

Ottawa Journal by David Tilson MP ? Things you should know about bringing goods home to Canada from abroad

There are many Canadians who have travelled with their loved ones over the summer and some may be planning a last-minute getaway before the season comes to a close.

Whether you're planning on travelling in the immediate future or making plans for this winter, there are several things to remember about what you may bring home to Canada.

When you've travelled abroad and are returning to Canada, you may qualify for a personal exemption which permits you to bring goods of a certain value into Canada without requiring you to pay regular duty and taxes. There are some general guidelines to assist you on what you may and may not bring home with you to Canada following your travels abroad. It is also important to keep in mind that items allowed to be brought into Canada must still be declared on your declaration card (Canada Border Services Agency Declaration Cards are distributed to passengers who are arriving to Canada by air and are also used at some locations for travellers arriving by train, boat, or bus).

The personal exemptions you may qualify for depend on the length of your absence from Canada. For an absence of less than 24 hours, there are no personal exemptions for same-day cross-border shoppers. If you have an absence of 24 hours or more, you can claim goods up to \$200 (Canadian) without paying any duty. You are required to have the goods with you when you enter Canada. Please also keep in mind that tobacco and alcoholic beverages are not included in this amount. If you bring goods with a value of more than \$200, you are required to pay full duty on the total amount.

For an absence of 48 hours or more, you may claim goods with a value up to \$800 without paying any duty. You are also required to have the goods with you when you enter Canada. Although you can include some tobacco products and alcohol, a partial exemption may apply to cigarettes, tobacco products, and manufactured tobacco. For more details, please see the Canada Border Service Agency's (CBSA) web pages on alcoholic beverages at www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/publications/pub/bsf5056-eng.html#s2x13 and tobacco products at www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/publications/pub/bsf5056-eng.html#s2x14. If you have exceeded your personal exemption following a trip of 48 hours or longer outside of Canada, you will be subject to a special duty rate of seven per cent on the next \$300-worth of goods. This rate only applies to goods that accompany you and doesn't apply to tobacco products or alcoholic beverages. You are still required to pay any Goods and Services Tax (GST) or Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) that applies. CBSA also collects the provincial sales tax in some provinces.

If you have been absent from Canada for seven days or more, you may claim up to \$800 worth of goods without being required to pay any duty. It is important to remember you must have the tobacco and alcohol with you when you are entering Canada; however, the rest of your goods may arrive later by mail, courier or delivery agency. As mentioned previously, although you can include some tobacco products and alcoholic beverages, a partial exemption may apply to cigarettes, tobacco products, and manufactured tobacco. Please refer to the web links listed above for more information.

For those Canadians who have spent part of the year in another country, you are still considered a resident of Canada, which means you too, are entitled to the same personal exemptions as other Canadians. Should you import foreign goods or vehicles for your personal use into Canada (even temporarily), you must meet all import requirements and pay all applicable duty and taxes.

For more information and details on what you can bring home to Canada, I encourage you to visit <http://travel.gc.ca/returning/customs/bringing-to-canada#+48hrs>. These guidelines can help all Canadians plan accordingly when travelling abroad to ensure there are no surprises when returning home to Canada

