

Canadian  
Transportation  
Agency



Office  
des transports  
du Canada

# ***Fly Smart***

C

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# INTRODUCTION

To help make your flight as smooth as possible, the Canadian Transportation 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 which you are unable to resolve with your air carrier, the Canadian Transportation Agency is ready to respond to complaints regarding some of the problems you may encounter when travelling by air. For more information, read the *Complaints* section of this booklet or call toll-free: 1-888-222-2592. You can also visit the Agency's Web site at [www.cta.gc.ca](http://www.cta.gc.ca).

Your travel agent, air carrier and the contacts listed at the end of this booklet are also valuable sources of information if you are to Fly Smart.

*Note: The content of this booklet is accurate to the best of our knowledge at the time of printing. It is to be used for general information purposes only. We welcome any comments you may have to improve this booklet.*

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business  
travel



← Gates A35 to A75 →

Gate  
A56

→ Gates A1 to A30 →  
→ Concessions E and C  
→ 0006 terminal

# **CONTENTS**

Travel Documents .....	2
Air Fares .....	6
Insurance .....	11
Reservations, Ticketing and Check-In .....	12
Baggage .....	17
Customs .....	25
Airport Security .....	26
Personal Safety .....	28
Unruly Passengers .....	31
Delays and Cancellations .....	32
Over-Booking and Denied Boarding .....	33
Charter Flights .....	35
Travellers with Disabilities .....	36
Unaccompanied Minors .....	38
Complaints .....	39
Other Sources and Contacts .....	43

## Do I need a passport?

If you are planning to travel outside Canada, you will most likely require a passport and, in some instances, a visa. Your passport is the only proof of your Canadian citizenship and identity that is accepted in all countries. Make sure that the expiry date of your passport is more than six months after your planned return to Canada since some countries will not admit someone whose passport is close to expiration.

As of January 23, 2007, Canadians flying or transiting by air into the United States will require a passport. Passport Canada encourages Canadians who will be travelling outside the country to obtain a passport.

You are responsible for finding out about passport, visa and vaccination requirements for your destination. Travel agencies and air carriers may provide information but it is not their responsibility to ensure you have the necessary documents. Air carriers may refuse transportation to passengers who do not have the appropriate or valid travel documents.

Should you not have a passport or should you need to renew it, allow the Passport Office 10 working days to process your application if you are applying in person and 20 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. Do not pack your passport in your checked baggage and do not leave it in your hotel room. Carry a photocopy of the identification page of your passport and keep it separate from your passport; also, leave a second photocopy at home.

## **What if I travel with children?**

Canadian children who travel outside the country need their own passports. Customs officials are looking for missing children and may ask questions about 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 and by Canadian authorities upon your return.

Different rules apply to different family relationships:

- ▶ When a minor child, as defined by the destination country, 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 and deny entry to foreigners. You may require visas, entry and exit permits, and health certificates when entering a country. You must plan ahead since these documents may be difficult or even impossible to obtain at your point of entry. To avoid possible delays or even detention, consult a travel agent or the diplomatic or consular mission of the countries concerned prior to departure. Allow enough time for processing of visas and other documents.

You should also ask your air carrier which travel documents you should have before check-in to avoid confusion at that time. Some countries may require that you show the return portion of your air ticket and other documentation upon your arrival. For further information about travel documents, contact Foreign Affairs Canada which publishes travel reports about various countries on its

Web site under its *Consular Affairs* section. Canada has embassies and consular missions in many countries to provide assistance. Many foreign countries also have embassies or consular missions in Canada.

Permanent residents returning to Canada now require a valid Permanent Resident Card before boarding the airplane. For more information, consult Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

## **Do I need a certificate of vaccination?**

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. It is best to determine what vaccinations, if any, you will need well ahead of departure. Verify once again before leaving, since health regulations can change with little notice and some vaccines take time to be effective.

For further information, contact a doctor, your municipal, provincial or territorial department of health, or the Public Health Agency of Canada. You can find travel health advice for various countries on Foreign Affairs Canada's Web site.

Before travelling with pets, make sure they will be allowed to enter the foreign country and that they have had the appropriate vaccinations. Have proof of this in your possession.

