

POPA 2016: Canadian Customs Procedures

International flying is one of the many great pleasures of flying an aircraft. It's all the excitement wrapped up in the first solo cross-country, but even more so considering the challenges of new cultures, languages, weather patterns, scenery, and conquering the ICAO rules and regulations. The efficacy of one's due diligence is paramount in completing the mission safely and efficiently. Without doing the homework, egregious fees can be imposed, countries regulations can be inadvertently broken, and even worse, safety of flight can quickly become compromised. Therefore, it's vital to understand ICAO rule and the AIP (Airman Information Publication) for each country visited. In the AIP is a wealth of information to make your journey enjoyable and safe. If you're unwilling or unable to plan yourself, it's easy to obtain handling assistance from one of the many service providers which will essentially take care of all the dirty work for you. It's then your responsibility to facilitate the plan as PIC.

Luckily, our proximity to Canada can provide just enough of the international intrigue without having to travel very far or spend lots of time researching AIP's or ICAO rules- It's fairly similar to flying in the US. Below is a step-by-step guide to flying into Canada and returning to the US. Follow the instructions and you'll have a pleasant experience flying internationally.

Pilot, Passenger, and Aircraft Requirements

Pilot in Command

- Passport
- Pilot certificate with an English proficient endorsement
- Medical certificate
- Restricted radiotelephone operators permit

Passenger(s)

- Each passenger must have a current passport
- Children traveling with only one parent must have a notarized statement of approval from the absent parent stating the dates of the trip.

Aircraft

All US registered aircraft must have...

- A standard Airworthiness Certificate
- A permanent registration certificate (no temporary certificates/pink slips)
- A radio station license
- Operating limitations information
- Weight and Balance information
- If the aircraft is registered in another person's or corporation's name, we recommend you bring a notarized letter authorizing use of the aircraft in Canada.
- An ID data plate
- 12-inch registration marks if you're crossing an ADIZ to get into Canada (primarily affects those flying in from Alaska)
- Transponder with Mode C - TSA waivers are still required and mandatory for all international flights for aircraft not equipped with a transponder.
- Either a 121.5 MHz or 406 MHz ELT
- Charts - Both U.S. and Canadian are needed. (Jeppesen trip kits, Foreflight, AirNav.com, Fltplan.com, Nav Canada, and other online sources)

- Department of Homeland Security (DHS) decal affixed to window.
- Aircraft with fuel tanks installed in the baggage or passenger compartments must have Form 337 on board.
- Verify insurance coverage for flight into Canada. Private aircraft must be covered with liability insurance. Proof of liability coverage needs to be carried onboard
 - The amount and types of coverage are based on the aircraft's gross takeoff weight; your Insurance agent should be able to provide proof of insurance in the correct amounts.

eAPIS and DHS Decal Requirements

- All pilots crossing the U.S. border either way are required to use Custom and Border Protection's (CBP) Electronic Advance Passenger Information System (eAPIS) to provide crew, passenger(s), aircraft, and trip information. The eAPIS information must be filed at least one hour before departing from or arriving in the United States, but pilots can file as far in advance as they wish, giving the option to provide information for the return trip via Internet before leaving home. (This does not apply if you overfly Canada going from one U.S. airport to another without landing - eAPIS is not, then, required.)
 - An annual DHS user fee decal to be placed near the entrance door of the aircraft (\$27.50) – allow a few weeks for delivery. You can buy decals online. For decal questions, call (317)-298-1245 or send an email to decals@dhs.gov. You can download a decal form at <https://dtops.cbp.dhs.gov/main>

