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Transportation
Agency



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INTRODUCTION > > > > > > > >

Thousands of Canadians travel by air each day. Travel services can seem bewildering at times, yet most Canadian air travellers experience trouble-free transportation. To help make your flight as smooth as possible, the Canadian Transportation Agency (Agency) has put together this booklet, which provides helpful information and advice about flying to, from, and within Canada.

We hope you will be among the majority of air travellers who experience problem-free flights. However, should you encounter difficulties and are unable to resolve them with the carrier, the Agency's Air Travel Complaints Commissioner and Agency staff are ready to respond to complaints regarding some of the problems you may encounter when travelling by air. For more information about this Agency role, read the Travel Complaints section of this booklet. Our toll-free complaints investigation line, available throughout Canada and the United States, is 1-888-222-2592.

Your travel agent, your airline and the contacts listed at the end of this booklet are also valuable sources of information on flying smart.

Note: The content of this booklet is accurate to the best of our knowledge and is to be used for general information purposes only. We would welcome any comments you may have about the booklet.



TABLE OF CONTENTS > > > > > >

Travel Documents	Page 2
Customs	Page 7
Security	Page 8
Insurance	Page 10
Smoking	Page 11
Airline Safety	Page 12
Unruly Passengers	Page 14
Reservations and Ticketing	Page 15
Unaccompanied Minors	Page 20
Air Fares	Page 21
Baggage	Page 26
Delays and Cancellations	Page 33
Over-booking and Denied Boarding	Page 34
Charter Flights	Page 37
Air Travel Reward Programs	Page 38
Travellers with Disabilities	Page 40
Travel Complaints	Page 42
Questions and Complaint Filing	Page 44
Other Sources and Contacts	Page 45

When do I need my passport?

It is a good idea to take your passport with you whenever you leave the country. Make sure that its expiry date is more than six months after your planned return to Canada since some countries will not admit someone whose passport is close to expiration.

While a birth certificate may be sufficient for Canadian citizens visiting certain countries, you will need a passport and, sometimes, a visa, to visit other countries. Showing your passport also makes cashing traveller's cheques a lot easier.

Before you travel, you should make sure your passport is a valid document to the country you are travelling to.

Should you not have a passport or need to renew your current passport, allow the Passport Office 10 working days to process your application if you are applying in person and 40 working days, not including postal delivery times, if you are applying by mail.

Your passport is a valuable document; guard it carefully. Keep it with you in a secure place when you are travelling. Don't leave it in your baggage or hotel room, unless it is in a secure in-room safe. Do not pack your passport in your checked baggage.

You are responsible for finding out about passport, visa, and vaccination requirements for your destination. Travel agencies may provide information, but it is not their responsibility to ensure you have the necessary documents.

Airlines may refuse transportation to passengers who do not have the proper documents.

What if I travel with children?

Effective December 11, 2001, Canadian children who travel outside Canada need their own passport.

Customs officials are looking for missing children and may ask questions about the children travelling with you. Make sure to carry the proper identification for yourself and any children travelling with you, including any documents required by the country you intend to visit.

Different rules apply to different family relationships.

- When a minor child, under the age of 18, travels to a foreign country with only one parent, that accompanying parent requires a legal, certified consent from the absent parent, as well as a copy of any separation or divorce decree.
- If the absent parent is deceased, a legal copy of the death certificate should be presented.
- If only one parent is named on the child's birth certificate, the accompanying parent must provide a legal copy of the child's birth certificate.

- If the accompanying adult is the child's legal guardian, a copy of the court order granting guardianship must be presented.

When are visas, entry and exit permits, and health certificates required?

Every country has the right to set entry requirements, limit the duration of visits, or deny entry to foreigners. You may often require visas, entry and exit permits, and health certificates when entering a country. Since these documents may be difficult or even impossible to obtain at the border, you must plan ahead.

Visas are issued by foreign government offices in Canada. If you plan to remain in a foreign country for a lengthy period (usually more than 90 days), even as a tourist, a visa will be required. Therefore, you should contact the Embassy or Consulate of the countries you are going to. Also, some countries may require that you show the return portion of your ticket and other documentation on arrival.

To avoid possible delays or even detention, consult a travel agent or the diplomatic or consular missions of the countries concerned. Remember to allow enough time for processing of visas and other documents. You should also ask your airline which travel documents you should have before check-in to avoid confusion at that point.

For further information about travel documents, contact the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. The department publishes Travel Reports about various countries on its Web site at www.voyage.gc.ca/destinations/menu_e.htm.

Canada also has embassies and consular missions in many countries to provide assistance. Many foreign countries also have embassies or consular missions in Canada.

Do I need a certificate of vaccination?

Required or recommended vaccinations may vary greatly, depending on the country you plan to visit. It is best to determine what vaccinations, if any, you will need well ahead of departure and once again before leaving, as health regulations can change with little notice.

