



Introduction

As an American Citizen , traveling to Canada from the US is fun, easy and opens up a brand new world to the North - if you know the rules! Knowing the rules can spell the difference between a great trip and an expensive disappointment or worse.

Here is a short quiz to test your knowledge of entering and flying in Canada. I also suggest every pilot read the AOPA/COPA Guide to Cross Border Operations – and become familiar with the appropriate US FARs and Canadian CARS, before you try crossing the border as PIC.

For those that require more information please consider a membership in the Canadian Owners and Pilots Association (COPA), this will entitle you to free access to all our aviation guides, and entitle you to free consultation with member-assistance staff. AOPA members may request a email copy (PDF) copy of our AOPA/COPA Guide to Cross Border Operations.

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VFR Questions Section

1. Crossing the Canadian border from the central USA in my private C182, day VFR – who must I contact prior to my flight and when, and who enroute?
 - a. CBSA: (Canada Border Security Agency), between 2-48 hours prior. The number to call is essentially the same wherever you are in the USA. The number is 1-888-CANPASS (1-888-226-7277) which will put me in touch with the Telephone Reporting Centre in the region closest to my call. I should always ask for a call record number, name or other evidence, to record that I have made the mandatory call.
 - b. File a flight Plan with FSS (FAR 91.707): by Web or Phone (1-800-WX-BRIEF). I should print and keep my Web Flight plan confirmation. (I must make sure I open my flight plan!)
 - c. Governing ATC Unit: (generally one of the ATC Centres), who I have contacted prior to crossing to obtain a discrete transponder code, and who I am in contact with - while crossing the border. Flight Following is the easiest way of accomplishing this if VFR.

2. My transponder is down for maintenance – Can I still cross the border?
 - d. Short Answer: No.
 - e. Long Answer: Yes if I have a prior permission obtained from the US ATC unit, military border watch and US CBP.

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3. What must I declare to the CBSA in my initial call to CANPASS prior to my flight to Canada from the US?
 - f. Alcohol (1.14 litres max per person – see: <http://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/travel-voyage/faqs-eng.html>),
 - g. Cigarettes (200),
 - h. My firearms need a prior permit - **Non-Resident Firearm Declaration** (form **CAFC 909**), no automatic weapons (prohibited), nor handguns (restricted), nor large capacity magazines (restricted) are permitted. Storage requirements are noted at : http://www.cfc-cafc.gc.ca/factsheets/storagetransport_e.asp
 - i. Passengers names, ages, nationality.
 - j. Any commercial goods.
 - k. Money over \$10,000 CAD

4. The weather is no-go across my route to my Canadian Airport of Entry. – What action should I consider while enroute, to avoid a fine.
 - l. It may be easier to divert back to USA, call CANPASS from the ground, and re-plan my crossing.
 - m. Land at an alternate airport in Canada, call CANPASS immediately to explain I have made a weather diversion, and obey instructions given. (I may be asked to wait in the aircraft until a CBSA inspector arrives). Note that only I should leave the aircraft if forced to find a landline to make the call.

5. Two of my three passengers are not Americans. What questions should I ask them before starting my flight.
 - n. I should ask ALL my passengers to show me their passports, and I should confirm they are valid and there is at least 6 months left before their passports expire.
 - o. To enter Canada my passengers should be Canadian, American or possess a Canadian visa to enter Canada. Certain more relaxed rules for members of the British Commonwealth exist.
 - p. The issue gets more complicated if I intend to return to the USA in my aircraft. Even if these (non-American) passengers are Canadian, if I intend to return with them to the USA, I must check where they were born, and check their country of origin against the list of the 18 NSEERS nationalities on the US watch list that must be fingerprinted on return to the USA, regardless of Canadian citizenship. Note that Canada does not discriminate Canadians by place of birth, but the US does.
 - q. Ensure I ask CBP if these NSEERS passengers will be allowed to return by private aircraft to the USA, and where, under what conditions?
 - r. Ensure I ask CBP where the passengers will be allowed to return.

