23
Tobacco products	24
Gifts	25
Prizes and awards	25
Paying duties	26
Special duty rate.....	26
Regular duty rate	26
Importing a marine pleasure craft.....	26
How goods qualify under NAFTA.....	27
World Trade Organization (WTO) agreement	28
Value for duty and foreign sales tax	28
When you return to Canada	28
Making your declaration.....	29
CBSA services	29
CBSA programs for registered trusted travellers.....	30
You and the border services officer.....	32
False declarations and the seizure of goods.....	33
Claiming unaccompanied goods	34
Postal importing	34
Courier importing.....	34
Exchanging goods.....	34
Additional information	35

Is this publication for you?

This publication will be helpful if

- you are a Canadian resident intending to travel outside Canada, or
- you are returning home after travelling to a foreign country and you have been away for less than a year.

This publication provides detailed information that all residents of Canada should know before returning home.

Before you leave

To facilitate your return to Canada, there are several things you can do before you leave.

Identification

Make sure you carry proper identification for yourself and any children travelling with you, regardless of their age, to assist in confirming your legal right or authorization to enter Canada upon your return. Proper identification includes a Canadian passport, a Canadian birth certificate, a citizenship card or a Certificate of Indian Status. A Canadian permanent resident card accompanied by a valid foreign passport is proof of permanent resident status for international travel purposes.

The Government of Canada recommends that Canadian citizens travel with a valid Canadian passport because it is the only reliable and universally accepted travel and identification document available to Canadians for the purpose of international travel.

International transportation companies such as airlines may require travellers to present a passport. Therefore, Canadian citizens who present other documents, such as birth certificates, citizenship cards or certificates of Indian Status, may face delays or may not be allowed to board the plane or other conveyance.

All adults travelling alone with minors are strongly recommended to have a letter authorizing them to take the children on a trip out of the country. The letter should include addresses and telephone numbers where the parents or legal guardian can be reached and will confirm that the children are not being abducted or taken against their will.

Divorced/separated parents who share custody of their children should carry copies of legal custody documents.

When travelling with a group of vehicles, parents or legal guardians should arrive at the border in the same vehicle as their children to avoid any confusion.

Border services officers watch for missing children as part of the Our Missing Children program and may ask detailed questions about the children who are travelling with you.

Protecting your valuables

Before travelling outside Canada with valuable items, you may wish to take advantage of a free identification service that is available at all CBSA offices. This service is available for items that have serial numbers or other unique markings. For items that do not have such markings, the CBSA can apply a sticker to them so that they can be identified for customs purposes as goods that are legally in Canada.

When you show your valuables to a border services officer and state that you acquired them in Canada or lawfully imported them, the officer will list your valuables and their serial numbers on a wallet-sized card called a Form Y38, *Identification of Articles for Temporary Exportation*. If you are questioned about your goods when you return to Canada, show your card to the officer. This will help identify the valuables that were in your possession before leaving the country.

Jewellery

Because jewellery often has significant value and can be difficult to identify, border services officers cannot list it on a Form Y38. It is recommended that you travel with as little jewellery as possible. Taking the following steps before you leave Canada will make it easier for you to re-enter the country with jewellery:

- Obtain an appraisal report and a signed and dated photograph of each piece of jewellery from a recognized Canadian gemologist, jeweller or your insurance agent.
- Obtain written certification that the items or jewellery in the photographs are the ones described in the appraisal report.
- Take the jewellery appraisal reports, certification statements and photographs to a CBSA office to be validated.
- If the jewellery was purchased in Canada, retain the sales receipt. If you imported the goods previously, make sure you have a copy of your receipt.
- Carry the appraisal reports, the certifications and photographs when travelling outside Canada.

Modifying an item outside Canada

Under customs legislation, if you take any item outside Canada and change it in any way to enhance its condition or value, the CBSA does not consider it to be the same item when you bring it back into the country. You have to declare the full value of the new item.

Example

You take an old diamond ring with you on a trip outside Canada. While outside Canada, you decide to have the diamond taken out of the old ring and placed in a new setting. When you return to Canada, the ring will be considered new and must be declared accordingly.

Even if part of the ring originated in Canada, the CBSA is required to treat the ring like any other piece of jewellery you may have purchased while outside the country. This rule applies unless you have previous authorization from the CBSA to have those repairs or alterations made outside Canada.

