

First Things First

Entry Requirements

Identification

The requirements of U.S. authorities for identification upon entering the United States have recently become much stricter.

The most important formality on entering the United States is providing proof of your Canadian citizenship. In order to avoid possible problems, all Canadians should carry a Canadian passport for all visits to the United States. Your Canadian passport is the best document to prove your Canadian citizenship and your right to return to Canada.

All carriers (noticeably airlines, but also rail and bus services) have become much stricter about

requiring proof of admissibility to Canada as a result of the heavy fines they face for carrying inadmissible passengers. Since birth and baptismal certificates, for example, do not have photographs, they are no longer accepted without accompanying valid photo identification. Even carriers taking Canadians from Canada to the United States on roundtrip tickets have refused to return them to Canada without valid photo identification and proof of Canadian citizenship.

As a result, many travellers have had to contact Canadian government offices in the United States for assistance. When this happens, the office has to verify

Travelling by Air

The Government of the United States has imposed a requirement that all airlines operating flights into the United States collect the following information for every passenger: full legal name, gender, date of birth, nationality and travel document number. This information is provided to the U.S. Customs Service in advance of a flight's arrival in the United States. As a

condition of travel, all passengers travelling to the United States, or in transit through the United States to a third country, must provide this information at the time of flight check-in. This program is referred to as the United States Advanced Passenger Information System and is part of the security measures implemented by the United States after September 11, 2001.