

# Questions & Answers

## Reporting Requirements for Private Boaters

For use by CBSA media relations only

### *Reporting requirements*

#### **Q.1. What are the reporting requirements for private boaters entering Canada?**

- All private boaters are required to report upon arrival in Canada, with one exception as follows. Canadian legislation stipulates that private boaters that are 'in transit' through Canada are not required to report, provided they are proceeding directly from one point outside of Canada to another point outside of Canada. This movement, defined as 'in transit,' must be continuous, uninterrupted and without delays or stopovers.
- Arrival in Canada occurs when a boat or other marine vessel crosses the international boundary into Canadian waters.
- The requirement to report applies to all foreign boaters entering Canada, as well as private boaters who depart Canada, enter foreign waters, and subsequently return to Canada. This requirement exists regardless of boaters activities while outside of Canada or their planned activities while in Canada. Private boaters are required to report regardless of whether or not they drop anchor, land, enter an inland tributary or moor alongside another vessel while in foreign waters.

#### **Q.2 Has the law changed?**

- While the law has not changed, in July 2011 the CBSA announced simplified reporting for certain private boaters.
- Certain private boaters may now contact the CBSA by calling the Telephone Reporting Centre (TRC) at 1-888-226-7277 from their cellular telephones upon arrival in Canadian waters, to obtain clearance. This includes:
  - Canadian citizens and permanent residents who have not landed on U.S. soil; and
  - U.S. citizens and permanent residents who do not plan on landing on Canadian soil.
- All other private boaters, including those without cellular telephones, must proceed directly to a CBSA designated marine telephone reporting site and place a call to the TRC to obtain CBSA clearance. This includes all vessels carrying individuals who are not Canadian or U.S. citizens or permanent residents.

#### **Q.3 Are reporting requirements for private boaters the same for both Canada and the U.S.?**

- The CBSA can only speak to the reporting requirements as outlined by Canadian law. All private boaters are required to report upon arrival in Canada.
- Arrival in Canada occurs when a boat or other marine vessel crosses the international boundary into Canadian waters.
- In recognition of the importance of travel and leisure to Canadian communities, the CBSA takes a practical approach to the application of the law. While there are both low-risk and higher-risk private



vessels travelling through Canadian waters, we know the majority of private boaters just want to enjoy Canada's coasts and inland waterways.

***Planning to "land" your vessel on Canadian soil or did you leave Canada and land on U.S. soil?***

**Q.4 I'm a U.S. resident planning to "land" my vessel on Canadian soil. How do I report my entry to Canada?**

- All private boaters who intend to land on Canadian soil are required to report to a CBSA designated marine reporting site.
- Upon arrival at a CBSA designated marine reporting site, boaters should use the phone provided to place a call to the Telephone Reporting Centre (TRC) at 1-888-226-7277 to obtain clearance.

**Q.5. I'm a Canadian resident who left Canada by boat and landed on U.S. soil. Am I required to report upon re-entry to Canada?**

- Yes, all private boaters who have departed Canadian waters and landed on U.S. soil, are required to report to a CBSA designated marine reporting site.
- Upon arrival at a CBSA designated marine reporting site, boaters should use the phone provided to place a call to the Telephone Reporting Centre (TRC) at 1-888-226-7277 to obtain clearance.

**Q.6. What can boaters expect when they call the Telephone Reporting Centre (TRC)?**

- When private boaters call the TRC, they will be asked a series of questions about their trip, any passengers onboard the vessel, and their declarations.
- It is the responsibility of the owner/operator to ensure all those onboard have [proper identification](#). After recording the information provided, the CBSA officer at the TRC will determine whether further verification or examination is required.
- If no examination is necessary, the CBSA officer will provide a report number to the owner/operator. The receipt of this report number will constitute release and approval for entry into Canada.
- If a verification or examination is required, the CBSA officer will advise the owner/operator to ensure all goods and passengers remain onboard until the verification team arrives.
- A report number will be provided following the verification process. Owners/operators should keep their report number available during their entire stay in Canada.

***Vessels in transit and commercial passenger vessels***

**Q.7. What about vessels that are in transit, travelling from one point to another? Are they required to report?**

- Canadian legislation stipulates that private boaters that are 'in transit' through Canada are not required to report, provided they are proceeding directly from one point outside of Canada to another point outside of Canada. This movement, defined as "in transit," must be continuous, uninterrupted and without delays or stopovers.
- In transit movement by foreign boaters may be undertaken for a variety of reasons including, obtaining the shortest route, respecting requirements of deep waters, and evading obstacles such as bridges, etc.
- It is important to note that as a result of our diverse geography, there are situations when a vessel while travelling from one point in Canada, to another point in Canada, may cross through U.S. waters. Canadian law does not recognize these vessels as "in transit," and as such, they are required to report.

**Q.8. What about commercial passenger vessels, such as ferries and tour boats? There are plenty of U.S.-based ferries that transit Canadian waters and Canadian-based ferries that transit U.S. waters. Are ferries and tour boats required to report?**

- In recognition of the importance of travel and leisure to Canadian communities, the CBSA takes a practical approach to the application of the law.
- Commercial passenger vessels, such as ferries and tour boats, have clear itineraries and scheduled routes. Provided their movement is continuous, uninterrupted and without delays or stopovers, the CBSA does not require commercial passenger vessels, such as ferries and tour boats to report.

