
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.

U.S. entry requirements for Canadians are neither onerous nor complex. Nevertheless, they are legal requirements. To travel in ignorance or with an "it won't happen to me" mentality, or to expect that your lack of preparation will be overlooked, is to seek trouble. And many who seek will find.

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 are 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.

First Things First

Identification

The most important formality on entering the United States is giving proof of citizenship. Typically, U.S. officials have been willing to accept anything from a driver's licence or birth certificate to a Canadian Tire credit card. Increasingly, however, Canadians are being required to show identification that includes a photo and proves their right to re-enter Canada.

Every Canadian should carry a valid Canadian passport for all

trips outside Canada, including those to the United States. Your passport is the most widely accepted form of identification available. It confirms your identity and your right to re-enter Canada.

Travelling Canadians may find it difficult to enter, pass through or return from the United States if they do not have valid photo identification and proof of citizenship. All carriers (noticeably airlines, but also Amtrak and Greyhound) have become much stricter about requiring proof of admissibility to Canada as a result of the heavy