As a returning Canadian citizen or landed immigrant, you will not need an International certificate of vaccination to enter Canada, but you may need proof of immunization before entering other countries. For further information, contact a doctor, your municipal or provincial department of health, or Health Canada (see appendix for contact information). You can find travel health advice for various countries on the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Web site (see appendix for contact information) mentioned in the previous section.

You should also make sure you have the proper vaccinations for any animal you plan to take with you. Before getting the vaccinations, make sure that your animal will be allowed to enter the foreign country.



CUSTOMS > > > > > > > > > >

When you enter a foreign country directly from Canada or return to Canada, you will be required to go through customs and immigration. When you travel to the United States via one of Canada's major airports, you will most likely clear United States customs and immigration at that airport.

Most countries restrict what you are allowed to take with you, including currency. It is best to be aware of these restrictions ahead of time. On your return, you will be asked to declare all goods you have acquired outside Canada and you may be required to pay duty and taxes. For further information about importing goods into Canada, contact the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (see appendix for contact information).

SECURITY



The security measures in place at airports are intended to ensure the safety and security of the travelling public. Be sure to have photo identification with you and be prepared to show it at the check-in counter, airport security, or in the boarding gate area, regardless of your destination.

Police will deal with passengers carrying unauthorized weapons (such as firearms) or explosives. Potentially dangerous articles (such as razors, pocket knives, scissors and letter openers) must not be put in carry-on baggage. You can carry electronic devices – such as cell phones, laptop computers and pagers on an aircraft, but, to clear security, you may be required to turn them on to prove they work. Do not take wrapped gifts to the security area, because security personnel may need to inspect them.

If you are unsure about a particular item you are transporting, contact your air carrier in advance to determine whether it is permitted. This will prevent any unnecessary delays at the security screening checkpoint.

When you are checking baggage, airline staff must question you to establish the following facts:

- ▶ Whether you personally packed the baggage you are checking.
- ▶ Whether you know what is in that baggage.

- Whether you have left that baggage unattended in a public area since you packed it.
- Whether the baggage contains an electronic device.

Security staff may manually search your carry-on baggage to ensure maximum safety.

At the security screening checkpoint, you will be required to remove all loose belongings and walk through a metal detector. Carry-on baggage is sent separately through an X-ray machine. If you activate the alarm on the metal detector, security staff must search you again by hand or with a hand-held metal detector. Security staff will manually search your carry-on baggage if the X-ray doesn't clearly show what the baggage contains. If you refuse to undergo security screening, air carriers will not allow you to board the aircraft.

While this section of the booklet highlights current security procedures, the well-being of the air travelling public is one of the government's highest priorities. Consequently, improved security measures can be implemented at any time at airports across Canada. Therefore, always allow sufficient time before your flight to undergo security screening.

INSURANCE



Because of the restrictions placed on passengers using discounted airline tickets, you may want to buy insurance in case you need to cancel your trip due to illness or for other specified reasons.

You can also buy insurance to cover the cost of illness, accidents or a number of other problems that may occur while you are travelling. Be sure to find out whether an insurance policy you are thinking of buying covers any existing medical problems you may have. If you are using a credit card to pay for your trip, check with the issuer to see what insurance it may automatically provide when you use your card. Consult your airline, your travel agent, an insurance broker or insurance company for a package that suits your specific needs and make sure you understand the contents and applicable restrictions.

As well, you may want to take out additional insurance to cover loss of, or damage to, your baggage for amounts above the liability of the carrier (see Baggage section for more information).

If you are considering travelling with valuable or fragile articles, consult your airline in advance. Some airlines may refuse to transport certain items, or to compensate you for loss, if you don't make arrangements with the airline in advance.

SMOKING > > > > > > > > > >

The *Non-Smokers' Health Act* bans smoking on all commercial flights operated by Canadian air carriers. This ban includes lavatories, which have smoke detectors.

Most, but not all, foreign carriers also restrict smoking on flights.





While air travel is very safe, regulations require standard safety briefings to be provided before take-off, after take-off, when the seat-belt sign is turned on due to turbulence and before landing.

Where a standard safety briefing is insufficient because of the passenger's physical, sensory or comprehension limitations, or because the passenger is responsible for another person on board, regulations require a crew member to provide an individual safety briefing, including additional information applicable to the needs of that passenger, before take-off.

Exit row seats must not be occupied by any passenger whose presence in the seat would adversely affect the safety of others during an evacuation. Passengers seated at emergency exits must be:

- briefed on the operation of the exit;
- able to understand the printed and spoken emergency instructions;
- must be able to determine whether the exits are safe to open;
- must have sufficient mobility, strength and dexterity to reach and operate the emergency exit;
- must be able to adequately communicate information verbally to other passengers; and

- ▶ not responsible for another person on board, as this can hinder the opening of the emergency exit.