# AIR FARES

Within certain limits, air carriers are allowed to set their own prices and terms and conditions of service. These are set out in a tariff. For more information about tariffs, see the box in the *Complaints* section of this booklet.

Air carriers 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. It is important that you make enquiries before making a reservation since air fare types, prices and restrictions vary greatly.

## **What are the different types of air fares?**

The price structure of an air carrier 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 likely have paid different fares due to air carrier marketing strategies and the periodic need to stimulate additional air travel.

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." They are designed for travellers

who require 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 and terms and conditions applicable to these fares are based on 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.

Many air carriers offer special discount fares for seniors, youths, unaccompanied children and very young children. Investigate fares thoroughly since they may come with special conditions that may not meet your needs.

If the fare meets your requirements, you should consider buying your ticket quickly, as the number of seats available at discounted fares can be limited and low fares may be available only for a short period. Remember, a price quote is only that, a quote. The price is not fixed until the ticket has been issued.

You can often get a less expensive ticket if you are flexible regarding the time and day of travel and the air carrier providing the flight. Check fares offered by all air carriers that 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. They are aware of seat sales, last minute sell-offs and other low-fare initiatives offered by travel suppliers. As well, they are in a position to help travellers in other ways, such as arranging hotel, 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 options.
- › Reserve your ticket as soon as your travel dates are firm.
- › Be prepared to alter your travel dates as some 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 day when fares are normally lower.

## **What about taxes and other charges?**

The price you are quoted for a ticket is usually the price the air carrier sets for air transportation. Some air carriers include other charges, such as air navigation fees, in their advertised fares in newspapers or online. Taxes and carrier-imposed surcharges are usually extra. Airport improvement fees may also apply.

Check with your air carrier or travel agent to find out how much your total air travel cost will be, including all additional charges. Before paying a fare, you should determine what the “bottom line” cost is.

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

Some air carriers have policies that allow for partial refund or discount of the round-trip 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 air carrier’s policy meets the needs of your particular situation, ask your travel agent or air carrier before you travel and be sure to comply with requirements.

## What are “seat sales”?

Short-term discount fares are also known as “seat sales.” An air carrier sometimes offers highly discounted excursion fares to stimulate traffic and diminish the potential financial loss associated with operating an airplane at less than full capacity. Most air carriers will not permit you to exchange seat sale tickets, which may be highly restricted in such areas as charges or refunds.

## **INSURANCE**

It is strongly recommended that you buy travel insurance in case you need to cancel your trip due to illness or other specified problems that may occur, either prior to departure or while travelling. As well, you may want to take out additional insurance to cover loss of, or damage to, your baggage for amounts above the liability offered by the air carrier. (See *Baggage* section.)

Be sure to find out whether the 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 find out what insurance it may provide.

Consult your air carrier, travel agent or insurance company for a package that suits your specific needs and make sure you understand the contents and restrictions.



## **RESERVATIONS, TICKETING AND CHECK-IN**

Air carrier tariffs govern the contracts between carriers and their passengers, and set out the terms and conditions related to tickets and travel. Upon request, air carriers must give you access to their tariffs. However, you may need to pay a small fee, not exceeding the cost of photocopying, to receive a copy.

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 governing your travel.

The air carrier with which you book or the carrier appearing in the schedule may not actually operate your flight as a result of certain commercial agreements among air carriers. For example, the flight may be operated with a crew and airplane belonging to another carrier. The carrier you are booking with must advise you of this fact when you reserve and when you check in. If you receive a printed itinerary, it must also show which flights are "code shares." However, regardless of which carrier actually operates your flight, the terms and conditions of carriage that apply to you are those of the carrier that issued your ticket.

## **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 air carrier or travel agent to ensure that you hold a confirmation on the flight.

Your travel agent or air carrier should provide you with a hard-copy itinerary and receipt that confirm your transportation. For future reference, make sure you get a confirmation number when you make your reservations, particularly if it is an electronic ticket.

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

Many air carriers, but not all, 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 may be required to pay the new price. The reverse is also true; you may receive a refund if the price is reduced.

## **Do I have to confirm my return flight?**

Most air carriers have stopped requiring passengers to confirm return flights for travel within North America. For travel outside North America, carriers' practices vary more widely.

When confirmation is required, most air carriers will ask you to confirm your return transportation at least 72 hours before the flight. Failure to comply with this requirement could result in the cancellation of your reservation and you may be unable to travel.