Operations: US to Canada

- There is no need to contact U.S. customs on departure - eAPIS filing is sufficient.
- The pilot will need to contact CANPASS (888-CANPASS or 888-226-7277) by phone prior to takeoff in U.S. and, again, by phone after landing prior to exiting the aircraft. The first call must be made no less than two hours nor more than 40 hours before the border crossing. The pilot will be given an ID number that must be provided upon arrival. Only very rarely are pilots asked to await an official to provide an inspection in Canada Nevertheless, Taxi the aircraft to the customs locations and await further instructions. Generally speaking, wait to open the aircraft door until a custom officer arrives to the airplane or, permission is granted to deplane via phone. If anyone is allowed to deplane without permission, it's generally the PIC and the PIC only.
- Pilots who frequently travel to Canada directly from the United States on a small private aircraft should apply to enter the CANPASS Private Aircraft program, which makes clearing the border easier for private aircraft carrying no more than 15 people (including the crew) and traveling to Canada from the United States. This program allows members to access more airports and provides expedited clearances for low-risk, pre-screened travelers.

Operations: Canada to the US

- The first landing in the U.S. must be at a designated airport of entry with a customs office. These airports are referred to as "Designated International Landing Rights and User Fee" airports. Prior to departure, make direct telephone contact with the customs office at the U.S. destination airport, and notify of ETA at least one hour before and no more than 23 hours before the ETA. (Do not rely on entry of "ADCUS" in the flight plan.)

- After landing at the U.S. airport, taxi to customs office and wait in or next to the airplane for customs officers to inspect airplane prior to exiting the plane or immediate tie-down area.

Canadian User Fees

- Invoices for Canadian fees are mailed later. They can take a while to receive.
- NAVCAN user fee charge is \$72/yr. or \$17.85/quarter (CDN\$) for use of the ATC system.
- Landing fees are charged at tower-controlled airports (\$24 CDN at Quebec City)

**Always check the FBO for the most up-to-date pricing and availability.*

Electronic Travel Authorization Requirement

As of March 15, 2016, Canada will require Electronic Travel Authorization (eTA) for all visa-exempt foreign nationals entering the country by air. Effective this date, visa-exempt foreign nationals, other than U.S. citizens, must have an eTA prior to being processed by customs, immigration, and quarantine (CIQ) and entering Canada.

The following is an overview of what you need to know:

- Those impacted by this change

In the past visa-exempt foreign nationals could travel to Canada without any specific advance travel authorization. This changes on March 15, 2016, with the introduction of the new eTA requirements for visa-exempt foreign nationals, regardless of their age. Only U.S. nationals are exempt from this requirement. U.S. permanent residents (Green Card holders) require eTAs to arrive in Canada by air. For example, if you're a visa exempt national of the UK or Japan you're now required to have an eTA to enter Canada, even though you did not require any advance travel authorization in the past. **Note that new eTA requirements also apply to tech stops in Canada, even if passengers do not leave the aircraft.**

- Reasoning behind the change

Governments around the world are trying to standardize enhanced vetting processes to better control who may access the particular country. For example, the U.S. has the [Electronic System for Travel Authorization \(ESTA\)](#) in place, and both Australia and Turkey have implemented electronic authorization programs for visiting foreign nationals. Canada's eTA program takes this one step further in requiring electronic authorization for nationals, who in the past did not even require visas.

- Obtaining eTAs

eTAs are obtained online, and we recommend submitting the application at least 72 hours in advance. In most cases, online applications are approved quickly, but in some cases, it may take up to 72 hours to receive a response. To apply for eTA you must have a valid passport and provide an email address. Once your eTA is approved and confirmed, it will be sent to you by email (to the address you provide), and it's valid for five years or until your passport expires. eTA allows you to enter Canada unlimited times, so long as both the eTA and your passport remain valid. You may apply for an eTA on your own or use a 3rd-party provider to obtain it for you. To determine if you need a visa or eTA for Canada see the [official website](#).

At the end of the day, flying into and out of Canada is a very simple process. Ensure that you have your documents, make the proper phone calls, and exercise sound judgment. As a procedure, it can be helpful to use the passport in a similar fashion to a boarding pass: no document, no boarding. If you have further questions, please feel free to e-mail or call any of the POPA board members and they'll be happy to assist you.