

Getting Around Canada

Public transit, driver's licences, vehicles and road safety

For newcomers and students building a safe transportation plan



PRACTICAL. CLEAR. SOURCE-BASED.

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www.theworldbridge.ca





How to use this guide

Use the actions in the order that fits your status, province and circumstances. Write in the planning pages and return to the source page before a high-consequence decision.

01

Start with legal and safety steps

Confirm documents, conditions, deadlines and immediate needs before optional purchases.

02

Use official sources

The linked authorities are the primary reference. Rules and eligibility can change.

03

Keep evidence

Save confirmations, receipts, records and written advice in a secure system.

04

Ask early

Use free newcomer supports and seek individualized advice for high-consequence decisions.



IMPORTANT

This guide provides general information and practical orientation. It is not a substitute for individualized immigration, legal, tenancy, employment, financial, tax or medical advice. Eligibility, procedures and provincial or territorial rules can change. Verify current requirements with the linked authority before acting.

Build a transportation budget

1

Public transit

- Monthly pass or pay-as-you-go fares
- Transfers, regional travel and reduced-fare eligibility
- Travel time and service frequency
- Taxi or ride-hailing backup for late hours

2

Driving

- Vehicle payment or purchase cost
- Insurance, fuel, maintenance and parking
- Licence, registration and winter equipment
- Emergency repairs and depreciation

3

Choose by total cost

- Compare door-to-door time
- Include child care, work shifts and weather
- Use mixed transportation where practical
- Delay a vehicle purchase until income and location are stable

Use public transit confidently

1

Learn the system

- Official route planner and service alerts
- Fare card, transfer and proof-of-payment rules
- Last departure and weekend schedule
- Accessibility and paratransit options

2

Travel safely

- Wait in a visible, designated area
- Keep valuables secure
- Plan the walk from the stop to destination
- Tell a trusted person when travelling late

3

Prepare for disruption

- Weather delays and service cancellations
- Backup route or emergency fare
- Charged phone and saved addresses
- Work or school contact for delays

Using a foreign driver's licence

1

Rules vary by province

- A valid foreign licence may be accepted for a limited period
- The permitted period and exchange rules differ
- Carry the licence whenever driving
- Check the provincial authority before driving

2

International Driving Permit

- Obtain it in the home country before travel where appropriate
- It translates the licence into English and French
- It does not replace the original licence
- It does not override provincial licensing law

3

Bring supporting history

- Original licence and certified translation if required
- Driving record
- Insurance claims or experience letter
- Identity and immigration documents

Get a provincial licence

1

Confirm the pathway

- Exchange agreement or graduated licensing
- Knowledge, vision and road tests
- Waiting periods and accepted experience
- Required identity and residence documents

2

Prepare properly

- Use the official provincial driver's handbook
- Take professional lessons where helpful
- Learn school bus, pedestrian and cyclist rules
- Practise winter and highway skills safely

3

Keep it valid

- Track expiry and address-change requirements
- Carry correct insurance and registration
- Follow licence class and condition restrictions
- Do not lend a licence or use another person's identity

Understand vehicle insurance

1

Insurance is required

- Coverage and minimum requirements are provincial
- Rates depend on vehicle, location, use and driving history
- Disclose household drivers and vehicle use accurately
- Keep proof of insurance available

2

Compare coverage

- Liability, collision and comprehensive
- Deductibles and exclusions
- Rental vehicle and roadside options
- Monthly payment fees and cancellation terms

3

Use international history

- Ask insurers whether they recognize foreign experience
- Bring an official experience or claims letter
- Compare several legitimate quotes
- Do not misstate address or vehicle use to reduce premiums

Buy a used vehicle carefully

1

Verify the vehicle

- VIN and ownership
- Lien and vehicle-history search
- Recall status
- Independent mechanical inspection

2

Calculate total cost

- Tax, registration and insurance
- Immediate repairs and tires
- Fuel economy and parking
- Financing interest and add-on products

3

Complete the sale lawfully

- Use provincial ownership-transfer requirements
- Do not sign blank documents
- Get a bill of sale and receipts
- Avoid cash pressure and curbsider fraud

Drive for Canadian conditions

1

Winter

- Check forecast and road conditions
- Clear all snow and ice from the vehicle
- Use suitable tires and maintain safe distance
- Carry an emergency kit

2

Wildlife and rural roads

- Reduce speed in low visibility
- Watch shoulders at dawn and dusk
- Keep fuel and phone charge for long routes
- Do not stop in an unsafe travel lane

3

Distraction and impairment

- Do not use a handheld phone while driving
- Plan a sober ride
- Understand cannabis and medication impairment
- Follow seat-belt and speed laws

Children, passengers and collisions

1

Child car seats

- Use a seat appropriate to the child's size and provincial law
- Choose a Canadian-compliant seat
- Follow manufacturer instructions
- Register the seat and monitor recalls

2

Passenger safety

- Seat belts for every occupant
- Secure luggage and equipment
- Never leave a child in a hot or cold vehicle
- Use safe pickup and drop-off locations

3

After a collision

- Stop safely and call 911 for injuries or immediate danger
- Exchange required information
- Photograph damage and location when safe
- Report to police, collision centre and insurer as required

Transportation mistakes

1

Licence

- Driving too long on a foreign licence
- Assuming an IDP is a Canadian licence
- Using the wrong licence class
- Missing address or expiry updates

2

Vehicle

- Buying without inspection or lien search
- Ignoring insurance cost
- Financing based only on the payment
- Importing a vehicle without checking federal and provincial rules

3

Safety

- Underestimating winter conditions
- Using an unsuitable child seat
- Driving while tired or impaired
- No backup plan for transit disruption

Transportation setup checklist

1

First week

- Download official transit tools
- Learn home-to-school/work routes
- Prepare backup fare and route
- Confirm foreign-licence rules

2

First month

- Gather driving and insurance records
- Decide whether licence exchange or testing is needed
- Compare total transit and vehicle costs
- Plan winter transportation

3

Before buying

- Insurance quote obtained
- History, lien, recall and inspection completed
- Total monthly cost fits budget
- Ownership transfer process confirmed

My transportation plan

1

Daily route

- Home to work/school: _____
- Primary mode: _____
- Travel time/cost: _____
- Backup route: _____

2

Driver's licence

- Foreign licence valid until: _____
- Provincial requirement checked at: _____
- Test/exchange date: _____
- Documents needed: _____

3

Vehicle decision

- Monthly total budget: _____
- Insurance estimate: _____
- Inspection provider: _____
- Decision review date: _____

Reliable sources and next steps

Open the linked authority and confirm the current rule before acting.

- 01** **IRCC - Driving in Canada**
www.canada.ca
- 02** **IRCC - Transportation in Canada**
www.canada.ca
- 03** **Transport Canada - Vehicle, tire and car-seat recalls**
tc.canada.ca
- 04** **Transport Canada - Child car-seat safety**
tc.canada.ca
- 05** **Transport Canada - Importing a vehicle**
tc.canada.ca

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