If you feel you are unwilling to or incapable of operating an emergency exit, you should ask to be moved to another location.

A safety-features card in the seat pocket will also provide information about the aircraft and the equipment carried on board. Before take-off, you should locate the exit closest to you, as well as an alternative exit.

Keeping your seat belt fastened at all times reduces the possibility of injuries as a result of unexpected turbulence. Listen to the safety briefings carefully and ask the flight attendant to explain anything you don't understand.

It is strongly recommended that you use an approved child restraint device when travelling with infants (anyone who is less than two years old). If you use such a device, you must keep your infant in it during take-off, landing and turbulence, and when directed to do so by a crew member. Ask your airline for information on approved child restraint devices and reduced fares for a seat occupied by an infant in an approved device.

Remember safety is the highest priority on an aircraft and crew members are responsible for the safety of all persons on board. For this reason, regulations require passengers to follow all safety-related directions given by any crew member.

UNRULY PASSENGERS



It is illegal for anyone on board an aircraft to threaten or interfere with crew members or other passengers. If anyone contravenes this law or violates the rights of others, police will meet that person when the plane lands and that person may be arrested, charged and prosecuted. Anyone found guilty will have a criminal record and may face a fine of up to \$100,000, imprisonment for up to five years, or both. Carriers have the right to refuse to transport unruly passengers. This prohibition may extend to subsequent flights, up to and including a lifetime ban.

Examples of unacceptable behaviour include harassment, verbal abuse, physical assault, sexual offenses, intimidating behaviour, intoxicated and disorderly conduct, disregard of smoking prohibitions, consumption of carry-on alcoholic beverages, refusal to follow instructions of the crew and endangerment of the safety of the aircraft or fellow passengers.



As a result of certain commercial agreements among airlines, also known as code sharing, the airline you book with or the carrier appearing in the schedule, may not actually operate your flight. For example, the flight may be operated with a crew and aircraft belonging to another carrier. The carrier you are booking with must advise you of this when you reserve and when you check-in. If you receive a printed itinerary, it must also show which flights are code shares.

Airline tariffs govern the contracts between carriers and their passengers, and set out the terms and conditions related to your travel and ticket. Carriers must give you access to their tariff before or after you buy your ticket. However, you may need to pay a small fee, not exceeding the cost of photocopying, to get a copy of it. A ticket is proof of payment and contains only some of the information that appears in a tariff. If the information on a ticket differs from that found in a tariff, the information in the tariff applies. You should familiarize yourself with the terms and conditions applicable to your ticket.

If you feel that a carrier has not respected its tariff or that the tariff provisions are unreasonable, you may complain to the Agency, which will investigate.

Generally, by law, an air carrier must apply the fares, rates, charges, and terms and conditions of carriage that appear in its tariff. Also, such fares, rates, charges, and terms and conditions of carriage must be reasonable.

If the Agency determines that a carrier has failed to respect its tariff, the Agency may order the carrier to do so. Under some circumstances, the Agency could also order the carrier to compensate passengers for out-of-pocket expenses incurred because the carrier failed to apply its tariff. In addition, in some circumstances the Agency could fine the carrier.

If the Agency finds that a fare, rate, or term and condition of carriage is not reasonable, it may disallow the fare, rate, or term or condition of carriage in question, and may substitute a different term or condition in its place.

An airline's level and quality of services, including the effectiveness and attitude of airline employees fall entirely within the responsibility of airline management. If you are unsatisfied with the quality of service you have received, you should notify the air carrier's management.

If you are unsatisfied with its response, you may complain to the Agency's Air Travel Complaints Commissioner (see page 42).

Is a reservation the same as a confirmation?

No. Making a reservation for a flight does not mean that you hold a confirmation on that flight. Ask your airline or travel agent to ensure that you hold a confirmation on the flight. Or, check the status box on your ticket to be sure it is marked "OK" or "HK". Your travel agent or airline may subsequently provide you with a hard-copy itinerary and receipt that confirm your transportation. Make sure you get a confirmation number when you make your reservations. When you purchase a ticket, particularly if it is an electronic ticket (or e-ticket), it is important to obtain a confirmation number, sometimes referred to as a file locator, for future reference.

Does my reservation mean the price of the ticket is guaranteed?

Many, but not all, carriers will guarantee the price of the ticket once you have paid in full.

When buying your ticket, you may place a deposit with the understanding that you will pay in full by the date required, but this does not guarantee the price you were quoted when you made the reservation. If the price rises between the time of your deposit and full payment, you would be required to pay the new price. The reverse is also true; you may receive a refund if the price drops.

Do I have to confirm my return flight?

