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Helpful Tips for U.S.-Canadian Border Travelers during the Summer Holidays

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Seattle – U.S. Customs and Border Protection is reminding both Americans and Canadians planning their holiday travel for Canada Day, Fourth of July and summer vacation season that there are a number of steps they can employ to cross the border more efficiently.

The Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative was implemented on June 1 and requires U.S. and Canadian citizens age 16 and older to present a valid, acceptable document that denotes both identity and citizenship when entering the U.S. by land or sea. WHTI acceptable documents include a passport, U.S. passport card, enhanced driver's licenses -- now produced by the State of Washington and Providence of British Columbia -- or a Trusted Traveler Program card (NEXUS, SENTRI and FAST). For more information, visit the WHTI Web site. (GetYouHome.gov)

CBP also wants to remind U.S. lawful permanent residents that the I-551 form (green card) is acceptable for land and sea travel into the U.S.

"The United States remain a welcoming nation for our neighbors to the north, however the holidays and summer weekends will require additional planning and patience on the part of travelers," said Michele James, CBP director of Field Operations-Seattle. "If both Canadian visitors and returning Americans will take the time to 'Know Before You Go' they will help us keep the busy summer traffic moving safely and efficiently."

Here are a few 'Travel Tips' that will assist travelers crossing the international border:

Tip #1 – Travelers should familiarize themselves with the "Know Before You Go" section of the CBP Web site to avoid fines and penalties associated with the importation of prohibited items. "Know Before You Go" brochures are also available at border ports. ([Know Before You Go](#))

Tip #2 – Travelers should prepare for the inspection process before arriving at the inspection booth. Individuals should have their crossing documents available for the inspection and they should be prepared to declare all items acquired abroad. In addition, individuals should end cellular phone conversations before arriving at the inspection booth.

Tip #3 – Members of the traveling public should consult the CBP Web site to monitor border wait times for various ports of entry including Blaine and Sumas, Wash.; Sweetgrass, Mont.; and Pembina, N.D. Information is updated hourly and is useful in planning trips and identifying periods of light use/short waits.

Tip #4 – During periods of heavy travel, border crossers may wish to consider alternative, less heavily traveled entry routes.

Tip #5 – Travelers should plan to build extra time into their trips in the event they cross during periods of exceptionally heavy traffic (i.e. Canada Day and the Fourth of July holidays and adjacent weekends).

Tip #6 – Know the difference between goods for personal use vs. commercial use.

Tip #7 – Do not attempt to bring fruits, meats, dairy/poultry products and firewood into the

United States from Canada without first checking whether they are permitted.

Tip # 8 – Understand that CBP officers have the authority to conduct enforcement examinations without a warrant, ranging from a single luggage examination up to and possibly including a personal search. Even during the summer vacation season, international border crossers should continue to expect a thorough inspection process when they enter the U.S. from Canada.

CBP officials continually monitor traffic and border crossing times at area ports of entry. They plan to fully staff all inspection lanes during peak periods and to implement various traffic management operations to maintain the flow of traffic during periods of exceptionally heavy usage.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection is the unified border agency within the Department of Homeland Security charged with the management, control and protection of our nation's borders at and between the official ports of entry. CBP is charged with keeping terrorists and terrorist weapons out of the country while enforcing hundreds of U.S. laws.

see also:



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