

TRANSPORTATION

Mexico has developed a remarkably strong infrastructure well suited to world class foreign trade. Advantages include 39 international airports, 240,000 kilometres of highways, a railway network of 26,000 kilometres and the capacity for 26 million kilowatts of electrical power. Of prime importance to the country's transportation network are 16 main ports which, in 1990, were responsible for the movement of approximately 167 million tons of goods. Under President Salinas de Gortari, the Mexican government has invested significantly in the transportation and communication sectors, and the private sector is also cooperating in a number of innovative projects, including funding directed toward highway improvements across Mexico.

CANADIAN EXPORTS TO MEXICO (\$Cdn ,000)

	ROAD	RAIL	WATER	AIR	OTHER	TOTAL
1987	170,656	72,526	255,173	23,571	54	521,980
1988	162,004	98,349	196,223	29,933	5	486,556
1989	242,388	125,153	150,457	85,929	3	603,959
1990	240,132	155,455	101,704	97,990	45	595,326
1991	250,286	73,853	140,622	59,745	36	524,544

Source: Statistics Canada, *Exports-Merchandise Trade*, #65-202.

Exporters can purchase transport services to Mexico in two ways. The trucking company, railway sales office, airline cargo office or marine shipping agent can be contacted directly, or a freight forwarder can be used to arrange the whole transportation package. In many instances, and especially for new exporters, the services of a freight forwarder are recommended. The freight forwarder can consolidate shipments as needed, advise on the mode of transport best serving the exporter's needs, and arrange for customs documentation, the services of a Mexican customs broker, and transport, warehousing and distribution within Mexico if required. Depending on the terms of sale, customs clearing, import licensing, import duties, and transportation, warehousing and distribution within Mexico could be left up to the Mexican importer.

As regards the actual process of transportation, trucking companies with affiliates in Mexico or interchange agreements with Mexican carriers can often provide better services as they experience less delays at the border during trans-shipment. Above all, the exporter should question his freight forwarder, trucking company or other transport company to ensure that the firm has experience in moving goods to and within Mexico. Experience and established contacts are key to the successful handling of shipments to Mexico. Based on the volume of merchandise shipped, the most important Mexican ports of entry are: Mexico City International Airport for air shipments; Manzanillo, Acapulco, Vera Cruz and Tampico-Altamira for maritime traffic; and Tijuana in the northwest and Nuevo Laredo in the northeast for land based traffic.