Most carriers have stopped requiring passengers to confirm return flights for travel within North America. For travel outside North America, carrier practices vary more widely. When confirmation is required, most airlines will ask you to confirm your return transportation at least 72 hours before the flight. Ask your airline or travel agent whether such a confirmation requirement exists. If it does, be sure to comply or you may find your reservation cancelled and be unable to travel. Whether the airline requires it or not, you should confirm your return flight anyway, as it gives the airline a point of contact should your flight be delayed or cancelled.

Can a ticket be transferred to someone else?

Airlines will generally not allow a ticket purchased by one individual to be transferred to another.

Airlines ask you for identification before you board and will refuse to allow you to board if you have a ticket that was issued to someone else. In addition, the airline may not be liable for irregularities (such as lost baggage or personal injury) if you use a ticket belonging to someone else.

What happens if I lose my ticket?

If you lose your ticket, you may purchase another one for immediate travel and make a claim with the airlines for a refund. If the airline agrees to issue a replacement ticket, it may charge you a re-issuing fee. The best way to avoid this problem is to guard your ticket carefully.

What if I decide not to use a portion of my ticket?

If you change all or part of your travel plans, make sure to advise the airline. If you don't, the airline may cancel the remaining segments of your trip.

What do I do if the airline ceases operations after I have purchased a ticket?

If you have purchased a ticket but have not yet travelled, you should contact your travel agency or the airline that sold you the ticket for help in making alternative arrangements or obtaining a possible refund.

If you are outside Canada, you should contact your travel agent or the airline's representative in the country you are visiting.

If you cannot get help from your agency or airline, or determine whom to contact, the Agency can help you. The Agency's Web site at www.cta.gc.ca may also contain contact and other information related to the situation.

UNACCOMPANIED MINORS



Some carriers accept unaccompanied minors for travel, generally children aged 5 to 11. For a fee, in addition to the air fare itself, the carrier will escort and supervise the children from check-in through arrival at the destination airport. Unaccompanied older children, aged 12 to 17, may also receive special care, again for a fee. Carefully read and understand your airline's terms and conditions for carrying unaccompanied minors. For example, the minor's parent or guardian must remain at the airport until the flight departs, and someone with appropriate identification and prior authorization must be at the destination airport to meet the minor.





Airlines are allowed to set the prices, terms and conditions of their services, since they must operate with economic efficiency to remain financially viable. The terms and conditions are set out in a tariff which can be read at the airline's office. If you wish to have a copy of the tariff, there may be a charge for this service.

Currently, airlines offer a number of different types of air fares. Prices and restrictions depend on a number of market factors, including destination, distance and time of year.

Since air fare types, prices and restrictions vary greatly, it is important that you make enquiries before making a reservation. Discounted tickets usually have more restrictions than more expensive tickets.

What are the different types of air fares?

The price structure of an airline offering a scheduled service includes various types of fares. The structure is based on the premise that full economy fares (normally called "Y" fares in Canada and "coach" fares in the U.S.) must cover the cost of operating that service year round.

On any one flight, different passengers will have likely paid different fares, due to airline marketing strategies and the need to stimulate additional air travel. The following are the basic types of fares:

- Full fares give passengers the most flexibility to book, change or cancel reservations. They have the fewest restrictions of all fares, but are the most costly. These fares may also be divided by class of service into "economy", "business" or "first class". These fares are designed for travellers who require a high degree of flexibility, special amenities, (such as larger seats and more leg room) or both.
- Discount fares give passengers less flexibility to change or cancel reservations, but offer lower prices. The prices, terms and conditions applicable to these fares are based on prevailing market conditions, such as traffic volume, time of year and level of competition. These fares go under many different names or codes, and have a variety of terms and conditions. Short-term discount fares are also known as "seat sales".

Many airlines also offer special discounted fares for seniors, youths, unaccompanied children and very young children. On some airlines, seniors may receive a further 10 percent discount on already discounted fares. Investigate fares carefully, since airlines often offer deeply discounted special fares though you may need to provide proof of age.

A quoted fare is the best fare available for sale when you conduct your fare research. If the fare meets your requirements, you should buy your ticket very quickly, as the number of seats available at discounted fares is limited and low fares may be available only for a short period.

Further, a price quote is only that – a quote. The price is not guaranteed until the ticket has been issued.

If you are flexible regarding the time and day of travel and the airline providing the flight, you can often get a less expensive ticket. Check fares offered by all carriers who serve a route. If you can reach more than one airport within a few hours' drive, you may save money or avoid long layovers by choosing one airport over another.

You may wish to do online fare searches, as many Internet travel sites have tools to help you find the lowest fares. Most of these sites will give you a list of flights available on selected dates, along with the fares available on those flights.