Ask your air carrier or travel agent whether such a confirmation requirement exists. However, whether the air carrier requires it or not, confirming your return flight gives the air carrier a point of contact should your flight be advanced, delayed or cancelled.

## **How long in advance should I check in before my flight?**

Always verify with your air carrier to determine how long in advance of your flight time you must check in. You should arrive at the airport in plenty of time to check in, clear security and reach the departure gate. Check in as soon as you arrive at the airport and obtain your boarding pass.

Check-in times vary from carrier to carrier. Be sure to comply with your carrier's check-in time limit or you may be refused transportation on your flight with no liability on the part of the carrier.

## **What are my options for check-in?**

Some air carriers offer self-service kiosks to improve service at check-in. These kiosks allow passengers to bypass the more traditional check-in counter. Some air carriers have gone a step further and enable their passengers to check in via the Internet before they leave for the airport.

## **Can a ticket be transferred to someone else?**

Air carriers will generally not allow a ticket purchased by one individual to be transferred to another. Air carriers ask you for identification and will refuse to let you board the airplane if you have a ticket issued to someone else. Furthermore, the air carrier may not be liable for irregularities, such as lost baggage or personal injury, if you travel on a ticket belonging to someone else.

## **What happens if I lose my ticket?**

If you lose your ticket, you may be required to purchase another one for immediate travel. To obtain a refund of the replacement ticket, you must file a claim with your air carrier. However, the carrier may charge you a lost-ticket

fee. Refunds for lost tickets may take up to twelve months, depending on the carrier's internal policies.

## **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 air carrier as soon as possible. If you do not, the air carrier may cancel the remaining segments of your trip. Depending on the terms and conditions of the fare paid, you may be subject to a change fee or cancellation penalty.

## **What if the air carrier ceases operations after I have purchased a ticket?**

If you have purchased a ticket but have not yet travelled or if you have initiated travel but it has not yet been completed and your air carrier ceases operations, you should immediately contact your travel agency or other transportation providers to make alternative travel arrangements. If you have an unused ticket, you may be eligible for a refund from your travel agency, your credit card company or certain provincial government authorities.

The Canadian Transportation Agency may be able to help you if you cannot determine whom to contact. The Agency's Web site ([www.cta.gc.ca](http://www.cta.gc.ca)) may contain contact and other information related to the situation.

# **BAGGAGE**

You should put a tag with your name and, if possible, contact information at your destination on the outside of each piece of checked baggage. It is advisable to place a tag with similar information inside your bags in the event that the external tag is damaged or removed.

## **How much checked baggage may I take?**

Air carriers allow you to check a specified amount of personal baggage free of charge. The amount of allowable baggage may be determined either by the number of pieces or the weight of your bags, depending on the air carrier, type of travel and origin or destination. If you check more than the limit, you may need to pay a fee.

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

Weight and piece limitations can vary from one carrier to the next and from one size of airplane to another. If you have a connecting flight and the second carrier has a smaller limitation than your initial carrier, you may be required to pay an excess-baggage fee.

## What can I carry onto the airplane?

Safety regulations require air carriers to ensure that the total amount of carry-on baggage on an airplane takes into account the plane's weight, size, shape and total volume limitations. Security restrictions also forbid passengers from carrying certain articles on board an airplane, whether in the passenger cabin or baggage compartment. (See *Airport Security* section.)

Any item brought into an airplane 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, including the items you were not allowed to bring on board the airplane, exceeds the maximum allowable total weight or number of pieces, you may have to pay excess-baggage charges.

As air carriers operate different types of planes, each air carrier is responsible for ensuring that all carry-on baggage can be stowed safely on board. Contact your air carrier 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 to close it, it is too full; air carriers will not pay for damage caused by over-packing.
- ▶ 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 if the outside tag is accidentally torn off or removed.
- ▶ Brightly coloured and distinctive labels or straps can help you identify your baggage on carousels.
- ▶ Make an inventory of the contents of your checked baggage and place it in your ticket jacket.
- ▶ Remove all old air carrier baggage tags.