Repairs or alterations to your vehicle/ vessel/aircraft

If you intend to have repairs or alterations made to your vehicle/vessel/aircraft outside Canada, check with the CBSA for information before you leave.

Under customs legislation, the CBSA can no longer consider your vehicle, vessel or aircraft to be

Canadian-made if you increase its value, improve its condition or have it modified outside Canada.

As a result, you may have to pay duty and the goods and services tax (GST) or harmonized sales tax (HST) on the entire value of the vehicle/vessel/aircraft when you bring it back.

Duty will not apply to the value of the repairs or alterations made to your vehicle/vessel/aircraft in the United States, Mexico, Chile, Costa Rica, Israel or another Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement beneficiary when it is re-imported into Canada; however, the GST/HST will apply.

Emergency repairs can be made to your vehicle/vessel/aircraft while you are travelling outside the country to ensure your safe return to Canada. However, to be eligible for this special provision, be sure to declare the value of all repairs and replacement parts when you return to Canada with the vehicle.

Transport Canada also has requirements for vehicles that are extensively modified. For more information, contact Transport Canada's Registrar of Imported Vehicles at **1-888-848-8240**.

For your health and safety

Some of the places you plan to visit or pass through may be plagued by cholera, yellow fever or malaria. Before you leave Canada, it is recommended that you contact a qualified health professional at a travel health clinic near you to find out what vaccinations and medications you might need. A list of travel clinics across Canada is available on the Public Health Agency of Canada's Web site at www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/tmp-pmv.

Public health

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

Health products (drugs)

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

Currency and monetary instruments

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

Restrictions

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

Firearms and weapons

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

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

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

- you **must** be at least 18 years of age;
- you **can** import non-restricted and restricted firearms provided all documentation and other requirements are met; and
- you generally **cannot** import prohibited firearms or any type of prohibited weapons or devices, including silencers, replica firearms, switchblades, pepper spray and other weapons.

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

For more detailed information on importing a firearm into Canada, see the publication called *Importing a Firearm or Weapon Into Canada* or call BIS at one of the telephone numbers listed in the section called "Additional information." For information about applying for a Canadian firearms licence or a firearms registration certificate, or to obtain an *Application for an Authorization to Transport Restricted Firearms and Prohibited Firearms* (Form CAFC 679) **in advance**, please contact the Canada Firearms Centre:

Canada Firearms Centre
Ottawa ON K1A 0R2

Telephone: **1-800-731-4000** (toll-free in Canada and
the United States)

506-624-5380 (from all other countries)

Fax: 613-825-0297

E-mail: cfc-cafc@cfc-cafc.gc.ca

Web site: www.cfc-cafc.gc.ca

Explosives, fireworks and ammunition

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

Explosives Regulatory Division
Natural Resources Canada
1431 Merivale Road
Ottawa ON K1A 0G1

Telephone: 613-948-5200

Web site: www.nrcan.gc.ca

Vehicles

Vehicles include any kind of pleasure vehicles, such as passenger cars, pickup trucks, camper trucks, vans, Jeeps, chassis cabs, motorcycles, snowmobiles and motor homes, as long as you use them for non-commercial purposes. However, you should be aware that Transport Canada has many requirements that apply to vehicles.

Transport Canada defines a vehicle as any vehicle that is capable of being driven or drawn on roads by any means other than muscular power exclusively, but not including a vehicle designed to run exclusively on rails. Trailers, such as recreational, boat, camping, horse and stock trailers, are considered vehicles as are wood chippers, generators or any other equipment mounted on rims and tires.

Import restrictions

Import restrictions apply to most used or second-hand vehicles that are not manufactured in the current year and are imported from a country other than the United States. For more information, please refer to the CBSA publication called *Importing a Vehicle Into Canada*, which is available on the CBSA's Web site at www.cbsa.gc.ca, or visit Transport Canada's Web site at www.tc.gc.ca.

Transport Canada requirements

Transport Canada requirements apply to vehicles that are less than 15 years old and to buses built on or after January 1, 1971. If you are considering importing such a vehicle, be sure that it meets Transport Canada's import requirements or that it can be modified to meet these requirements after you import it. Not all vehicles from the United States can be imported into Canada.

If you have purchased or acquired a vehicle from the United States, you **must** contact Transport Canada's Registrar of Imported Vehicles (RIV) **before** you import your vehicle to ensure that it can be imported and that it can be modified to meet Canadian standards after you import it.