Travel Agents are excellent sources of information. Not only are they aware of seat sales, last minute charter sell offs and other low-fare initiatives offered by travel suppliers, they are in a position to help travelers in many other ways, from arranging hotel and resort accommodations and ground transportation, including car rentals and tour packages. They can also provide assistance with insurance, passport and visa applications, and information on immunization and other foreign travel requirements.

To get the lowest possible fares:

- Begin your fare research early to be aware of the options.
- Reserve your ticket as soon as your travel dates are firm.
- Be prepared to alter your travel dates – many discounted fares require a Saturday night stay or a minimum stay of two to three days.
- Consider flying on certain days of the week or at particular hours of the days when fares are normally lowest.

What about taxes and other charges?

The price you are quoted for a ticket is usually the price the airline sets for the transportation. Some airlines include other charges, such as air navigation fees, in their fares advertised in newspapers or online. However, taxes and surcharges, such as the new Air Travellers Security Charge, are usually extra. Airport improvement fees and fuel surcharges may also apply. Check with your airline or travel agent to find out how much your **total** air travel cost will be, including charges Canadian and foreign airports may levy directly on users at the airport. Before paying a fare, you should ask what the “bottom line” cost is for you.

Am I entitled to a lower fare when I travel for compassionate reasons?

Many, but not all, airlines have policies that allow for partial refund or discount of the full economy fare paid by a traveller who must travel for compassionate reasons (such as death or imminent death of an immediate family member).

Conditions that apply vary greatly. To ensure that your carrier's policy meets the needs of your particular situation, ask the travel agent or airline before you travel and be sure to comply with its requirements.

What are seat sales?

An airline sometimes offers highly discounted excursion fares, also known as seat sales, to stimulate traffic and diminish the potential financial loss associated with operating an aircraft at less than full capacity.

Most airlines will not permit you to exchange tickets you already hold for seat sale tickets. The trick is to be flexible and to book early.

For security reasons, you should put a tag with your name on the outside of each piece of checked baggage.

How much checked baggage may I take?

Airlines allow you to check a certain amount of personal baggage free of charge. Depending on the airline, type of travel, and origin or destination, the amount of allowable baggage may be determined either by the number of pieces or the weight. If you check more than the limit, you may need to pay a fee.

Travel to, from and within North America on scheduled carriers is usually governed by the piece system; elsewhere, the weight system prevails. Be careful when connecting from a domestic flight to an international flight. You may find that the baggage allowed on your domestic flight exceeds the allowable weight for free baggage on your international flight. If this happens, you may face a sizeable charge for excess baggage.

For infants under age two who are travelling free or on reduced fares, there is no baggage allowance. For children over two, travelling on reduced fares, the same baggage allowance as for adult passengers applies.

What can I carry onto the airplane?

Safety regulations require airlines to ensure that the total amount of carry-on baggage on an aircraft does not exceed the plane's weight, size, shape and total volume limitations. New security restrictions also forbid passengers to carry certain articles on board an aircraft (see the Security section on page 8).

As every airline operates different types of planes, each airline is responsible for ensuring that all carry-on baggage can be stowed on board.

Any item brought into an aircraft cabin is considered carry-on baggage and is therefore subject to size and placement restrictions. If any of your carry-on baggage exceeds these restrictions, you will have to check it. If your checked baggage plus the items you were not allowed to bring on board the aircraft exceeds the maximum allowable total weight or number of pieces, you may have to pay excess baggage charges. Please contact your airline for details.

Never carry anything onto a plane for someone else.

What can I do to minimize baggage problems?

Here are some packing tips:

- ▶ Use baggage sturdy enough to withstand handling.
- ▶ If you have to force a piece of baggage closed, it is too full. Airline companies will not pay for damage caused by over-packing.
- ▶ Lock your baggage.
- ▶ Label all baggage with your name and the name of a contact person or hotel at your destination. Put your name, address and telephone number inside each piece of baggage, so that your bags can be identified even if the outside tag is accidentally torn off.
- ▶ Brightly coloured and distinctive labels or straps can help you identify your baggage on crowded carousels.
- ▶ Make an inventory of the contents of your checked baggage and place it in your ticket jacket.
- ▶ Remove all old airline baggage tags.

You should carry the following items with you on board:

- ▶ valuable, perishable or essential items;
- ▶ your passport, wallet, identification card and return tickets;

- an inventory of the contents of your checked baggage (in case the baggage is lost or damaged);
- essential overnight items (in case your baggage is delayed or lost); and
- essential medicines and medical devices, such as insulin, prosthetic wear, glasses and contact lens kits, prescription medicine should be in its original container with the name of the doctor and other information clearly marked.

When you check your baggage, you will get a baggage claim check. Keep it in case your bags are lost, delayed or damaged; it proves you checked your baggage. It may be difficult to substantiate a claim for lost baggage without your baggage claims.

What do I do if my bags are lost, delayed or damaged?