You should carry the following items with you on board:

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

- › medicines and medical devices, such as insulin, prosthetics, glasses and contact lens kits (prescription medicine should be in its original container with the name of the doctor and other information clearly marked)
- › essential overnight items in case your baggage is delayed or lost
- › your laptop computer, electronic equipment and cameras

When you check your baggage, you will receive a baggage claim check. Keep it in case your bags are lost, delayed or damaged. It may be difficult to substantiate a claim without your baggage claim check.

If you are considering travelling with valuable or fragile articles, consult your air carrier in advance. Some air carriers may refuse to transport certain items, or to compensate you for loss, if you do not make arrangements with the air carrier in advance.

## **What do I do if my bags are lost, delayed or damaged, or items are missing from my bags?**

If your baggage or items from your baggage are missing or damaged, you should report this immediately to your air carrier, ideally before you leave the airport. If you used more than one air carrier for your journey, you should report it to the final carrier that brought you to your destination, even

if you are aware that it happened earlier en route. Double-check all statements and information on the air carrier's report. Ensure that it is accurate and complete. Keep in mind that this initial report does not constitute a claim for compensation.

If your baggage is not found or if you incur expenses as a result of your missing baggage, you may file a claim for compensation. Contact your air carrier to obtain a claim form. Your claim must be submitted in writing and should list the missing and damaged items and their value. Any out-of-pocket expenses that you incurred should be accompanied by receipts.

Keep copies of the report and other forms, as well as documents such as tickets and baggage claim checks, receipts and correspondence, while the claim is in progress. During the process, keep in touch with the air carrier's claims department.

If the air carrier takes a long time to settle your claim or if you are not satisfied with the result, you may contact the Canadian Transportation Agency.

Be aware that most air carriers set specific time limits for reporting and claiming baggage mishandling. Ask your air carrier about its time limits.

## **Will I receive any compensation before the claim is settled?**

Some air carriers provide immediate cash relief for lost or delayed baggage. Save receipts for any expenses you incur as a result of the loss, damage or delay of your baggage since 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 air carrier will take these into account when calculating a final settlement.

In some cases, you may be able to claim the difference between what the air carrier 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 your loss.

## **What is the air carrier's liability for lost, damaged or delayed baggage?**

Air carriers have limited liability for lost, damaged or delayed baggage. Air carriers will not normally compensate you for more than the actual loss you have suffered and you will likely be required to provide proof of loss.

Ask about your air carrier's domestic limits of liability. The amounts vary greatly among air carriers. On international flights, the air carrier's liability will, in most cases, be subject to the provisions of the *Montreal Convention* which prescribes a maximum amount of compensation per passenger.

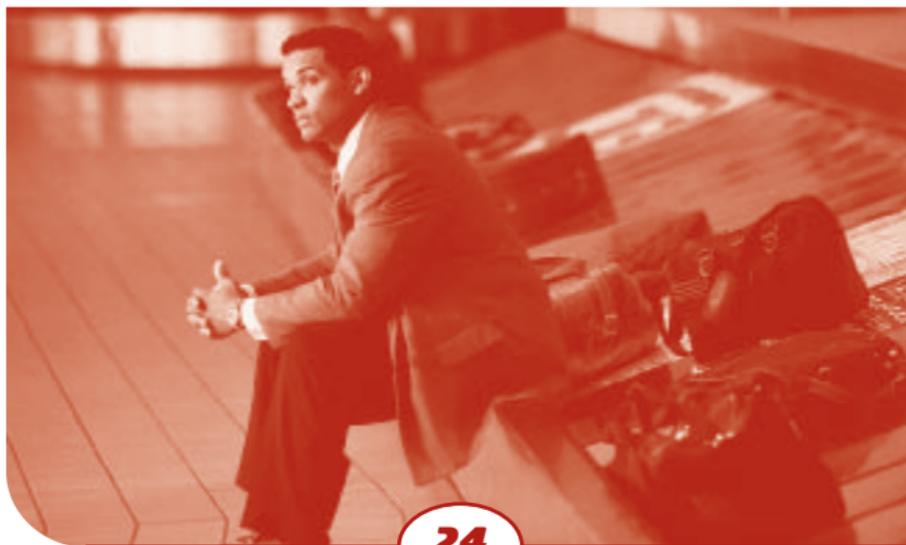
If, in your opinion, the limit of liability is too low, consider declaring a higher value for your baggage and buying additional insurance to obtain better compensation in case your baggage is lost, damaged or delayed. Keep in mind that not all air carriers may allow for the declaration of excess value and there is usually a charge associated with such a declaration.

