



*Irish Cultural Society*  
of Calgary

# **Newcomer's Guide**

## **(Your Canadian Journey)**

- Moving to Canada?**
- Arrived in Calgary?**
- Applying for Residency?**
- Applying for Citizenship?**

..... Information that may be of interest to **Calgary Newcomers and Others!**



## Introduction

### **Where are you on your Canadian Journey?**

Thinking of moving to Canada, or recently arrived in Calgary or any Canadian City, applying for residency and eventually applying for citizenship - all can be a challenge even for the most capable of us!

A team within the Irish Cultural Society of Calgary (ICS) has produced this initial document and welcomes relevant input from others, to continue to produce information about day to day factors, which may be a help to newcomers.

The journey is contained in the following parts:

- Part I - [Thinking of Moving to Canada?](#)**
- Part II - [Recently Arrived in Calgary?](#)**
- Part III - [Applying for Residency?](#)**
- Part IV - [Applying for Citizenship?](#)**

Please also note that some highlighted and underlined texts may be “hyperlinked” to additional information --- these are usually in a different colour --- can be accessed by either moving the cursor onto the text and clicking on it if a “hand” appears, or, right clicking and selecting “hypertext - open link.”

This document was placed on the [ICS Website](#) about February 1<sup>st</sup> 2019 as a text document (version V1.1) and the intention is to add graphics and an easy on-line search function on the ICS Website (at calgaryics.org or, type Irish Cultural Society Calgary), as the next phases of development. We ask for your patience as we work to improve this newcomer guide.

**We hope you enjoy.**

## **The Irish Cultural Society**

The Irish Cultural Society of Calgary (ICS) is a non-profit organization which exists for the purpose to guide, support and appreciate the best aspects of Irish and Celtic culture, social relationships and recreational activities, in all their forms.

The ICS has an open, welcoming and collaborative approach to everyone. Membership and guests who enjoy the fun and friendship of the Irish social attitude are always welcome.

### **“Sense of Irishness”**

**You may be considered as being Irish if you have a “Sense of Irishness” about you, and perhaps the definition of Irishness could be described as follows:**

***“Anyone who has supported, participated in, or appreciated and enjoyed an opportunity associated with an Irish or Celtic activity of music, drama, concerts, theatre, poetry, writings, readings, history, language or love of the Land has experienced a “Sense of Irishness”, at least for a moment in time, and as a member, guest, visitor or friend is warmly welcomed to the ICS.”***

***“Our symbol is a graphic representation of a never ending knot from the 7<sup>th</sup> century Irish monastic “Book of Durrow”.***

***A knot which binds us all together.”***



©

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## **Document Information**

Please note that this information document is under active production and updates will be available on the ICS website.

### **Acknowledgements and Document History**

For some time the Irish Cultural Society (ICS) had considered taking on a broader array of scope, such as providing some information for Newcomers on a very limited scale. But the project was never started.

In November 2018, Pádraig McMullan, a Newcomer to Calgary, contacted the ICS and a coffee chat took place with David Price and Colleen Devlin. An idea was committed to. A short while later at an evening meeting, the team of Padraig, David & Greg Nolan, firmed up the scope and structure of the project. The agreed goal was to have Phase I as written text in a format to subsequently be able to download or read on line. Graphics to improve visual quality were Phase II. Phase III was to improve formatting to allow easy use of online menu and key word search. There was an identified need to provide management of updates to maintain the information as current. An approach was to insert personal comments from experiences that were not readily available elsewhere, and use hypertext and hyperlinks to other helpful data. All to provide a helpful guide to Newcomers to Calgary and Canada.

The material was presented to the ICS Board on January 2019 as a 16 page comprehensive first version, and was passionately approved to proceed. And it was agreed to go on the ICS website with a target date of February 1<sup>st</sup> 2019, even though it would still be in a formative stage.

In keeping with the ICS culture it was agreed to invite valid contribution from others. To date, the following contributions are acknowledged and welcomed:

*Ciara Lane, Colleen Devlin, Michele Holmgren, Angela Williams, Vincent Morales*

On behalf of Pádraig and myself, thanks to those who are supporting this effort. Our hope is, in some way, we have helped those of us on a part of a journey. The Newcomer's Guide itself, is also on a journey of evolution as a living project.

