

## Canada-U.S. Blog

LEGAL DEVELOPMENTS AFFECTING CANADA-U.S. CROSS BORDER TRADE

# How to Avoid Problems at the Canada/US Border at Thanksgiving

By Cyndee Todgham Cherniak on November 25th, 2015

Posted in Border Security, Canada's Federal Government, Cross-border trade, NEXUS



Thanksgiving is a time of year for families to get together. There is a lot of food. If your family is anything like my family, we exchange gifts with people we will not see over the Christmas holidays.

Border crossings get backed-up during important holidays, such as Thanksgiving. This year, in 2015, due to the recent events in Paris and the extra scrutiny at the border, expect long line ups at customs checkpoints and longer than normal delays. For this reason, be prepared when you make your declaration to the primary officer in the booth. Don't hedge your bets (i.e., not declare anything when you have something to declare) because you have been in line for a long time and just want to get home. Making a proper and accurate declaration at Customs is an important step in the Thanksgiving coming and going process.

If you are traveling over the Canada/US border to celebrate Thanksgiving, please remember to declare any gifts that you will be leaving behind. If you are spending U.S. Thanksgiving in Canada, the rule is that you must declare everything that you plan to leave in Canada – even gifts. If you would like to avoid line ups inside the Canada Border Services Agency offices, don't bring gifts with you. The expense to ship gifts may be worth the money if you do not wish to be delayed in the line ups.

Also, when you return home, declare any gifts that you received (you may have to open them at the border in front of the border officers – make sure to treat the gift as the best gift ever) and any goods you purchased for yourself. It is best to obtain the receipts from the gift giver.

Also, don't forget to declare all the food that you are bringing for holiday festivities. It is best to not bring any food that is not permitted (e.g., fruits, vegetables, dairy, eggs, poultry, etc.). Check to see what food is not allowed – because if you bring it, your travel time will be extended due to the time spent in lines at the border. The fines are significant for not declaring food. For example, failure to declare food in Canada is \$800 and you can have your NEXUS card cancelled. For this reason, if you would like to minimize your risk (and travel delays) do not bring food or alcohol across the border – buy what you need at your destination.

In addition, if you are bringing currency in excess of \$10,000, you must declare the currency.

Finally, if you have teenagers, have the talk with them about drugs. It is really embarrassing and is a negative event if your child is arrested at the border. The rule must be that they not bring any drugs and that they look in their pockets (clothing and bags) to make sure that drugs are not bring transported across the border.

Tags: Canada Border Servcies Agency, CBSA, food, gifts, holiday, presents, Thanksgiving, USCBP

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