The RIV is an agency contracted by Transport Canada to ensure that imported vehicles are brought into compliance with Canadian safety standards. For more information, contact the RIV:

Registrar of Imported Vehicles

Telephone: **1-888-848-8240** (toll-free within
North America)
416-626-6812 (outside North America)

Web site: **www.riv.ca**

If your vehicle does not meet Canadian safety standards but qualifies for importation, a border services officer will register your vehicle into the RIV program upon your arrival in Canada. The program registration fee is CAN\$195 + the GST in all provinces except Quebec, where it is CAN\$195 + GST + the Quebec sales tax. You will then have 45 days to bring your vehicle into compliance with Canadian safety standards and have it inspected.

You cannot license or sell the vehicle you imported into Canada until it is modified and passes federal inspection under the RIV program.

Vehicles originally manufactured to meet the safety standards of **countries other than the United States or Canada** are not allowed into Canada unless they are 15 years of age or older, are buses manufactured before January 1, 1971, or are entering Canada temporarily. Before importing this type of vehicle, you must contact Transport Canada:

Transport Canada

Telephone: **1-800-333-0371** (toll-free in Canada)
613-998-8616 (from all other countries)

Web site: **www.tc.gc.ca/roadsafety**

In addition, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) requires that you wash any sand, soil, earth and plant residue from your passenger and recreational vehicles, including the undercarriage, before you import them. For more information, call the CFIA at one of the telephone numbers listed under the section called "Food products, plants and animals."

Finally, if your vehicle meets both CBSA and Transport Canada requirements, it will also be subject to provincial or territorial taxes. For more information, contact the motor vehicle authority in your province or territory.

Restrictions on temporary importing

If you buy, lease, rent or borrow a vehicle while outside Canada, Transport Canada and customs legislation does not allow you to bring it into Canada for your personal use, even temporarily, unless it meets all Transport Canada requirements and you pay the duty and federal taxes that apply. For exceptions, please consult Memorandum D2-4-1, *Temporary Importation of Conveyances by Residents of Canada*, and Memorandum D8-1-1, *Temporary Importation (Tariff Item No. 9993.00.00) Regulations*, which are available on the CBSA's Web site at www.cbsa.gc.ca. You can also call BIS at one of the telephone numbers listed in the section called "Additional information." The duty and taxes, as well as the RIV fee, are not refunded when the vehicle leaves Canada.

Goods subject to import controls

To monitor the effects of imports on Canadian manufacturers, there are import controls on items such as clothing, handbags and textiles. These controls are outlined in the *Export and Import Permits Act*. Depending on the value, quantity or type of goods you intend to import, you may need an import permit even if you qualify for a personal exemption.

For more information, call BIS at one of the telephone numbers listed in the section called "Additional information" or contact the Export and Import Controls Bureau:

Export and Import Controls Bureau
Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada
Tower C, 4th Floor
125 Sussex Drive
Ottawa ON K1A 0G2

Web site: www.international.gc.ca

Prohibited consumer products

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

Health Canada

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

Web site: www.healthcanada.gc.ca/cps

Food products, plants and animals

The CFIA has a mandate to safeguard Canada's food supply and the plants and animals upon which safe, high-quality food depends. The CBSA performs inspection functions on food, plants, animals and related products on behalf of the CFIA at all ports of entry into Canada. These controls, restrictions and prohibitions on the entry of plants, animals and related products, including food, mean you need certificates or permits to import some of these goods.

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

Other Government of Canada departments and agencies such as Environment Canada, as well as some provinces, have special requirements for the importation of food, plants, animals and related products. The *Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora* (CITES) alone has import and export requirements for some 30,000 wild animals (including fish), plant species and related products.

Without the proper documentation, the CBSA may confiscate, dispose of or order the removal of certain food, plants, animals or related products. Other imports may require treatment before they can stay. Importers and other travellers are responsible for all costs related to disposal, quarantine or treatment.

For more information, call BIS at one of the telephone numbers listed in the section called “Additional information,” visit the CBSA’s Web site at www.cbsa.gc.ca or refer to the Automated Import Reference System (AIRS) section on the CFIA’s Web site at www.inspection.gc.ca. You can also call a CFIA Import Service Centre toll-free at one of the following numbers:

Eastern Canada: 1-877-493-0468

Central Canada: 1-800-835-4486

Western Canada: 1-888-732-6222

For information on Environment Canada’s import requirements, refer to the CITES Web site at www.cites.ec.gc.ca.

Food products

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

You can import certain food products from certain states in the United States. Before entering Canada with these products, contact BIS at one of the telephone numbers listed in the section called “Additional information” or refer to the AIRS section on the CFIA’s Web site at www.inspection.gc.ca.

The CFIA and Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada have set limits on the quantity and/or dollar value of certain food products that you can bring into Canada duty-free or that you can include in your personal exemption. Unless

you have an import permit from Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada for quantities over and above the established limits, you will have to pay duty based on a rate ranging from 150% to 300% of the value of the goods.

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

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

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

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

Note

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

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

Plants

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

Houseplants are defined as plants commonly known and recognized as such, which are grown

or intended to be grown indoors. Bonsai plants are not considered to be houseplants. If you are importing houseplants from the continental United States as part of your baggage or household effects, you do not need phytosanitary certificates or import permits. For all other plants from the United States, you may require a phytosanitary certificate from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and an import permit from the CFIA.

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

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

For more information, contact BIS at one of the telephone numbers listed in the section called "Additional information" or refer to the AIRS section on the CFIA's Web site at www.inspection.gc.ca.

Animals

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

You may import puppies and kittens younger than three months old from any country and ferrets younger than three months old from the United States without submitting any documentation; however, these animals must be examined by a CFIA-authorized veterinarian if they appear unhealthy. Although there are no documentation requirements, you may wish to carry proof of birth to verify the age of the animal. If you use an **assistance dog** that is certified as a guide, hearing or other service dog, you can import it without any restrictions as long as you are accompanying the dog to Canada.

You may import cats and dogs from any country and ferrets from the United States that are older than three months if you provide a certificate signed and dated by a licensed veterinarian for each pet. The certificate must clearly identify the animal by breed, age, sex, colouring and any distinguishing marks. It must also show that the animal has been vaccinated against rabies within the last three years. Animal tags are not accepted in lieu of certificates. Ferrets of any age from any country other than the United States require an import permit issued by the CFIA. Unaccompanied dogs between the ages of three and eight months from any country have specific documentation requirements. These requirements can be found by visiting the CFIA's Web site at www.inspection.gc.ca.

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

Endangered species

Canada signed CITES, which is an international agreement to protect wild animals and plants and their parts or derivatives from over-exploitation in international trade. CITES operates through a system of import/export permits. However, you can import certain goods controlled under CITES without a CITES permit. The following exceptions apply for **non-commercial purposes only**:

- tourist souvenirs;
- personal effects;
- household effects; and
- certain hunting trophies.

The items cannot be alive and must not be sold or disposed of within 90 days after the date of import. Canadian threatened or endangered species are not included in these exemptions; they still require all of the necessary CITES permits.

In all cases, it is best that you contact the CITES office to ask about import requirements.

Telephone: **1-800-668-6767** (toll-free number
in Canada)
819-997-1840 (from all other countries)

Fax: 819-953-6283

Web site: **www.cites.ec.gc.ca**

Prohibited goods

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

Used or second-hand mattresses

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

Cultural property

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

Movable Cultural Property

Canadian Heritage

15 Eddy Street, 3rd floor

Gatineau QC K1A 0M5

Telephone: 819-997-7761

Fax: 819-997-7757

Web site: **www.pch.gc.ca**

Personal exemptions

When you return to Canada, you may qualify for a personal exemption. This allows you to bring goods of a certain value into the country without paying regular duties, except for a minimum duty that may apply to some tobacco products.

The term “duties” can include excise taxes and the GST/HST. It does not include provincial or territorial sales tax. However, the CBSA has agreements with some provinces and territories that allow the CBSA to collect provincial and territorial taxes, levies and fees on goods that have a value higher than your personal exemption.

If you reside in one of the provinces or territories that has an agreement with the CBSA and you return to Canada at a port of entry in your province or territory of residence, the goods that you import in excess of your personal exemption will be subject to a provincial/territorial assessment. If you bring in more than the allowance for alcohol, you will have to pay the provincial/territorial assessment in the province or territory where you enter Canada, even if it is not your province/territory of residence.

The Government of Canada has agreements with New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador to collect the HST. If you live in a participating province and the value of the non-commercial goods you import is more than your personal exemption, you have to pay the HST instead of the GST, regardless of where you enter Canada.

Except for restricted items, you can bring back any amount of goods as long as you are willing to pay the duties and any provincial/territorial assessments that apply. This rule applies even if you do not qualify for a personal exemption.