### **Disclaimer**

This material has been put together by volunteers from the Irish Cultural Society of Calgary, with the hope and intent it provides helpful information to newcomers to Calgary, and others. It has been prepared and presented in good faith. Some aspects may be based on personal experiences that may not always relate to other situations or to other people. People react differently to apparently similar situations, but there may be different influencing factors. It is suggested that readers should seek advice and information from multiple sources before deciding on any particular course of action.

We do hope you enjoy the information provided and wish you well on any phase of any journey you are on.

*David Price, ICS President January 31, 2019.*

## Part I - Thinking of Moving to Canada?

### **Different ways to immigrate:**

- There are [several different ways to immigrate to Canada](#) however the most common in recent years is the Working Holiday visa program.

The 2 year Working Holiday program is designed for Irish citizens (aged between 18 and 35) who intend to travel in Canada and who wish to find temporary paid employment (up to 24 months).

- To be eligible for the Working Holiday category, you must:
  1. Have a valid Irish passport for the duration of your stay in Canada (24 months minimum) - *please note; if you hold a British passport, there is a separate British pool with different terms*
  2. Be between the ages of 18 and 35 (inclusive)
  3. Have a minimum of CAN\$2,500 to help cover your expenses in Canada
  4. Have health insurance for the duration of your stay
  5. Be admissible to Canada
  6. Not be accompanied by dependents.
- Applications are easy and straightforward - for more information and next steps, go to the [official Canada immigration site](#)
- Immigration requirements change regularly, to ensure the most correct information please contact a legal professional or the Government of Canada prior to submitting any immigration applications.

### **About Canada**

- Canada is the world's 2<sup>nd</sup> largest country but has only a population of 36 million. Each of its ten Provinces and three territories has their own unique landscape and history.
- The provinces are, in alphabetical order: Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, and Saskatchewan. The three territories are Northwest Territories, Nunavut, and Yukon.

### **About Alberta**

- Alberta is a Province of Canada, which was founded in 1905. Edmonton is the capital city however the city of Calgary has a larger population.

## Oil based economy

- Despite efforts to diversify, Alberta is essentially an oil an oil-based economy (between 20% and 25% of Alberta's GDP). Oil is recovered by oil wells and open cast mining of oil sands. Conventional drilling uses state of the art directional drilling and enhancement processes such as injection techniques. Oil sands mining includes use of heavy mining equipment and steam separation of the oil and sand. There are also large coal deposits close to the surface and these are usually accessed by open cast mining. Natural gas is obtained by conventional drilling. Electric generating stations are usually powered by coal or natural gas. The Province of Alberta aims at supplying 30% of its electricity from renewable sources by 2030 and decreasing its coal use to 0%. Alberta has the best solar and wind resources in Canada. There is some use of wind turbines. Environmental controls are continuously upgraded. Alberta is in a cold region and in winter the average daily temperature requires significant consumption of energy for heating homes and commercial buildings. In terms of energy use it is worth noting that Calgary is a very sunny place. We get as much sun as Brazil and Miami – just not as warm.

## About Calgary

- Located in the south of Alberta, Calgary is Alberta's largest city. Calgary is known globally for its high quality of life. The economy of Calgary includes energy, financial services, film and television, transportation and logistics, technology, manufacturing, aerospace, health and wellness, retail, and tourism sectors. It is often called the city of head offices as over 800 of Canadas largest companies have their main office in Calgary.

## Calgary as a Destination

- Calgary is in the southern part of the Province of Alberta. Alberta is one of the Provinces in Western Canada. A ten-hour drive to the west, through the Rocky Mountains will get you to the coast of British Columbia. About a three-hour drive south will put you into Montana in the US. The Alberta Capital City of Edmonton is a three-hour drive or 45-minute flight to the North. If you drive east along the TransCanada Highway for several days, you will still be in Canada. Calgary was located at the junction of the Bow and Elbow rivers and is at a transition zone between the Rocky Mountains and Prairie, in the Foothills. Population is about 1.3 million, elevation at about 1040 m above sea level and the City area is about 320 square miles.
- The City is laid out as four quadrants, the NE, NW, SE and SW. Centre Street runs north to south and divides the city into east and west. The Bow River runs approximately east to west and divides the city into the north and south. Avenues typically run east to west. Streets typically run north to south. As a general guide the Calgary Tower is close to the centre of the city and the Rocky Mountains are to the west. A Calgarian giving directions would typically say turn east or west rather than left or right. Street names often refer to the city quadrant. Roads are sometimes called the north or south road. The Airport is at the north of the city.

