

Before You Go

Canadians travel to the United States in greater numbers and with greater frequency than to anywhere else. The neighbourhood is a shared one. As a former prime minister remarked, "We are not in the same boat, but we are pretty much in the same waters."

We may easily forget that the border is an international frontier. The United States is a foreign country.

Many Canadians do not make adequate preparations for entering the United States.

As a result, they encounter serious problems.

The Consular Affairs Bureau of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and Canadian government offices in the United States help thousands of such Canadians. Problems range from the simple ("I'm in West Virginia — how do I get out?") to the complex ("I've been arrested..."). If you have a problem, call us. We are open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. See the "For More Information" section for contact numbers.

Be Prepared

Every trip begins at home. What you do before you leave — and the more you do — will help ensure a trouble-free visit.

You may wish to consult our Travel Reports for the United States, Florida, Hawaii, Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands for information on safety and security conditions, health issues and entry requirements. Check the "For More Information" section for details.

The preparations you must make and the information you require depend on the reason for your visit and the length of time you expect to be in the United States. If you're simply crossing the border to fill your gas tank or shop for a few hours and have done so before, your preparations can be minimal. But if you are going for several weeks or months, if you are moving permanently, or if your visit involves remunerative work, you need to prepare carefully.