Most airlines specify that lost, delayed or damaged baggage must be reported within a certain time limit. Your claim may not be accepted if you exceed the time limit. Once you realize your baggage is missing or damaged, report the problem as soon as possible to the airline, before leaving the airport.

If your baggage cannot be found, have the airline representative complete the appropriate documentation and get a copy. Double-check all statements to be sure they are accurate. Tracing procedures will start at this time.

How can I speed up the tracing process?

Be sure to report the information accurately and completely. After a few days, if your baggage has not been located, file a claim listing the missing items and their value. It may take a while to settle your claim, especially if more than one airline is involved. Keep copies of the loss report and other forms, airline documents (such as tickets and baggage claim checks) and correspondence while the claim is in progress. If you used more than one carrier for your journey, you should report your loss to the final carrier that brought you to your destination, even if you are aware that your bags were lost earlier en route. Under international rules, if you have a through ticket for all stages of your trip, the final airline is responsible for tracing your lost baggage and processing your claim.

During the claim process, keep in touch with the airline's claims department. If the airline takes a long time to settle your claim, or if you are not satisfied with the result, you may wish to contact the Agency's Air Travel Complaints Commissioner.

Will I receive any compensation before the claim is settled?

Some airlines provide immediate cash relief for lost or delayed baggage. Save receipts for any expenses you incur as a result of the lost or delay of your baggage; you will need these to substantiate your claim.

Any interim payments may be considered an advance against any subsequent claim for loss or delay. The airline will take them into account when calculating a final settlement. In some cases, you may be able to claim the difference between what the airline pays and the actual loss under your household insurance policy. If you purchased your trip with a credit card, the credit card company may also cover any loss.

What is the airline's liability for lost, delayed or damaged baggage?

Airlines have limited liability, for the loss, delay or damage of baggage. Ask your carrier what its limits of liability are.

On international flights, the airline's liability may be subject to the provisions of the *Warsaw Convention*, which limits liability to a set amount per kilogram of checked baggage.

If you believe that a carrier's liability limit does not cover the value of your baggage, you should declare a higher value at check-in and purchase additional insurance from your carrier.

Airlines will not normally compensate you for more than the actual loss you have suffered.

Are any items excluded from the airline's liability?

Yes. Fragile, valuable and perishable items may be excluded. Certain other items are not usually considered baggage and are, therefore, excluded from the airline's liability. They include money, jewellery, silverware, negotiable papers, securities, business documents, prototypes, electronics and office equipment. You should carry such items with you. Check with your airline for details.

What if I forget something on the aircraft or in the airport?

Articles lost at an airport, on ground transportation vehicles, at airport lounges, or left on an aircraft after landing, are not usually the carrier's responsibility. However, airlines and airports operate lost-and-found departments and you should check with them for your lost items.



DELAYS AND CANCELLATIONS > >

Scheduled airlines must operate their flights in accordance with their service schedule, although delays and cancellations can result from bad weather, mechanical problems or other conditions affecting safety. Charter carrier flights are subject to change without notice (see the section on Charter Flights for more information). You should call the airline a few hours before you plan to leave to confirm that your flight is expected to leave on time. Many airports now post arrival and departure information on their Web sites as well. Generally speaking, timetables are subject to change without notice to passengers and airlines assume no responsibility for ensuring that their passengers make their connections to other flights.

Carriers do not usually accept responsibility for costs incurred as a result of flight delays or cancellations. However, in cases of long delays, some carriers will give you vouchers for food and overnight accommodations, if you ask for them.



OVER-BOOKING AND DENIED BOARDING



Airlines over-book their flights (confirm more seats than are available) because some passengers make reservations and then change their plans at the last minute, without cancelling their reservations.

If the aircraft is over-booked and too few passengers volunteer to take another flight, some passengers with confirmed reservations will be “bumped” from the flight. This practice can inconvenience passengers. The compensation for such involuntary denied boarding varies from carrier to carrier, as set out in their tariffs.

What can I do to avoid being “bumped”?

You can take some precautions to minimize the chances of being bumped:

- ▶ Understand the airline’s policies for honouring reservations on oversold flights (these are contained in the airline’s tariff).
- ▶ Since late-arriving passengers are usually the ones bumped, arrive at the airport in plenty of time to check-in, clear security and reach the gate (remember that line-ups are common).
- ▶ Check-in as soon as you arrive at the airport and obtain your boarding pass at that point or at the departure area, as soon as possible after checking in.

What happens if I am “bumped”?

Passengers bumped will usually be placed on the next available flight. If you are bumped, you should not leave the check-in area or try to make your own flight arrangements. Airline personnel will usually help you find another flight.

Some airlines may also provide denied boarding compensation in the form of vouchers for future travel or cash. Major airlines usually provide such compensation for travel within Canada or between Canada and the United States. Some foreign airlines may not provide denied boarding compensation for flights into or out of Canada. Check with your airline for details.