### Some relevant facts are:

- The Rockies have a mountain pass due west of Calgary that in winter allows warm Chinook winds to flow to the City several times a year. A Chinook can raise [Calgary temperatures](#) by more than 20°C within a couple of hours so layered clothing may help. [Chinook](#) winds can sometimes cause headaches.
- Additionally [Chinook](#) winds can stress roof shingles so a good idea if replacing the roof covering to ask for interlocking shingles.
- Calgary is in what is locally known as Hailstorm Alley. Large hail can occur a couple of times a year so if you see dark cloud formations try and park under a roof.
- If driving north to Edmonton there are a couple of areas such as near the town of Bowden where ice patches form and you can hit black (invisible) ice. A sign is vehicles off the road in a ditch – you do not want to become a warning sign to others.
- Most of the time Calgary has blue sky and the air is fresh.
- Newcomers may notice that Calgary air can be very dry, so lip balm may help. You may also feel static electric sometimes when you touch metal door handles.
- Rush hour(s) can start at 6:30 am to 7:30 am and again from 2:30 to 5:30.
- Calgary has a road lane reversal system. When driving towards the city centre in the morning some traffic lanes will be reversed to allow a greater one way flow; at night the reversals are to allow faster egress from the city. A green arrow above the traffic lane is an approved direction, whereas a red cross is no entry to that lane.

### [Cost of Calgary Living](#)

- More information can be found online on Calgary's [average cost of living](#)

### [Official documentation](#)

- It is important to gather as much official documentation prior to your arrival in Canada. Examples include, birth certificate and official university transcripts. You may be asked to provide this at some point therefore it's better to be prepared.

### [What Clothes to Bring](#)

- Calgary has a great selection of clothing shops and you may want to pack light and purchase more bulky clothing when you arrive. As you are aware, Calgary has varied weather therefore if you arrive in winter layering is key, you will need the following:
  - Winter coat (with hood)
  - Warm underwear (long underwear for men and stockings / tights for women)
  - Heavy socks
  - Waterproof winter boots
  - Scarf, gloves and hat
  - Sunglasses (even in winter)

## Part II - Recently Arrived in Calgary?

For convenience, this information is presented as follows:

1. [General](#)
2. [Personal](#)
3. [Recreation](#)
4. [Getting Advice](#)

### GENERAL

#### [Arriving in Calgary? The Irish Cultural Society can help](#)

After arriving in Calgary and perhaps after you get some practical items done such as getting a Social Insurance Number (SIN) and bank account set up, one way to ease in a transition is to try and meet an Irish - Calgarian and grab a coffee to chat about the lay of the land and for general Calgary advice.

You can reach out to the Irish Cultural Society which is in the Bowness area of Calgary @ 6452 – 35 Avenue N. W.

Let us know you are new to Calgary by:

- Visiting our website [www.calgaryics.org](http://www.calgaryics.org)
- Sending an email to [calgaryics@gmail.com](mailto:calgaryics@gmail.com)
- Telephone (403) 288-8641

#### [The City of Calgary Services](#)

The City operates a phone and online service for accessing all municipal concerns. Phone 311 or type in Calgary 311 for an online request. This applies to any resident, visitor business owner. It is an information service for non-emergencies. Includes bylaws, potholes, street cleaning and concerns & complaints, as well as some requested building inspection services. If in doubt please ask – they cover a lot.

- There is a free Mobile 311 App for iPhones, iPads and Android.
- The 311-phone access is available in many languages.
- For outside of Calgary phone 403-268-2489
- You will be given a Service Request Number to be able to track progress on resolving any issue.
- For Bus & Train service information call 403-262-1000 or [visit Calgary Transit](#)
- For the Calgary Parking Authority phone 403-537-7000

#### [Waste Management](#)

Cities in Alberta have a recycling system. In Calgary, organic (food) waste goes into a green bin. Recyclables such as glass and metal go into a blue bin. The rest usually goes into a black bin. Landfill sites are also available as are recycling area at major shopping centres. Electronics may often be recycled at bottle depots (for returning empty bottles, and getting a refund). Good advice about caring waste management is available at [Green Calgary](#).