### **Are any items excluded from the air carrier's liability?**

Yes. Fragile, valuable and perishable items are generally excluded. Certain other items are also usually excluded from the air carrier's liability. These include money, jewellery, silverware, negotiable papers, securities, business documents, prototypes, electronics and office equipment. You should carry such items with you on board the airplane. Check with your air carrier for details.

## **What if I forget something on the airplane or in the airport?**

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



## ***CUSTOMS***

When you enter a foreign country or on return to Canada, you will be required to go through Customs and Immigration services upon arrival. 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 your airport of departure.

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 to Canada, you will be asked to declare all goods you have acquired outside the country and you may be required to pay duty and taxes. For further information about importing goods into Canada, contact the Canada Border Services Agency.



## **AIRPORT SECURITY**

The Canadian Air Transport Security Authority (CATSA) assumes full operational responsibility for pre-board screening of air passengers and their belongings. The security measures are intended to ensure the safety and security of the travelling public.

Be sure to have valid photo identification for domestic flights and your passport for international flights. Be prepared to show it at the check-in counter and at the boarding gate.

At the security screening checkpoint, you will be required to remove all outerwear and any metal objects, like coins and keys. If you activate the alarm, security staff must search you again by hand or with a hand-held metal detector. Carry-on baggage is sent separately through an X-ray machine, and may be searched manually by security staff. Passengers may also be selected at random for additional screening procedures, even if they do not alarm the metal detector. If you refuse to undergo security screening, you will not be allowed past security screening and air carriers will not allow you to board the airplane.

Passengers are not permitted to carry unauthorized weapons and explosives through pre-board screening. Potentially dangerous articles, such as pocket knives, scissors and tools such as screwdrivers, must not be put in carry-on baggage. Articles considered as dangerous goods,

such as gasoline, are prohibited in both your carry-on and checked baggage. You can carry electronic devices, such as cell phones and laptops, but security may be required to do additional tests. Do not wrap gifts, as security personnel may need to open them for inspection.

Liquids, aerosols and gels are permitted on Canadian flights provided they are in 100 ml/100 g/3.4 oz containers and are placed in a 1 litre resealable, transparent plastic bag. A single bag is allowed per person. Liquid prescription and essential non-prescription drugs are allowed without any restriction.

Infant formula, baby food, milk, water and juice are permitted in carry-on baggage when the passenger is accompanied by a child of two years or less.

To speed up the security procedure, passengers should place all liquids, aerosols and gels in the bins provided at the entrance of the checkpoint. If you are unsure about a particular item, contact your air carrier or CATSA in advance to determine whether it is permitted.

While this section of the booklet highlights current security procedures, enhanced security measures can be implemented at any time at airports across Canada or elsewhere. Therefore, always allow sufficient time before your flight to undergo security screening.

## **PERSONAL SAFETY**

Regulations require passengers to follow all safety-related directions given by any crew member. Standard safety briefings will be provided before and after take-off, when the seat belt sign is turned on due to turbulence and before landing.

A crew member is required to give an individual safety briefing before take-off when a standard safety briefing is insufficient because of a passenger's physical, sensory or comprehension limitations. A briefing is also necessary if a passenger is responsible for another person on board. That briefing includes additional information applicable to the needs of the passenger. (See *Travellers with Disabilities* section.)

Exit-row seats must not be occupied by any passenger whose presence would adversely affect the safety of others during an evacuation. Passengers seated beside an emergency exit must be:

- ▶ briefed on the operation of the exit;
- ▶ able to understand the printed and spoken emergency instructions;
- ▶ able to determine whether the exit is safe to open;

- › sufficiently mobile, strong and able to reach and operate the emergency exit;
- › able to adequately communicate information verbally to other passengers; and
- › not responsible for another person on board.

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

A safety-features card, located in the seat pocket in front of you, will provide information about the airplane and the equipment carried on board. Before take-off, you should consult it and 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 do not understand.

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

While at your destination, make sure your air carrier knows how to reach you in case flights are advanced, delayed or cancelled for various reasons, including natural disasters and social or political upheaval. Foreign Affairs Canada provides information and advice about safe travel in foreign countries through its Consular Affairs Bureau.