***Not planning to "land" your vessel, or are you a Canadian resident who left Canada but did not land on U.S. soil?***

**Q.9. I'm a resident of the U.S. and while out boating, I occasionally enter Canadian waters but never dock or land. How do Canadian reporting requirements apply to me?**

- You still need to report to the CBSA. While the law has not changed, in 2011 the CBSA introduced simplified cell-phone reporting, to make it easier for certain private boaters to comply.
- U.S. citizens and permanent residents who do not plan on landing on Canadian soil may contact the CBSA by calling the TRC at 1-888-226-7277 from their cellular telephones upon arrival in Canadian waters, to obtain clearance.
- Private boaters that are strictly weaving in and out of Canadian waters but are not in transit, are required to call the TRC only once at the time of their initial entry into Canadian waters. If this activity changes, i.e., the vessel docks in Canada or takes on new persons or goods while in foreign waters, the boater must report directly to a CBSA designated marine reporting site and call the TRC upon their arrival in Canada.
- All other private boaters, including those without cellular telephones, must proceed to a CBSA designated marine telephone reporting site and place a call to the TRC to obtain clearance. This includes all vessels carrying individuals who are not Canadian or U.S. citizens or permanent residents.

**Q.10. I'm a Canadian resident and boat often. While I may enter U.S. waters I never land or dock my boat on U.S. soil. Am I required to report upon my return to Canada?**

- Yes, you still need to report to the CBSA. While the law has not changed, in 2011 the CBSA introduced simplified cell-phone reporting, to make it easier for certain private boaters to comply.
- Canadian citizens and permanent residents who have not landed on U.S. soil may contact the CBSA by calling the TRC at 1-888-226-7277 from their cellular telephones upon arrival in Canadian waters, to obtain clearance.
- Private boaters that are strictly weaving in and out of Canadian waters but are not in transit, are required to call the TRC only once at the time of their initial entry into Canadian waters. If this activity changes, i.e., the vessel docks in Canada or takes on new persons or goods while in foreign waters, the boater must report directly to a CBSA designated marine reporting site and call the TRC upon their arrival in Canada.
- All other private boaters, including those without cellular telephones, must proceed to a CBSA designated marine telephone reporting site and place a call to the TRC to obtain clearance. This includes all vessels carrying individuals who are not Canadian or U.S. citizens or permanent residents.

***Tips to make reporting easier***

**Q.11. Do you have any tips to help make reporting to the CBSA easier?**

- Never leave home without acceptable identification.
  - It is the responsibility of the owner/operator to ensure all those onboard have proper identification. A valid Canadian passport, while not mandatory, is the preferred piece of identification for Canadians

entering Canada. Other acceptable identification includes an enhanced driver's licence, Permanent Resident Card, or a Secure Certificate of Indian Status, as well as a NEXUS or Free and Secure Trade card for Canadian citizens.

- Know what you've got onboard.
  - It's not a problem to bring the food and drinks you need for your trip. When law enforcement authorities patrol Canadian waters, they're looking for signs of higher-risk activities, which could include smuggling goods into or out of the country. Canadian law requires that travellers report to the CBSA when carrying CAN\$10,000 or more, or its equivalent in a foreign currency across the border. We recommend boaters carry only what they need for their trip and leave the rest at home.

**Q.12. If I'm out fishing or hunting waterfowl in foreign waters do I report my "catch" to the CBSA upon entry to Canada?**

- All travellers, including boaters, are required to obey the law. While you are not required to report the fish or waterfowl you catch, some provinces and territories may have specific restrictions. Local legislation must be followed concerning prohibited or protected wildlife species. Contact your local Fish and Wildlife Agency as to the possible restrictions in your fishing or hunting area.

***Advance Reporting Arrangements***

**Q.13. I boat often. Is there any way to make reporting my entry to Canada easier?**

- The CBSA's Trusted Traveller programs streamline the border clearance process for pre-approved, low-risk travellers.
- NEXUS and CANPASS members can provide advance notice to the CBSA at least 30 minutes (minimum) and up to four hours (maximum) prior to arriving in Canada by calling the NEXUS Telephone Reporting Centre at 1-866-99-NEXUS (1-866-996-3987) and 1-888-CANPASS (1-888-226-7277) respectively.
- For more information on how to apply to NEXUS and CANPASS, as well as the full requirements and benefits of the programs, visit our [NEXUS](#) or [CANPASS](#) Web pages.

**Q.14. I'm organizing a local boating event and am concerned that reporting requirements will restrict or limit location participation. Does the CBSA have any arrangements for local events such as mine?**

- Are you organizing a local boating event or fishing derby and wonder how reporting requirements may impact your participants? Contact the TRC as soon as possible at 1-888-226-7277 to discuss clearance procedures for your participants. Ask for the TRC superintendent who can assist you and your participants in complying with reporting regulations, so you can enjoy your time on the water this summer.

***Failure to Report***

**Q.15. Is the CBSA really going to be stopping vessels on the water to check if they have reported?**

- Canadian authorities do not inspect every vessel entering Canadian waters. We take a practical approach to the application of the law, in recognition of the reality that there are both low-risk and higher-risk vessels travelling through Canadian waters.
- Canadian law enforcement authorities do patrol Canada's coasts and inland waterways and have the authority to stop any vessel having recently entered Canadian waters.
- All travellers, including boaters, are required to obey the law and comply with reporting requirements.

**Q.16. What happens if someone doesn't report?**

- Canadian law enforcement authorities do patrol Canada's coasts and inland waterways and have the authority to stop any vessel having recently entered Canadian waters. Failure to report may result in detention, seizure or forfeiture of the vessel and/or monetary penalties. The minimum fine for failing to report to the CBSA upon entry to Canada is CAN\$1,000.
- Following enforcement action, all persons have the right to appeal the penalty. An independent third party reviews the elements of the seizure/action and will render a decision. To appeal a seizure or penalty, individuals must send a written submission to the Recourse Directorate of the CBSA. For more information on appeals, visit the CBSA Web site at: [www.cbsa.gc.ca](http://www.cbsa.gc.ca). The appeal must be filed within 90 days of the penalty action.

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