### [Parking in Calgary](#)

Calgary parking is one of the most expensive in North America; take the City transit buses or trains whenever possible

### [General Health Care in Calgary](#)

Remember in an emergency dial 911.

Foothills Hospital in the N.W. is the leading trauma and acute care centre and is leading edge for Heart & Stroke, and Cancer Treatment @ the Tom Baker Centre. The Peter Lougheed Hospital in the N.E is a good facility and is good for gastro intestinal matters. There is a New South Hospital Campus in the south and this offers very high-quality care especially for short term stays and is perhaps the friendliest hospital around. There is also Rocky View Hospital.

For non-emergencies the City of Calgary Health Services provides a 24/7 Health Link. Phone 811 or email to <https://myhealth.alberta.ca/811> or try MyHealth.Alberta.ca for:

- Health Advice
- Health Information
- Funding Health Care
- Primary Care Network
  - Local Doctors
  - Healthcare Providers

The Sheldon Chumir Centre in the Calgary City Centre provides excellent non-emergency care as does the Urgent Care Centre in nearby Cochrane to the west of Calgary. The Cochrane facility usually has small line ups and provides blood test and x-ray services.

### [Health card](#)

Alberta health cards are very important to receive medical services within the province, there are requirements that must be met prior to signing up. More information on Alberta Health card can be found on [the Government of Alberta website](#).

### [Family doctor](#)

Once you have an Alberta Health card, you are available to sign up with a local family doctor. More information can be found on [the Alberta Health website](#).

### [Walk in clinic](#)

- There are several walk-in clinics throughout Calgary. No appointment or prior sign up is required, it is important to bring your health card or valid insurance. A map of walk in clinics and their wait times can be found on the [Medimap site](#).

### [Opticians](#)

- Eyecare can be expensive in Canada so choosing the right opticians is important. You can compare prices whenever possible, and always check out online reviews prior to booking appointments.

## Dentists

- Calgary has lots of dentists, but services can vary from each. It is important to research prior to seeking treatment, reading reviews and referrals can help.

## Mental health support

We are all the same and we are all different. We are the same in the sense we are self-aware organic beings. We consist of skin, bone and muscle and we have brains. We have thoughts and feelings and are subject to our environment and influencing factors such as other people, finances, health and trauma, climate, jobs, location, our immediate situation and possible or probable situation. When we have blood tests to check our body chemistry those tests are evaluated against the average ranges of other people. Many of us have blood results that are out of range and at times it is normal to be outside the so called normal range. We are different because we are born to different people, our physical exteriors are unique, we speak differently and hear and process communications differently, our immediate world, work and financial situation, and relationships build us differently. We interact differently with others and we internalise differently.

Stress can be a motivator to perform or be destructive in an instant or over the long term. Typically, losing a relationship, being injured, caring for someone, losing a good job, lack of sleep and running low on money, as well as random incidents, and being a Newcomer, can and do affect us mentally. Even today, we generally do not treat mental issues in the best way.

For some people some techniques to recover and recharge do work, some of the time. For others the techniques may just be useless platitudes. Such approaches can include taking a few deep breathes, listening to music, distracting from the issue by reading a book, having a coffee, talking to someone, asking for help and if that person cannot help then asking someone else, prescribed medication and if that does not work ask the doctor to try something else, going to a spa or treatment centre, avoiding people or situations that cause stress. It may be worth acknowledging that others suffer adverse situations too and people are not always what they seem. When people who are nasty and you do not respect such people, maybe you could try and discount their comments and avoid them. At the end of the day you are worth taking care of and maybe you could demand less of yourself for a while. It is also sensible to be aware that scam artists can take advantage of us when we are vulnerable. But there is a possible reality in that sometimes a friend or stranger, or a professional person, can and do reach out to us and give us a helping hand when things appear bleak. Part of the motivation for this Newcomer's Guide was because of people reaching out and trying to offer something, to try and help some of us through challenges, and move towards a better place.

- Being away from home can have an impact on mental health, within Calgary there are several services available to help. More information can be found on the [Alberta Access Mental Health site](#). Remember never suffer in silence, there is support available.

## Skin Care

Calgary sits at a high altitude and the air is thin relative to sea level. The air is also clean with little pollution. On sunny days a lot of UV light can penetrate deeply. This is particularly true on ski hills with the additional impact of snow reflection. You may want to up the SPF level. For skiers who wear goggles the burnt face and white around the protected eyes can cause the look

of a racoon. When skiing without goggles burnt eyeballs may be interesting to see but are painful.

At temperatures below about -15 °C with a wind, a nose or ears can get frostbite very quickly. It is good to cover. Wind speed does effect frostbite potential and feeling cold. Weather people will refer to wind chill, which is the combined effect of low temperatures and wind. Very white skin and loss of sensitivity to touch can be a warning sign of frost bite. Best to warm the area slowly or go to a walk in clinic or hospital as soon as possible.

Lips should also be protected in hot dry and cold dry conditions with lip balm. Also good to remember sucking in icy cold air when running for a bus, not only impacts lips but draws very cold air into lungs.

### [Business Contacts](#)

The **Ireland – Canada Centre for Commerce** in Calgary actively promotes contacts. They offer breakfast meetings on related events and provide networking. Their website is <https://www.icccal.com>. ICCC are focused on promoting collaboration between Irish & Canadian business leaders & professionals.

### [The Calgary Chieftains GAA](#)

The Calgary Chieftains is a Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) organization for folks interested in Gaelic sports and is also a hub for Irish minded folks to meet to play football & hurling, cheer on the team and shoot the breeze about Kerry & Galway and the GAA in Calgary & Edmonton. Their website is <http://www.calgarychieftains.com>

### [Irish Embassy](#)

The **[Irish Embassy](#)** is in Ottawa. A new office has recently opened in Vancouver.

Our **Irish Honorary Consul** in Calgary is Deirdre Halferty. Deirdre is a past president of the Irish Cultural Society (ICS) and a realtor. Deirdre offers support on linking between Calgary and Ireland in urgent and stressful situations. Please contact the ICS.

## PERSONAL

### Personal Documentation

- Always keep a record of identification in a safe place.

### SIN number

- You will need a Social Insurance Number (SIN) (9 digit) to work in Canada. This is a very important piece of information (paper form) which should never be given out to anyone other than an employer.
- To get a SIN, you will have to visit a Service Canada Office in person, you will need to bring required documentation such as proof of Canada status for example, working holiday visa.
- Find your nearest Service Canada office by clicking [here](#)

### Driver's Licence

- May be obtained at Registry Offices.

### ID for Non-drivers

- Non-drivers may obtain an ID card similar to a Driver's Licence at Registry Offices.

### Where and how to apply for Irish passports from Calgary

- Forms are available on-line and at the Irish Cultural Centre.
- Irish passport renewals are now available [online at the DFA website](#). This service can be used by Irish citizens living anywhere in the world and is available 24 hours, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

### Canadian Money

- Several years ago, Canada stopped issuing notes for \$1 and \$2 bills and replaced with coins. The One-dollar coin had a picture of a Loon – a Canadian waterfowl – and became known as the Loonie. The subsequent two-dollar coin became known as a Toonie. One cent coin production was stopped many years ago – often referred to as “pennies” and can still be handed in at most banks.
  - Loonie (one dollar)
  - Toonie (two dollars)
  - Quarter (25 cents)
  - Dime (10 cents)
  - Nickel (five cents)

### Dollar Bills

- 5, 10, 20, 50 and 100 and if you are lucky 1,000 denominations

## Taxes

- Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) is the tax agency. Canadians (including temporary residents) must submit tax information by April 30th every year for the previous year-end.

## Bank accounts - Opening an account

- Many banks offer a variety of different account types to suit your needs and most offer a newcomer account. Remember some banks will charge you for banking with them, normally a monthly fee. It is important to shop around and find the right bank that match your needs.

## International money transfers

- Money transfers can be carried out at local banks or online. Using online services are usually cheaper than bank rates. Always read reviews prior to using international money transfer companies.

## Work Job sites

- Some local job websites include: [Indeed](#) and the [Canada Job Bank](#)

## Job fairs

- Check local news for job fairs, which often have on the spot interviews and hiring.

## Networking

- Often within Canada, it is important to network to gain new business contacts. Networking can involve simple coffee meetings or more formal business networking events.