## **UNRULY PASSENGERS**

It is illegal for anyone on board an airplane to threaten or interfere with crew members or other passengers. If anyone contravenes this law or violates the rights of others, he or she may be restrained. Police will likely be requested to meet the airplane upon arrival and the contravener may be arrested, charged and prosecuted.

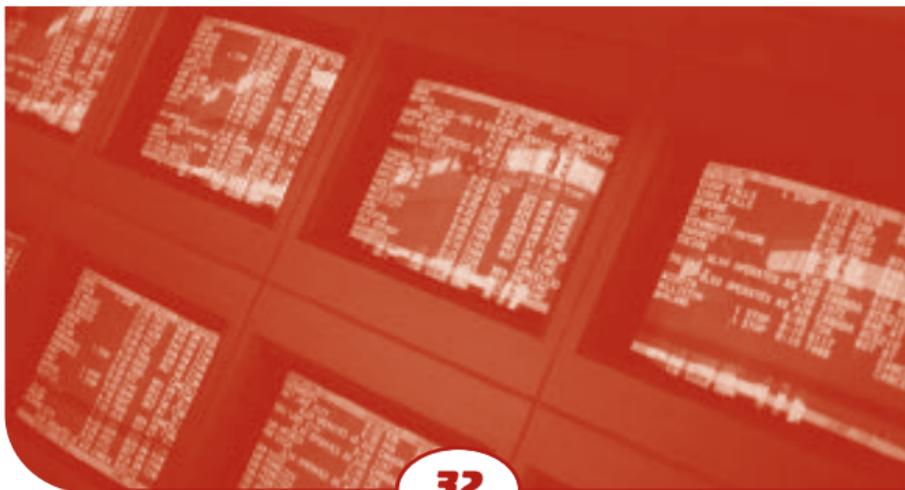
Air carriers have the right to refuse to transport unruly passengers. This prohibition may extend to subsequent flights, up to and including a lifetime ban. Examples of unacceptable behaviour include intoxicated and disorderly conduct, harassment, verbal abuse, physical assault, sexual offences, intimidating behaviour, disregard of smoking prohibitions, consumption of carry-on alcoholic beverages, refusal to follow instructions of the crew and endangering the safety of the airplane or fellow passengers.

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 foreign air carriers also restrict smoking on flights.

## ***DELAYS AND CANCELLATIONS***

Delays and cancellations can result from bad weather, mechanical problems or other conditions affecting safety. Generally speaking, timetables are subject to change without notice and air carriers assume no responsibility for ensuring that their passengers make their connections to other flights. You should call your air carrier a few hours before you plan to leave to confirm that your flight is expected to leave on time. Many airports also post arrival and departure information on their Web sites.

Air carriers do not usually accept responsibility for costs incurred as a result of flight delays or cancellations. In cases of long delays, some carriers will give you vouchers for food and overnight accommodation upon request. However, air passengers travelling within, to or from the European Union may be entitled to compensation and assistance in the event of cancelled flights and long delays.



## **OVER-BOOKING AND DENIED BOARDING**

Air carriers often 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 airplane is over-booked and too few passengers volunteer to take another flight, some passengers with confirmed reservations will be “bumped” from the flight. 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:

- ▶ Arrive at the airport in plenty of time to check in, clear security and reach the gate since late-arriving passengers are usually the ones bumped. Remember that line-ups are common.
- ▶ Understand the air carrier’s policies for honouring reservations on oversold flights (these are contained in the air carrier’s tariff).

## **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. Air carrier personnel will usually help you find another flight. Some air carriers may also provide denied boarding compensation in the form of vouchers for future travel or cash. Check with your air carrier 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 air carrier. If you feel the compensation offered is inadequate, complain to your air carrier in writing. If you are not satisfied with the carrier’s response, you may complain to the Canadian Transportation Agency.

## **What happens to my checked baggage if I am “bumped”?**

If there is sufficient time, your bags will be retrieved and returned to you before the airplane departs. However, as passengers are often bumped at the gate just minutes before departure, your bags may leave on the airplane you were unable to board. You should be able to find your baggage when you arrive at your destination. If you arrive later than your bags, the air carrier’s baggage agent may have put them away for safekeeping. If your bags cannot be found, file a claim.