6. Starting from a private strip (without any telephone service) in New York State, I am carrying some hunters to Northern Ontario, I am planning to file a flight plan enroute and ask FSS to call customs on my behalf, to legally cross the border. Am I OK?
 - s. NO, Not without a personal call to 1-888-CANPASS by the PIC of the aircraft.

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7. I am twenty minutes early in my cross-border flight because of poor planning and a great tailwind. Should I land anyway?
- t. Sure. Just follow the procedure in (g) above. The CBSA does not charge or fine the pilot for being early or late, but they will fine me some \$850 CAD for failing to make the call.
8. After landing at an Canadian towered airport on my VFR flight across the border, I should do a few things, what are they?
- u. (1) – I should check with Ground Control to close my Flight plan – since in Canada the tower may automatically do this but is not guaranteed to do so, unless your remind them.
 - v. (2) – I should taxi to the customs point on the field and wait until my ETA has passed.
 - w. (3) – After my ETA has expired, I should deplane (leaving the passengers inside the aircraft), and call the CBSA at 1-888-CANPASS and follow their instructions. If the CBSA verbally clears me, I must be sure to record the CBSA clearance number for my personal logbook and journey log.
9. After landing in Canada in my US aircraft, I am planning the next leg of 100 NM. There is no Nav Canada weather terminal at the airport. There is a phone. Who should I contact, at what number?
- x. Call the appropriate Nav Canada FIC at 1-866-WX-BRIEF to obtain the WX and file a flight plan.
10. While over Canada I want to check the weather at destination – who should I contact.
- y. This is complicated. Flight-Watch does not exist in Canada. Instead I must call the appropriate Flight Information Centre (FIC). These all used to be on 126.7 MHz but no longer. To find out which FIC to call, I consult the Canada Flight Supplement ([CFS](#)) listing for my destination airport. In the “FLT PLN” section it will list the FIC airport. I turn to the listing for the FIC and consult the list of frequencies for each airport that it has responsibility for. I call the frequency listed and address my call to the FIC (“name”) “FSS” , and ask for the WX.
11. I know the US has a graphical listing of TFRs. What are the Canadian equivalents, and what should I know about them?
- z. CFR: Canadian Flight Restriction. These are generally NOT the temporary, uncharted restricted areas found in the USA. In Canada these CFRs are few and fixed and generally marked on the VNC charts as CFRXXX. To find out about possible new ones, I should consult the NOTAMS, or ask a briefer (at 1-866-WX-BRIEF) about new CFR or “Alert areas”.



12. I am flying IFR (or VFR for that matter), to a non-towered Canadian airport. From what or who can I obtain the altimeter setting for the airport?

- aa. From the FSS on the airport (if it is a Mandatory Frequency (MF) airport), or
- bb. The relevant FIC (see previous question 10), or
- cc. From the centre frequency controller just prior to switching to the aerodrome frequency.
- dd. Sometimes (rarely) the UNICOM on uncontrolled fields can give an altimeter setting.
- ee. Some Canadian airports have IFR plates that give alternate altimeter setting procedures that involve using a nearby towered airport and a higher offset altitude minima.

13. I am just about to enter a Canadian Class C airport control zone, and have contacted the tower with my course and position - who has then told me to stand by. Should I continue my course?

- ff. A Canadian Class C has higher requirements than a US Class C in that the pilot must have a clearance before entering, since I don't yet have a clearance to enter, I must avoid continuing my course into the zone, until I obtain the clearance. (**CAR 601.08 (1)**)

14. At my Canadian towered-airport, I am cleared to: "line up runway zero nine". What does this mean?

- gg. Taxi onto takeoff runway 09 at the threshold, but do not take off. It is equivalent to "Runway 9 Position and Hold" in the USA.
- hh. By the way, Canadians do not drop the leading zero on runway designations: "Runway zero nine" means "Runway 09".

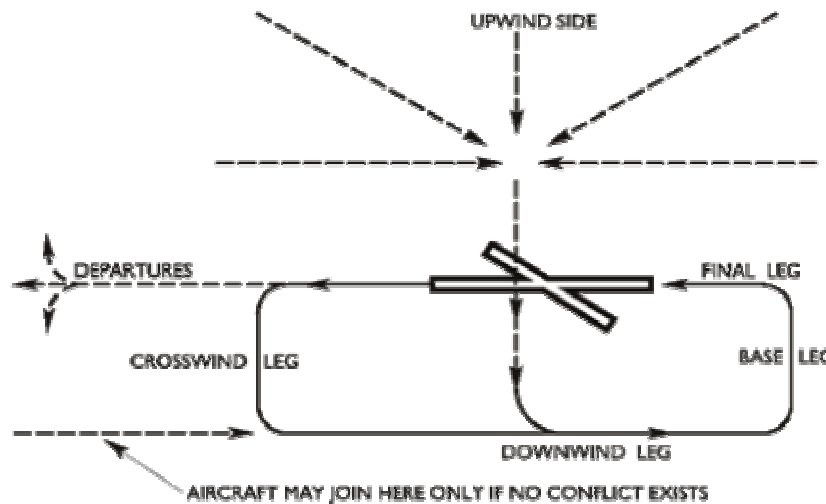
15. At Gatineau airport, a FSS-Radio equipped (MF), uncontrolled airport on my way to Montreal, I stop for fuel. What first call should I give prior to entering the airport area.

- ii. 5 minutes before arriving in the airport zone I should call to announce my tail-number, position, altitude and intentions. (**CAR 602.101**)



16. What American pattern joining procedures might I avoid at this Canadian airport? What “circuit” joining procedure should I use instead if joining from the upwind side.

- jj. I would avoid a 45 degree join to downwind, the approved Canadian entry is straight into the downwind.
- kk. Crossing overhead midway at circuit altitude - as this is the approved Canadian pattern entry. ([TC AIM RAC 4.5.2](#))



17. I want to fly in my single-engine aircraft, down the East coast on my way to Prince Edward Island, but I have no raft or survival suits. ADIZ concerns aside, what distance from shore should I stay within to obey Canadian rules for overwater flight? What minimum equipment should I carry for the flight to stay within Canadian rules for overwater flight.

- ll. Within gliding distance from shore (Canadian rules), or
- mm. I should have an approved aviation personal flotation device for each crew member and passenger and stay within 100 miles and 30 minutes cruising speed, or
- nn. Have a survival suit for each person and approved raft as well.

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18. To fly in my turbocharged Mooney at 16,500 ft from an uncontrolled field in class G airspace outside Ottawa to a similar field outside Sault St Marie (Canada), I must:

- oo. Call the appropriate Centre (Montreal or Toronto in this case), and obtain a clearance to enter Class B airspace ([CAR 601.07](#)) before climbing to 12,500 ft.

In my first call I explain I am flying VFR on a flight-plan to GobbleDuck-Farm, Ontario near Sault Ste Marie. What should I expect back from the controller?

- pp. A VFR Clearance to enter the Class B Control Zone.

What must I do following the controller's likely reply?

- qq. Read it back and receive the reply "Readback Correct".

19. I am visiting a Canadian airport and discover while there, that a flying club is offering flying rentals of the single-engine, light (2000 lb), "BarnStormer 200" aircraft with a prior checkout. There is a free booking that afternoon, and I have an American license and time on type. Can I do the checkout and fly solo in this aircraft?

- NO! – All flying by foreign nationals in Canadian Aircraft is subject to a Foreign Licence Validation Certificate ([FLVC](#)). This comes in two flavours (90 days or 1 year), and is easily obtained from Transport Canada at any regional TC office for \$45 CAD. ([TC Website FLVC](#))

20. I am a pilot with an American Private License, flying into a Canadian control zone at night, and I request Special VFR. Am I legal?

- rr. Yes! – Special VFR is permitted at night in Canada (for landings only [CAR 602.117](#)). One caveat, although no instrument rating is needed in Canada for special VFR, the general rule is that if you can't do it in your home country, you can't do it here ([FAR 91.703\(2\)\(3\)](#)), and in the US an IFR rating is needed for Special VFR.



21. While in Canada on an IFR trip, I come across an FBO and avionics dealer offering 75% off a dual GARMIN GNS530 IFR installation for my Cessna 150, replacing my existing avionics. The install can be done in 3 days, and I plan to be there that long anyways. Should I go ahead and order the installation? What other maintenance can I have performed?

- ss. Sure! The US FAA accepts Canadian installations, provided a US STC was used in the installation, with appropriate Form 337 completed.
- tt. To have any major installation work done by a Canadian FBO on a US Aircraft, and have the aircraft remain Airworthy, an AMO must do the work to US standards and have US or Canadian certifications. ([FAR 43.17](#)) Many Canadian shops are used to this kind of work, I should ask to see a list of prior American aircraft, that the shop has successfully upgraded.
- uu. In contrast, if minor repairs become necessary, but no added equipment or installation work is performed, it is permissible to have the work performed by a Canadian Approved Maintenance Organization (AMO) or simply an Aviation Maintenance Engineer (AME). ([FAR 43.17](#))

22. Having checked my progress (in my J3 cub), on the flight North to my refueling point South of the Canadian border, I establish that due to 200 knot tailwinds I can go directly to Canada without making a fuel stop. I decide to call the FSS and ask them update my flight plan to land in Canada, and mark off ADCUS on the flight plan, to advise Canadian customs.

Am I legal?

- vv. No! The pilot is the person in charge of the aircraft. As the pilot, I have to:
 - Place a telephone call to 1-888-226-7277 (1-888 CAN-PASS), at least 2 hours before but not more than 48 hours prior to my arrival in Canada;
 - give my estimated time of arrival (ETA);
 - give the aircraft tail number/aircraft registration mark; and
 - arrive during regular customs office hours at a designated airport of entry (AOE). The list of AOE's is on CBSA Web site at <http://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/contact/listing/indexpages/indextype5-e.html>
 - Note: Call 1-888-226-7277 again to report any change in the ETA, point of arrival, or other information.



23. Airborne on the trip returning to the USA from Canada, I encounter weather and decide not to cross the border, but instead divert to a Canadian airport to wait out the weather overnight. What should I do upon landing?

- ww. Close the flight plan with the appropriate Canadian Tower, FSS or FIC.
- xx. Call the US AFSS (1-877-4-TIBS-WX), to ensure the flight plan is closed at the American end, (as this has been a problem on occasion). Note that the 1-800-WX-BRIEF for toll-free access to the US AFSS, does NOT work in Canada. However Nav Canada may be able to give you a toll number for an FSS in the USA as an alternative.
- yy. Call the US CBP at the individual Port of Entry customs number, and cancel the aircraft border crossing.

24. Can I fly back into USA, from my trip to Canada, with a passenger who is not a Canadian or American citizen, and whom I picked up in Canada? Suppose the passenger is a Canadian Landed Immigrant, Suppose a Canadian child is picked up.

- zz. Not without a visa! Only Canadians or American citizens are permitted to travel to the USA by light aircraft without a visa,
- aaa. No deal for landed immigrants! If the passenger is a non-American, Canadian Landed Immigrant, they must have a visa.
- bbb. Yes! If the passenger has a valid Canadian Visa and is in possession of a valid Passport or pre-approved alternate travel document.
- and
- ccc. If the passenger is a Canadian child, a letter of authorization for travel, signed by both parents, plus identification.

See: <http://www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/publications/pub/rc4161-eng.html>

IFR Questions Section

25. VFR-on-Top is legal for Americans in Canada with what licenses or endorsements?

- ddd. It's a trick question, VFR-on-Top does not exist in Canada.
- eee. In Canada VFR pilots may fly VFR-over-the-top under strict weather limits (602.116). Since American pilots do not have such a rating as the (VFR OTT) rating, a US pilot should be IFR or commercially licensed and adhere to Canadian WX minima. (FAR 91.703)

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26. What general weather minima should I consider on my Category 1 IFR approach to a Canadian airport, considering that my flight is not a training flight?

fff. Approach Ban! Other than training flights, the standard approach ban for Canadian airports is 1200 RVR, or ¼ statute mile visibility, (Canada Air Pilot (CAP) GEN).

27. On a Winter IFR flight in Canada, certain a operational approach correction procedure applies to approaches. (Not referring to icing or aircraft capability.) What correction is required?

ggg. Altitude Correction! All published procedure altitudes should be amended upwards depending on the temperature. For example the Sector altitude correction for 3000 feet above the altimeter source is **430 feet** for a temperature of -20° C (degrees Celcius), (Canada Air Pilot (CAP) GEN).

28. Due to the largest high-pressure area ever seen in North America, the weather is a blue-sky CAVOK (TC AIM RAC 1.4) day at both my destination and my origin and in between, but I decide to file IFR for my trip from Montreal to Calgary. (I am flying a CANSO with special super long range tanks and have a copilot and potty on board). What must I file for the flight in Canada, that I would not have to file in the USA?

hhh. An Alternate: All Canadian IFR flights require an Alternate Airport be filed. (CAR 602.122)

29. On the aforementioned trip how much extra fuel should I have on board (at least)?

iii. Canada's required fuel limits are: (1 approach + 1 missed + diversion to alternate + 1 approach + 45 minutes), (TC AIM, RAC 3.13(2)).

30. Between Saskatoon and Kelowna, I am flying IFR on the airways in my new Turbo C182. I note that the MEA is going up substantially in one segment of the airway, (before I reach the Rocky Mountains). Should I climb before or after I reach the higher segment?

jjj. Before: Aircraft IFR are expected to be at or above the MEA of the segment at the time they reach it. (TC AIM, RAC 8.5)

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31. I am again planning on flying IFR in my new Turbo C182 equipped with Garmin G1000 Glass (Dual GPS, Dual VOR, Dual ILS, No DME, and **No ADF**). The trip will be conducted in summer in IMC conditions at both Destination and Alternate. What approaches must exist at the alternate airport if the weather is 600-2 there?

kkk. One precision approach which I can use: If the weather were to be 400-1, I would require two precision approaches which I can use, at the alternate. Note that if the precision approach is unusable because of a tailwind of 20 knots, it does not qualify. (Canada Air Pilot (CAP) GEN)

The alternate airport single precision approach is listed on the chart as:

“ILS or NDB RWY 23”

and has a missed approach to the “MOOLA” NDB. The approach is listed in my G1000 database. May I count this approach as a useable approach?

lll. NO! In Canada, all approaches including the missed approach segment must be flyable on the underlying aid, and the aircraft must be equipped with that aid unless the approach is marked “GNSS” designating it as a GPS overlay, in this case (Canada Air Pilot (CAP) GEN):

“ILS or NDB RWY 23 (GNSS)”



32. Prior to my approach to CARP (CYRP) using “RNAV (GNSS) RWY 10”, I must carry out a _____?

mmm. RAIM Check: “For GPS TSO C129/C129A avionics, periodically during the flight, and at least once before the mid-point of the flight to the destination...”, (Canada Air Pilot (CAP) GEN & [TC AIM COM 3.16.12](#)).

CARP is an uncontrolled aerodrome. What call should I make prior to landing?

nnn. IFR aircraft should broadcast their intentions (at any uncontrolled airport, MF or not) the requirement is "five minutes before the estimated time of commencing the approach procedure" ([CAR 602.104 \(2\)](#)). Included in the call should be the estimated time of arrival (ETA) at the airport.

33. Parry Sound (CYPD) as an uncontrolled aerodrome does not maintain a published altimeter setting. Normally Muskoka (CYQA) altimeter is used (when open), and when not, Wiarton (CYVV) altimeter is used. What should I check on the plate before using these altimeter settings?

ooo. Procedure altimeter offset: If another altimeter is used the plate will specify which ones may be used and how much offset to add to all procedure altitudes. For Parry Sound, the offset is 80 feet added to all procedure altitudes when using the Wiarton altimeter setting. (Canada Air Pilot (CAP))

When flying in the Canadian Far North, what altimeter setting procedure should I use?

ppp. All aircraft should set their altimeters to 29.92” whilst in the Standard Pressure Region, which is sometimes coincident with the Northern Domestic Airspace, but IS NOT the same thing. ([CAR 602.36\(1\)](#))

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