If you accept compensation, your acceptance may be considered a full settlement of all claims and may prevent you from taking further action against the airline as a result of the incident. If you feel the compensation offered is inadequate, complain to your carrier in writing. If you are not satisfied with the carrier's response, you may complain to the Agency's Air Travel Complaints Commissioner.

What happens to my checked baggage if I'm “bumped”?

If there is sufficient time, your bags will be retrieved and returned to you before the aircraft departs. However, as passengers are often bumped at the gate just minutes before departure, your bags may leave on the aircraft you

were unable to board. You should be able to find your baggage when you arrive at your destination. If you arrive quite a bit later than your bags, the airline's baggage agent may have put them away for safekeeping. If your bags can not be found, file a claim.

If taking a particular flight is important to you, you should check-in early.

CHARTER FLIGHTS



In the case of charter flights, airlines contract with a tour operator for part or all of the passenger seating capacity of an aircraft. The tour operator then sells the aircraft seats to the public, usually through a travel agent. Therefore, the passenger contracts with the tour operator, not the airline.

Regulations governing charter flights differ from those applying to regularly scheduled flights. Changes in the type of aircraft, days of operation, airline company and itinerary may be more likely on charter flights than they are on scheduled flights, and these changes can occur without notice.

All other terms and conditions of carriage, including the price of the flight, are established by the tour operator and are usually found in the brochure promoting the flight or package.

The airline's principal responsibilities to the passengers relate to loss, delay or damage of baggage, and injury to or death of passengers.

You should bring any complaints about charter flights to the attention of both the tour operator and the carrier. If you are unsatisfied with their response concerning the air travel part of your package, you may complain to the Agency's Air Travel Complaints Commissioner.

AIR TRAVEL REWARD PROGRAMS ➤

Air travel reward programs, also known as frequent flyer programs, reward travellers for their loyalty to a particular airline. Travellers earn points for flights taken; the number of points is often related to the distance flown and class of service. At various thresholds, travellers can redeem points for upgrades (from economy to business class, for example) or for future flights. While the basic concept behind each carrier's frequent flyer program is similar, the programs vary in terms of how rapidly points are earned and how they are redeemed. Most programs are associated directly with the name of a carrier and its alliance partners.

If you encounter a problem when trying to use accumulated points with an airline-administered frequent flyer program and cannot resolve it, you may contact the Agency's Air Travel Complaints Commissioner for assistance.

Many commercial enterprises, such as credit cards issuers, also offer frequent flyer programs. These may be linked to purchases on a particular card or from particular companies.

One characteristic of non-airline frequent flyer programs is that they are not associated with a particular airline and they offer travel on multiple and non-allied carriers.

If you encounter problems with such a program and you cannot resolve them to your satisfaction, you should contact your provincial government's consumer protection agency. A current list is kept on the Agency's Web site.

Should you enroll in an air travel reward program?

The answer depends on many factors, such as your spending habits, your willingness to use a credit card, your annual spending on the card or with participating companies and your objective (that is, the trip you would like to take with your points). You should read all the literature relating to a particular program carefully to see whether its terms and conditions are compatible with your goals.



A publication called *Taking Charge of the Air Travel Experience: A Guide for Persons with Disabilities* is available from the Agency and complements this brochure. It provides useful information on accessible features and services available to persons with disabilities travelling by air. It also offers tips on flying to, from and within Canada.

Reservation Checklist: Air Travel is also a tool available to travel agents and air travellers making arrangements for travellers with disabilities. It lists the services air carriers should provide, such as helping passengers with disabilities get to the boarding gate, providing specific seating and transporting mobility aids.

Under the *Canada Transportation Act*, the Agency has the authority to order the removal of undue obstacles to the mobility of persons with disabilities or to order the taking of corrective measures where it determines that an undue obstacle exists in the federally regulated transportation system.

The Agency's authority applies to all transportation services governed by the *Canada Transportation Act*, including:

- air carriers and airports;
- passenger rail carriers and stations; and
- interprovincial ferry services and terminals.

Under the *Canada Transportation Act*, the Agency can investigate complaints filed by or on behalf of travellers with disabilities to determine whether they face undue obstacles while travelling. If you cannot resolve such a complaint with the transportation service provider, you can ask the Agency for a copy of the *Accessibility Complaint Guide* can be requested or you can file a complaint online at www.cta.gc.ca.

Regulations and Codes of Practice (Air, Rail, Ferry) are administered by the Agency and relate to the elimination of undue obstacles with respect to the above matters and contribute to the goal of barrier-free travel. Copies of the Air Travel Accessibility Regulations and the Codes of Practice are available on request.