## **CHARTER FLIGHTS**

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

Regulations governing charter flights differ from those that apply to regularly scheduled flights. Changes in the type of airplane, days of operation, air carrier and itinerary may be more likely on charter flights than 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 air carrier's principal responsibilities to the passengers relate to lost, delayed or damaged 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 air carrier. If you are not satisfied with the response concerning the air travel portion of your package, you may file a complaint with the Canadian Transportation Agency.

## TRAVELLERS WITH DISABILITIES

A publication called *Taking Charge of the Air Travel Experience: A Guide for Persons with Disabilities* is available from the Canadian Transportation Agency and complements this booklet. It provides useful information on accessible features and services available to persons with disabilities travelling by air.

The *Reservation Checklist* is available to travel agents and persons making arrangements for travellers with disabilities. It is a tool to assist in accurately communicating their needs to the air carrier, such as helping passengers with disabilities get to the boarding gate, providing specific seating and transporting mobility aids or ensuring unaccompanied-passenger services for individuals who have cognitive or intellectual disabilities.

Under the *Canada Transportation Act*, the Canadian Transportation Agency will investigate complaints filed by, or on behalf of, travellers with disabilities to determine whether they faced undue obstacles while travelling. The Agency may order corrective measures, the payment of compensation, or both, if it determines that an undue obstacle exists in the federally regulated transportation system.

The Canadian Transportation Agency's authority applies to transportation services governed by this Act, including:

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

If you cannot resolve a complaint with the transportation service provider, ask the Canadian Transportation Agency for a copy of the *Accessibility Complaint Guide* or file a complaint online at [www.cta.gc.ca](http://www.cta.gc.ca).

For additional information on the Canadian Transportation Agency's accessibility program, copies of brochures and the *Reservation Checklist*, all available in multiple formats, consult the Agency's Web site ([www.cta.gc.ca](http://www.cta.gc.ca)).



## ***UNACCOMPANIED MINORS***

Some air carriers accept unaccompanied minors, 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 from some carriers, again for a fee.

Carefully read and understand your air carrier'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.



## **COMPLAINTS**

Complaints about air travel must be filed with the Canadian Transportation Agency within two years from the date of the incident.

If you have a problem with your air carrier, you should first bring the matter to its attention as soon as possible since the vast majority of complaints are resolved at this level and no further action is required. If you are unable to obtain a satisfactory response to your complaint within a reasonable time frame, you may bring your complaint to the Canadian Transportation Agency. Please note that the Agency's authority does not extend to questions of quality of service such as employee rudeness and attitude. Such matters are the responsibility of the air carrier's management.



The rules governing your obligations to your air carrier and the air carrier's responsibilities to you are referred to as a carrier's "Terms and Conditions of Carriage." Terms and conditions of carriage may be general in nature, in that they apply to all passengers at all times (e.g. compensation for lost baggage) or fare-specific, in that they govern the application of a specific fare (e.g. the fare is non-refundable and non-transferrable). Air carriers operating a service within, to or from Canada must publish their terms and conditions of carriage in their tariffs and must abide by them at all times. Carriers are required by law to make the appropriate sections of their tariffs available to the public upon request. However, you may need to pay a small fee, not exceeding the cost of photocopying, to receive a copy.

Air carriers operating service within Canada are generally free to set their own terms and conditions of carriage subject only to the requirement that these must be clearly set out in their tariffs and must be neither unreasonable nor unduly discriminatory. The terms and conditions of carriage of air carriers operating services to and from Canada are more restricted. They must conform to the provisions of all applicable international conventions and bilateral agreements. They must also be set out clearly in carriers' tariffs and must be neither unjust nor unreasonable.

If, after dealing directly with the air carrier, you believe that it may have failed to respect its published terms

and conditions of carriage, you may ask the Canadian Transportation Agency to intervene through its informal complaint resolution process. Upon receipt of a written complaint, Agency staff will analyse your complaint and research the relevant provisions of the carrier's tariff. You may be requested at this point to provide copies of relevant documents or to further clarify either the nature of your complaint or the details of the incident that resulted in the complaint being made.