You must always report the amount you are claiming for your personal exemption in Canadian dollars. You must therefore convert foreign currency values and any foreign sales taxes you paid to Canadian dollars at the appropriate rate of exchange.

What are your personal exemptions?

After each absence of 24 hours or more

You can claim up to CAN\$50 worth of goods without paying any duties. This is your personal exemption. **You must have the goods with you when you arrive in Canada and you cannot include tobacco products or alcoholic beverages in this exemption.** If the goods you bring in are worth more than CAN\$50 in total, you cannot claim this exemption. **Instead, you have to pay full duties on all goods you bring in.**

After each absence of 48 hours or more

You can claim up to CAN\$400 worth of goods without paying any duties. **You must have the goods with you when you arrive in Canada.** Although you can include some tobacco products and alcoholic beverages, a partial exemption may apply to cigarettes, tobacco products and manufactured tobacco. See the sections called “Alcoholic beverages” and “Tobacco products” for more details.

After each absence of 7 days or more

You can claim up to CAN\$750 worth of goods without paying any duties. Although you can include some tobacco products and alcoholic beverages, a partial exemption may apply to cigarettes, tobacco products and manufactured tobacco. See the sections called “Alcoholic beverages” and “Tobacco products” for more details. **With the exception of tobacco products and alcoholic beverages, you do not need to have the goods with you when you arrive.**

To calculate the number of days you have been absent, do not include the date you left Canada but include the date you returned. Dates matter but not times. For example, we consider you to have been absent seven days if you left Friday the 7th and returned Friday the 14th.

Who is eligible for these exemptions?

You are eligible for a personal exemption if you are one of the following:

- a Canadian resident returning from a trip outside Canada;
- a former resident of Canada returning to live in this country; or
- a temporary resident of Canada returning from a trip outside Canada.

Even young children and infants are entitled to a personal exemption. As a parent or guardian, you can make a declaration to the CBSA for a child as long as the goods you are declaring are for the child's use.

Do you spend part of the year outside Canada?

If you spend part of the year in another country for health reasons or pleasure, that country usually considers you to be a visitor. As such, you are still considered a resident of Canada by the CBSA. This means that you are entitled to the same exemptions as other Canadians. When you import foreign goods or vehicles for your personal use into Canada (even temporarily), you have to meet all import requirements and pay all applicable duty and taxes.

What conditions apply to your personal exemptions?

You cannot combine your personal exemptions with another person's or transfer them to someone else.

In addition, you cannot combine your 48-hour exemption (CAN\$400) with your 7-day exemption (CAN\$750) for a total exemption of CAN\$1,150.

In general, the goods you include in your personal exemption must be for your personal or household use. Such goods include souvenirs that you purchased, gifts that you received from friends or relatives living outside Canada or prizes that you won. Goods you bring in for commercial use or for another person do not qualify for the exemption and are subject to full duties. In all cases, goods you include in your 24-hour exemption (CAN\$50) or 48-hour exemption (CAN\$400) have to be with you upon your arrival in Canada.

Except for tobacco and alcohol, goods you claim in your 7-day exemption (CAN\$750) may be shipped to your home by mail, courier or other means of transportation.

Alcoholic beverages

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

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

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

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

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

Note

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

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

Tobacco products

If you are 18 years of age or over, you are allowed to bring in **all** of the following amounts of tobacco into Canada free of duty and taxes within your personal exemption:

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

Note

If you include cigarettes, tobacco sticks or manufactured tobacco in your personal exemption, a partial exemption may only apply. You will have to pay a special duty on these products **unless** they are marked “**CANADA DUTY PAID • DROIT ACQUITTE**.” You will find Canadian-made products sold at duty-free shops marked this way. You can speed up your clearance by having your tobacco products available for inspection when you arrive.

If you bring in more than your personal exemption, you will have to pay regular assessments on the excess amount. These regular assessments can include duty and taxes, as well as provincial or territorial fees. Border services officers will give an allowance for products that are marked **“CANADA DUTY PAID • DROIT ACQUITTÉ”** when they calculate the amounts owing.

