



Canadian
Chamber of
Commerce

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du Canada



Canadian Chamber of Commerce Travel Restart Framework

As Canada's vaccination deployment continues, it is critical to execute a roadmap that will set out markers for a restart to domestic and international travel. Travel has been in a stasis since the start of the pandemic with traffic down 89% through Canadian airports versus pre-pandemic levels. Traffic levels are forecast to recover to 17% of pre-pandemic levels by the end of this year, with a full recovery not until 2024.¹ Yet, mobility is critical for Canadians and economic growth. Travel is the lifeline of the tourism industry and essential for Canadian companies that do business abroad when they need to undertake activities such as business development or provide technical services to customers. Aircraft movements also play a critical role in cargo shipping that sustains supply chains. Reduced passenger traffic means less cargo capacity, higher shipping costs, and less investment in infrastructure that facilitates trade. Consequently, Canada urgently needs a roadmap for how travel will be enabled.

Canada cannot afford to wait until after the pandemic is over to develop the travel restart plan given, the lead-time required for implementation. In executing a roadmap, government needs to present a plan that is underpinned by three traits: clarity in its intent and objectives rather than based around outlier issues; trustworthiness that it is based on solid evidence that it will protect the health of Canadians; and predictability that the plan is durable and will only be changed under well telegraphed circumstances.

Several principles should guide the approach to the travel restart:

- The federal government should publish clear health metrics (e.g., vaccination rates, infection rates, prevalence of variants of concern) that will be the milestones for rolling back border restrictions under a risk-based framework rather than sweeping measures. The government should allow arriving higher-risk inbound international travelers to quarantine for a shorter period if two negative COVID test results can be confirmed.
- For higher-risk inbound international travellers who have a business need to be quarantine-exempt upon arrival, Canada should improve the current national interest exemption application system. This includes publishing clear criteria that will be used to adjudicate decisions and increase transparency around the application process. An improved system should also enable national interest exemption applications to operate in a scalable manner without burdening limited government resources. The application must be accessible for businesses of all sizes. The process should also ensure there is a risk-based approach that accounts for groups maintaining strictly closed bubbles.

¹ Source Canadian Airports Council

- The federal government should use positive incentives – such as an elimination/reduction in quarantine and/or test-and-release approach – as a means to encourage vaccine uptake.
- The federal government's approach to digital health credentials must be user-centric for inbound travellers by enabling easy use of the ArriveCAN app and implementing reasonable standards for travellers to prove their health status in the short-term. The government should begin work to leverage integration into existing infrastructure (e.g. trusted traveler programs or industry systems) to enable quicker adoption by travelers. There needs to be consideration given to the impact to trusted traveler programs and ensuring the benefits of expeditious travel are not impacted by health verification measures.
- The rules implemented by the federal government should be coherent across all modes of transport as it relates to testing, reporting of positive cases, and quarantines for individuals entering - and moving within - Canada, including the elimination of quarantine hotels for air travellers. Rules must be consistently enforced by CBSA officials at all points of entry and there should be a mechanism to address reports of inconsistent application of rules.
- The federal government and provinces need to ensure that vaccine records issued domestically can be easily and securely uploaded into the health credential systems of foreign jurisdictions, and that we are aligning with major international standards, including for cybersecurity and privacy, so as to support outbound travel by Canadians.