If this analysis indicates that the air carrier may not have respected its terms and conditions of carriage, Agency staff will open a dialogue with the carrier and attempt to obtain a settlement of the complaint consistent with the relevant terms and conditions of carriage. The informal complaint resolution process has a very high success rate. However, the informal complaints process cannot impose a settlement on either party to the dispute.

If, at the end of the informal process, you are still dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint and believe that the air carrier may not have respected its terms and conditions of carriage, you may ask the Canadian Transportation Agency to examine your complaint under its formal quasi-judicial process. This is a legalistic process in which you and the air carrier will be asked to set out arguments in writing and will be given the opportunity to respond in writing to the other party's submissions. Once pleadings have been completed, the Agency will issue a formal decision which is binding on both parties. When the Agency

finds in favour of the complainant, it may order the carrier to compensate for any out-of-pocket expenses incurred by the complainant as a result of the carrier's failure to respect its tariff.

Should you believe that an air carrier's domestic tariff contains terms and conditions that are unclear, unreasonable or unduly discriminatory, or that its international tariff contains provisions that are unclear, unjust or unreasonable, you may file a complaint with the Canadian Transportation Agency. All such complaints will be dealt with through the Agency's formal, quasi-judicial complaint resolution process as outlined above. However, the Agency cannot order any compensation under this part of the *Canada Transportation Act*. Rather, when it finds in favour of the complainant, its powers are limited to ordering the air carrier to amend the tariff provision in question.

Contact the Canadian Transportation Agency at the address or numbers listed below if you have any questions about matters covered in this booklet or if you wish to register a complaint. For complaints related to disabilities, see the *Travellers with Disabilities* section of this booklet.

## **Canadian Transportation Agency**

Ottawa ON K1A 0N9

Toll-free: 1-888-222-2592

TTY (for hearing-impaired persons): 1-800-669-5575

Fax: (819) 953-5686

[www.cta.gc.ca](http://www.cta.gc.ca)

## ***OTHER SOURCES AND CONTACTS***

Here is useful information relating to air travel from other Government of Canada organizations.

### **Canada Border Services Agency**

191 Laurier Avenue West, 16th floor  
Ottawa ON K1A 0L8

Telephone: 1-800-959-2036

[www.cbsa.gc.ca](http://www.cbsa.gc.ca)

- ▶ *I Declare – A Guide for residents of Canada returning to Canada*

### **Be Aware and Declare!**

[www.beaware.gc.ca](http://www.beaware.gc.ca)

### **Canadian Air Transport Security Authority**

99 Bank Street, 13<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Ottawa ON K1P 6B9

Telephone: 1-888-294-2202

[www.catsa.gc.ca](http://www.catsa.gc.ca)

## **Canadian Food Inspection Agency**

59 Camelot Drive  
Ottawa ON K1A 0Y9

Telephone: 1-800-442-2342  
[www.inspection.gc.ca](http://www.inspection.gc.ca)

## **Citizenship and Immigration Canada**

365 Laurier Avenue West  
Ottawa ON K1A 1L1

Telephone: 1-888-242-2100  
[www.cic.gc.ca](http://www.cic.gc.ca)

› *Planning to visit Canada?*



## **Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada**

125 Sussex Drive

Ottawa ON K1A 0G2

Telephone: 1-800-267-8376

[www.international.gc.ca](http://www.international.gc.ca)

- ▶ *Bon Voyage, But... Essential Information for Canadian Travellers*
- ▶ *Destination: Success: Services for Canadian Business Travellers*

## **Consular Affairs**

Advice for Travellers : 1-800-267-6788

Emergencies Abroad: (613) 996-8885 (collect)

[www.voyage.gc.ca](http://www.voyage.gc.ca)

## **Passport Canada**

Gatineau QC K1A 0G3

Telephone: 1-800-567-6868

[www.ppt.gc.ca](http://www.ppt.gc.ca)

## **Public Health Agency of Canada**

130 Colonnade Road

A.L. 6501H

Ottawa ON K1A 0K9

Telephone: 1-866-225-0709

[www.phac.gc.ca](http://www.phac.gc.ca)

## **Transport Canada**

330 Sparks Street

Ottawa ON K1A 0N5

Telephone: (613) 990-2309

[www.tc.gc.ca](http://www.tc.gc.ca)

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