The law in Canada also limits the quantity of tobacco products that may be imported (or possessed) by an individual for personal use if the tobacco product is not packaged and stamped **“CANADA DUTY PAID • DROIT ACQUITTÉ”** (in accordance with the *Excise Act, 2001*). The limit is currently five units of tobacco products. One unit of tobacco products consists of one of the following:

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

Gifts

While you are outside Canada, you can send gifts free of duty and taxes to friends in Canada under certain conditions. To qualify, each gift must not be worth more than CAN\$60 and cannot be a tobacco product, an alcoholic beverage or advertising matter. If the gift is worth more than CAN\$60, the recipient will have to pay regular duties on the excess amount. It is always a good idea to include a gift card to avoid any misunderstanding.

While gifts you send from outside Canada do not count as part of your personal exemption, gifts you bring back in your personal baggage do.

Prizes and awards

In most cases, you have to pay regular duties on prizes and awards you receive outside Canada. Prizes can be declared as part of your personal exemption and duty must be paid on any excess amount. For more information, call BIS at one of the telephone numbers listed in the section called **“Additional information.”**

Paying duties

Making a full declaration and paying any duty and taxes you owe is a simple, straightforward process. You can pay by cash, traveller's cheque, Visa, American Express or MasterCard. The CBSA also accepts debit cards at most offices. If an amount is no more than CAN\$2,500, you can sometimes pay by personal cheque. A border services officer will give you a receipt showing the calculations and amount you paid.

Special duty rate

After each trip outside Canada of 48 hours or longer, you are entitled to a special duty rate of 7% under the Most Favoured Nation tariff treatment in addition to your personal exemption. The rate applies only to goods that accompany you, that do not qualify for duty-free entry under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and that are worth up to CAN\$300 more than your personal exemption of CAN\$400 or CAN\$750. The rate does not apply to tobacco products or alcoholic beverages. You still have to pay any GST/HST that applies. In some provinces, the CBSA also collects the provincial sales tax (PST).

Regular duty rate

If you do not qualify for a personal exemption, or if you exceed your exemption limit, you will have to pay the GST/HST, as well as any duty or other tax or assessment that applies on the excess amount. Duty rates vary according to the goods you are importing, the country where the goods were made and the country from which you are importing them. You may also have to pay the PST if you live in a province where the CBSA has an agreement to collect the tax and you return to Canada through that province.

Importing a marine pleasure craft

Marine pleasure craft include any kind of vessels such as boats, fishing boats, yachts, dinghies, tenders, motorboats, sailboats and personal watercraft, as long as they are used for non-commercial purposes.

All vessels imported by residents of Canada, regardless of where the vessels are licensed or registered, are subject to all applicable duty and taxes when they are first imported into Canada. If a vessel is imported through a land border crossing, it must be declared to the border services officer and the importation process will take place at that location. In the event that the vessel is imported into Canada by water, the owner must go to a designated marina and contact the telephone reporting centre at **1-888-226-7277** immediately upon arrival in Canada and follow the instructions provided by the officer. If processing cannot take place at the marina, the owner must go to the nearest CBSA office. Please ensure to have the bill of sale and proof of ownership ready to present to the officer upon request. It is recommended that the proof of the CBSA declaration or payment of duty and taxes be kept on board the vessel for future reference.

For information on the licensing and registration of vessels, please visit Service Canada's Web site at www.servicecanada.gc.ca or Transport Canada's Web site at www.tc.gc.ca/marinesafety.

How goods qualify under NAFTA

Your goods qualify for the U.S. duty-free rate under NAFTA if the following applies:

- the goods are for your personal use; and
- the goods are marked as made in the United States, Canada or Mexico, **or** the goods are not marked or labelled to indicate that they were made anywhere other than in the United States, Canada or Mexico.

If you would like more information on goods eligible under NAFTA, refer to Memorandum D11-4-13, *Rules of Origin for Casual Goods Regulations*, which is available on the CBSA's Web site at www.cbsa.gc.ca under "Publications and forms," or you can call BIS at one of the telephone numbers listed in the section called "Additional information."

World Trade Organization (WTO) agreement

The duty on a wide range of products originating in non-NAFTA countries has been cut or will be reduced to zero over the next few years. NAFTA goods also qualify for the WTO agreement rate. If the duty rate payable on the goods you are importing is lower under the WTO agreement than under NAFTA, border services officers automatically assess your goods using the lower rate.

Value for duty and foreign sales tax

Value for duty is sometimes called customs value. It is the amount the CBSA uses to calculate duty on your goods, and it is generally based on the price you paid for the goods.

In most cases, the CBSA considers any foreign sales tax added to or included in the price to be part of the value. However, some foreign governments will refund sales tax to you if you export the items you bought. In such cases, you do not have to include the amount of the foreign sales tax that was or will be refunded to you.