Additional information on the Agency's accessibility program, copies of the brochures, and the Codes of Practice are available on the Agency's Web site. (contact information is listed at the end of this brochure).





If you have tried resolving a complaint about your travel experience with an airline and you are still unsatisfied, the Agency and its Air Travel Complaints Commissioner can help you. The Air Travel Complaints Commissioner will try to resolve it either directly with you and the airline, or in cooperation with other parts of the Agency and other government organizations.

Canadian and foreign air carriers must publish and comply with their tariffs which contain the terms and conditions of carriage that apply to your flight. Carriers must establish policies to address such topics as; lost baggage, involuntary denied boarding (“bumping”) and the transportation of persons with disabilities, and minors. Their terms and conditions of carriage must be reasonable and not unduly discriminatory. If you think that such terms and conditions are unreasonable or that an airline has not respected them, and you cannot resolve your concerns with the airline, you can complain to the Agency.

Generally speaking, the Government of Canada believes that market forces are the best way to ensure reasonable prices for all Canadians. For the most part, air fares for travel within Canada are not subject to government approval. Where there is meaningful competition on a domestic route, airlines are free to set their own prices based on their analysis of market conditions.

In July 2000, the *Canada Transportation Act* was amended to protect air travel consumers from unreasonable prices on routes within Canada on which there is no, or very limited, competition by giving the Agency the power to investigate airline prices and to take remedial action against the carrier. If it is your contention that an air carrier, including its affiliates, is the only carrier providing a domestic service between two points within Canada, and that a fare, cargo rate or an increase in a fare or cargo rate published or offered by the carrier is unreasonable or that the range of fares offered is inadequate, you can complain to the Agency.



QUESTIONS AND COMPLAINT FILING



If you have any questions about matters covered in this booklet, or if you wish to register a complaint, contact the Agency at the address or numbers listed below. The Agency can also give you the names, addresses and telephone numbers of airline offices to which you can send a complaint. For Accessible complaints filing, see the Travellers With Disabilities section.

Canadian Transportation Agency

Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0N9

Toll-free telephone: 1-888-222-2592

(Canada and the United States)

TTY : 1- 800- 669- 5575 (Canada)

Fax: (819) 953-5686

OTHER SOURCES AND CONTACTS ➤

Here are some useful documents that other Government of Canada organizations have produced relating to air travel. You may obtain these by mail, by telephone or online www.passages.gc.ca/template-e.asp.

Animal Health Division

Canadian Food Inspection Agency

59 Camelot Drive

Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0Y9

Telephone: (613) 225-2342

Fax: (613) 228-6631

Web: www.inspection.gc.ca

- *Travellers and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency*
- *Foot and Mouth Disease: Information for Travellers*
- *What Can I Bring to Canada?*
- *Help Keep Canada Free of Foot and Mouth Disease*
- *Be Aware – You Must Declare*

Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

Lester B. Pearson Building
125 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0G2

Telephone: 1-800-267-8376

E-mail: enqserv@dfait-maeci.gc.ca

Web: www.dfait.gc.ca

- *Bon Voyage, But... Information for the Canadian Traveller*
- *How to Obtain a Passport*
- *Lost and Stolen Passports*
- *Travel Reports – Security, Visas and Health Concerns*
- *Weekly Travel Bulletin – Warnings*
- *Consular Services – Assistance for Canadians Abroad*

Citizenship and Immigration Canada

365 Laurier Avenue West
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 1L1

Telephone: (613) 954-1064

Fax: (613) 952-5533

E-mail: coderd@pral.gc.ca

Web: www.cic.gc.ca

- *Do You Want to Visit Canada?*

Health Canada

A.L. 0904A

Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0K9

Telephone: (613) 957-2991

Fax: (613) 941-5366

Web: www.hc-sc.gc.ca

- *Health Advice for Travellers*
- *Health Canada – Information for Travellers*
- *Advisories for Travellers – International Outbreaks of Disease*
- *Immunizations Recommended for Travel Abroad*

Canada Customs and Revenue Agency

Offices are located across Canada. For the address and phone number of the one nearest you, or to find out how you can obtain one of the following documents, call 1-800-959-2221 or go to Web: www.ccr-aadrc.gc.ca.

- *Information for Canadian Residents Travelling Abroad*
- *I Declare – A Guide for Canadian Residents Returning to Canada*

Transport Canada

Tower C, Place de Ville
330 Sparks Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0N5

Telephone: (613) 990-2309 or 998- 5111

Fax: (613) 954-4731 or 998-8620

E-mail: webfeedback@tc.gc.ca

Web: www.tc.gc.ca

➤ *Tips for Air Passengers*

To see either of the next two documents on the Web, go to www.tc.gc.ca/air/menu.htm.

- *In Flight Safety for Persons with Disabilities – Frequently Asked Questions*
- *Aircraft Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities*