

Important things to do before and after you arrive in Canada

In this section, you will find lists of important things to do before and after you arrive in Canada. Every newcomer's situation is different, so the lists provide only an indication of what you may need to do at different stages. Not every item may be relevant to you, but it is best to be as prepared as possible.

If you are a refugee, you will receive information and support from the Government of Canada specifically for refugees during the immigration process.

Before you arrive in Canada

1. Collect and bring to Canada all official documents belonging to you and the family members who are immigrating with you.

Common documents include:

- birth certificate
- passport
- marriage or divorce certificate; death certificate for a deceased spouse
- adoption records for adopted children
- educational diplomas and certificates; transcripts that list the courses you took to obtain a degree or certificate
- official vaccination records
- medical records (prescriptions, test results, x-rays, allergies, etc.) and dental records
- driver's licence and/or International Driving Permit (IDP)

Some of these documents may not be required immediately, but it is better to bring all your official documents with you in case they are needed or useful in the future.

It is often much more difficult to obtain these documents after you have left your country of origin. If the original documents are not in English or French (Canada's official languages), you will need to obtain certified translations. If you are immigrating to Quebec, it is best to translate the documents into French. Otherwise (except in the officially bilingual province of New Brunswick), it is generally most useful to translate the documents into English. Choose a translation agency with a good reputation in your country of origin. When presenting your documents to Canadian officials, always provide the original, the certified translation, and the name and contact information of the translation agency. If you need to translate documents from English to French or from French to English, this can be done in Canada.

If you have family members that will be immigrating at a later date, you should bring copies of their documents with you as well.





2. Make an effort to improve your English or French if neither of these is your first language.

Communication skills may be the most important tool you can possess to settle successfully in Canada and find a good job. The language you focus on improving will depend on which one is most commonly spoken in the area where you have chosen to settle. For information on Canada's official languages and the importance of having strong English or French language skills, read the information on these topics in the sections *Canada: A brief overview*, *Improving your English and/or French* and *Employment and income*.

3. Plan where you will stay during your first days in Canada. Make arrangements to stay with family or friends or book a hotel in a central location. For information on temporary accommodation as well as how to rent or buy a home in Canada, read the section on *Housing*.

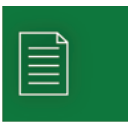


Research shows that strong language skills help you find a job and connect with your community.



4. Prepare yourself to find employment in Canada by doing the following:
 - Gather all your educational diplomas and certificates.
 - Obtain letters of reference from your past employers.
 - Learn about and begin the process of getting your educational and professional qualifications officially recognized in Canada.
 - Find out whether your profession is “regulated” or “unregulated” in Canada.
 - Learn about how to search and apply for jobs in Canada.

For an introduction on what you need to know about finding employment in Canada, read the section on *Employment and income*. It is particularly important for you to read the parts on credentials recognition and to seek further information on this subject from Canada's Foreign Credentials Referral Office (FCRO) (www.credentials.gc.ca) or Service Canada (1-888-854-1805).



5. Learn about the education system in Canada. Take note of deadlines for applying and registering at schools, colleges and universities. For information about schools for your children and education opportunities for yourself, read the section on *Education*.
6. Purchase private health insurance. This insurance pays for emergency medical costs until you obtain government health insurance in Canada. Private health insurance is necessary because the time between when you apply and when you receive a government health insurance card can be three months or longer. For more information about health care in Canada and obtaining government health insurance, read the sections on *Health care in Canada and Important documents*.
7. Learn more about the province and the city or town where you will settle. For more information, go to the provincial or territorial immigration websites in Table 3.1. For information on work opportunities in different professions across Canada, visit www.workingincanada.gc.ca.
8. Purchase some warm clothes to keep you comfortable during the first few days if you are arriving in Canada during the fall, winter or spring. To learn about seasons and weather in Canada, read the section on *Canada: A brief overview*.
9. Learn about Canadian laws and your rights and civic responsibilities when you become a resident of Canada. For more information, read the sections on *Canadian law and justice* and *Your rights and freedoms in Canada*.



Canada's national, provincial and territorial flags are a powerful symbol of the diverse nature of our federal system.