When you return to Canada

When you return to Canada, you have to declare all of the goods you acquired while outside Canada, such as purchases, gifts, prizes or awards that you are bringing with you or are having shipped to you. Include goods that are still in your possession that you bought at a Canadian or foreign duty-free shop. As well, make sure you declare any repairs or alterations you made to your vehicle, vessel or aircraft while you were out of the country.

If you aren't sure if an article is admissible or should be declared, always declare it first and then ask the border services officer. Remember that officers are there to help you and will work out your personal exemption and any duties you owe in the way that benefits you most.

Making your declaration

If you are returning to Canada by commercial aircraft, you will receive a Form E311, *CBSA Declaration Card*, to complete before you land. These cards are also used at some locations for travellers arriving by train, boat or bus. If you have any questions about the card or Canadian regulations, please ask the border services officer when you arrive.

If you arrive in Canada in a private vehicle, such as an automobile, an aircraft, a boat or a bus, you can usually make an oral declaration.

If you are declaring goods claimed as part of your CAN\$750 exemption that preceded or will follow your arrival in Canada, ask the border services officer for a Form E24, *Personal Exemption CBSA Declaration*. **You will need your copy of this form to claim these goods; otherwise, you may have to pay the regular duty and taxes on them.**

CBSA services

The CBSA has areas at most major airports where you can pay any duty or taxes you owe while waiting for your baggage to arrive.

The CBSA offers programs that streamline border clearances for pre-approved, low-risk Canadian and U.S. citizens and permanent residents travelling to Canada at major airports, highways and waterways. Refer to the section below for more detailed information.

CBSA programs for registered trusted travellers

The CANPASS and NEXUS programs streamline the border clearance process for pre-approved travellers. If you wish to participate in either of these programs, you must fill out an application form, undergo a security check and meet certain admissibility criteria. For information and application forms, visit www.cbsa.gc.ca/canpass or www.cbsa.gc.ca/nexus or call BIS at one of the telephone numbers listed in the section called "Additional information."

CANPASS Private Aircraft and CANPASS Corporate Aircraft

If you frequently travel to Canada from the United States on a small aircraft (maximum 15 passengers including crew), you may qualify for the CANPASS Private Aircraft or CANPASS Corporate Aircraft program. As a participant, you can enjoy many benefits:

- access to more airports;
- permission to land at an airport of entry any time the airport is open for landing, regardless of the hours of operation of the local CBSA office;
- permission to land at CANPASS-only airports, which may be nearer to your final destination; and
- expedited clearance.

These programs require the pilot to call **1-888-CANPASS (1-888-226-7277)** at least 2 hours but no more than 48 hours before arrival to identify everyone on board and report the goods they are importing. For more information, visit the CBSA's Web site at www.cbsa.gc.ca/canpass.

CANPASS Air

As a CANPASS Air participant, you can use a self-serve kiosk at the airport to expedite your border clearance. You simply look into a camera that recognizes your irises as proof of identity. For a list of participating airports, visit the CBSA's Web site at www.cbsa.gc.ca/canpass.

CANPASS Private Boats

If you are a member of CANPASS Private Boats, you are required to call a CBSA telephone reporting centre at **1-888-CANPASS (1-888-226-7277)** up to four hours before arriving in Canada by private boat from the United States. In addition to reporting at the regular telephone reporting sites when you arrive in Canada, you also have the option to arrive at a marine port of entry solely for CANPASS Private Boats members. To enjoy the program privileges, all passengers on board must be either CANPASS Private Boats or NEXUS members. For more information, visit the CBSA's Web site at **www.cbsa.gc.ca/canpass**.

NEXUS

NEXUS is a joint initiative of the CBSA and U.S. Customs and Border Protection. The program is designed to expedite the border clearance process for pre-approved, low-risk travellers into Canada and the United States. This allows both Canada and the United States to focus their efforts on unknown and potentially higher-risk travellers and goods. NEXUS members are subject to the same rigorous security standards as all travellers.

For more information about the NEXUS program, please visit **www.nexus.gc.ca**.

NEXUS in the air mode

NEXUS members can save time crossing the border by using self-serve kiosks in designated areas at participating international airports.

Members can also use their NEXUS card at a self-serve kiosk at participating airports as an alternative to a passport when entering the United States by air. For a list of participating airports, visit **www.nexus.gc.ca**.

NEXUS in the land mode

NEXUS members can use dedicated lanes at the land border to simplify their entry process while travelling back and forth between Canada and the United States.

However, NEXUS members must use the regular lanes if they are transporting persons into Canada or the United States that are not NEXUS members. For a list of participating land border crossings, visit www.nexus.gc.ca.

NEXUS in the marine mode

NEXUS members can save time by reporting to border officials in advance by telephone. NEXUS is available at approximately 450 designated marine reporting sites across Canada. For a list of these reporting sites, visit www.nexus.gc.ca.

You and the border services officer

You may occasionally find yourself going through a more detailed inspection. In some cases, this simply means that you may have to complete a form. In other cases, the border services officer will need to identify the goods you are bringing into the country or examine your luggage.

Border services officers are legally entitled to examine your luggage as part of their responsibility to protect Canada's safety, economy and environment. You are responsible for opening, unpacking and repacking your luggage. The CBSA appreciates your cooperation.

By making your goods easily accessible for inspection, and having your receipts handy, you will be helping the CBSA to help you. It is a good idea to keep all your receipts for accommodations and purchases, and for any repairs done to, or parts bought for, your vehicle. The border services officer may ask to see them as evidence of the length of your stay and of the value of the goods or repairs.

If you disagree with the amount of duty and taxes that you have to pay, please ask to speak with the superintendent on duty. A consultation can often resolve the issue quickly and without cost. If you are still not satisfied, our officers can tell you how to make a formal appeal.

In addition, border services officers may arrest an individual for an offence under the Criminal Code (e.g. impaired driving, outstanding arrest warrants, stolen property, abductions/kidnappings) and for infractions under other acts of Parliament (e.g. the *Customs Act*, the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*). If you are arrested, you may be compelled to attend court in Canada. You should note that anyone arrested in Canada is protected by, and will be treated in accordance with, the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

False declarations and the seizure of goods

If you do not declare goods, or if you falsely declare them, the CBSA can seize the goods. This means that you may lose the goods permanently or that you may have to pay a penalty to get them back. Depending on the type of goods and the circumstances involved, the CBSA may impose a penalty that range from 25% to 80% of the value of the seized goods.

In addition, the *Customs Act* provides border services officers with the authority to seize all vehicles that were used to import goods unlawfully. When this happens, the CBSA imposes a penalty that you must pay before the vehicle is returned to you.

If you do not declare tobacco products and alcoholic beverages at the time of importation, the CBSA will seize them permanently.

A record of infractions is kept in the CBSA computer system. If you have an infraction record, you may have to undergo a more detailed examination on future trips. You may also become ineligible for the NEXUS and CANPASS programs.

If your goods were seized and you disagree with the action taken, you can appeal by writing a letter to the CBSA within 90 days of the date of the seizure. You can find more information about the appeal process on your seizure receipt form.

Claiming unaccompanied goods

When goods arrive before or after your arrival in Canada, you have 40 days to claim them by producing your copy of Form E24, *Personal Exemption CBSA Declaration*. You are required to request this form when you return to Canada (see the section called “Making your declaration” for more information). It is recommended that you retain your copy of Form E24 until you have received and accounted for all your goods.

The carrier who delivers the goods will ask you to pay the duties that apply, along with a processing fee. You then have two options:

- you can accept delivery by paying the amount owing and then file a claim with the CBSA for a refund; or
- you can refuse to accept delivery.

Postal importing

If delivery is refused, the shipment is returned to the sender. The importer must advise Canada Post that a reclassification of the shipment is requested. The CBSA will contact the importer who will have to provide an explanation for the reclassification.

Courier importing

If you refuse delivery because you want to personally clear the goods through the CBSA, contact and advise the courier company. If the importer simply refuses delivery, the shipment will be returned to the country of export.

Exchanging goods

If you have to exchange any of the goods you brought in under your personal exemption and you want to avoid paying more duty, you have 60 days from the date you imported them to do so. Contact the CBSA for advice on how to do this.

Additional information

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

You can access BIS free of charge throughout Canada by calling **1-800-461-9999**. If you are calling from outside Canada, you can access BIS by calling 204-983-3500 or 506-636-5064 (long-distance charges apply). If you call during regular business hours (8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. local time, Monday to Friday, except holidays), you can speak directly to an agent by pressing "0" at any time during the recording.

You can also visit the CBSA's Web site at **www.cbsa.gc.ca**.

Think recycling!



Printed in Canada