## Resumes

- Canada resumes can be slightly different from Irish resumes in their layout styles, so you may need to adjust your resume to Canada standards. Examples of typical Canada resume layouts can be found online.

## Interviews

- Prior to your interview always search the company's location to work out how you are going to get there.
- Leave extra time, some mornings can be traffic heavy in Calgary.
- Dress for the job (professional)
- Be polite and use suitable language when in interview.
- Try to avoid using slang or general sayings which may not be used in Canada.
- If you do not get the job, you can ask for interview feedback. This is common in Canada.
- Some organizations use behavioural interviews where they ask for past examples of situations and how you dealt with the situation – all as a predictor for future behaviour.

### Worker's rights

- In Canada there are set rules on working conditions including minimum wage and holiday entitlement, this information can be found easily on the Government of Alberta website, always contact [employment standards](#) if you have any questions.

### Employment agencies

- There are various temporary work agencies within Calgary. They can offer short term working solutions. Always ensure you know your working rights prior to signing up with any agency. You can also ask for referrals from former or current temporary workers to ensure the agency is right for you.

### Accommodation

- When seeking accommodation within Calgary, always use valid and certified websites such as [rentfaster](#) or local registered rental agents. When viewing the apartment, try to view in the daytime and if possible bring someone else with you to view. If that's not possible, ensure family or friends know you are visiting a rental and give them the address.
- There are a [growing number of scams](#) around accommodation such as posting money to an international address and they will send the keys back in return. If it seems too good to be true, then it probably is. Always research prior to signing any lease and ask for advice from family and friends if required.

### Calgary neighbourhoods

- Calgary is a growing city with many neighbourhoods. Each neighbourhood is unique therefore research is key to ensure it will meet your day to day living needs. List of neighbourhoods can be found [online](#).

### Rentals/ different types of housing

- Condominiums (apartments)
- Semi-detached House, Detached House, Townhouse
- Duplex/Triplex
- Basement suites

### Renter's rights

- There are laws in place to protect renters and landlords on various issues (leases, repairs, roommates and sublets). If you are in doubt and have any questions you can contact [the laws of Landlords and Tenants Alberta site](#).

### Driving

- Driving license.
  - Driving licenses can be obtained in private Registry offices and at the Alberta Motor Association (AMA) if you are a member.

- Driving in the winter
  - In Canada “all season tires” are sometimes referred to as three season tires because they are not as good in winter as “winter tires” made from rubber that stays flexible in sub-zero temperatures. Some people consider “all weather tires” as a partial compromise.
  - Sometimes when driving it is helpful to glance in a rear-view mirror to detect black (invisible) ice in certain road and light conditions.
  - Sun angles can be very low, so sun glasses are a good idea.
  - Bringing a blanket, a candle, matches, flashlight, charged phone and snacks is prudent for long drives. Good idea to let others know if you are taking a long trip in a remote area and advising destination times.
  - **511** provides real time related road alerts – check out the website <https://511.alberta.ca> for more information
  
- Driving in Summer
  - It is possible to aquaplane during summer storms so make sure tires have good treads and slow down before you hit layers of water on the road surface.
  - It is rare but low areas can flood now and again. Best to avoid and turn around. If you must drive through go at a slow and steady pace to avoid setting up a large bow wave – this can flood the engine and ruin electronics.

### Public Transportation

- Getting around
  - [Calgary Transit](#) operates the public bus and light rail transit system sometimes referred to as the C Train.
  - By bus/ rail/ taxis / Uber, light rail transit, [Car2Go](#) which is a car sharing arrangement, bicycle and walking.
  - There is a good bike lane network in Calgary, including street bike lanes and pathways. Many people ride all year but proper equipment and clothing is advised. A new bike sharing scheme called [Lime-Bikes](#) is underway.
- Where to get C Train passes?
  - Many convenience and grocery stores sell tickets and monthly passes; look for the sign on the front entrance indicating that they sell Calgary Transit fare products. Additionally, they are available from the Calgary Transit offices on 7th Avenue between Centre Street and 1st Avenue

### Cars and Car Rental

- Licensed car dealers are regulated by [AMVIC](#) (the Alberta Motor Vehicle Industry Council). If you are going to purchase from a dealer, you should check with AMVIC to make sure that your dealer is in good standing.
- [Used cars are also available throughout Alberta](#), be sure to do your due diligence and trust your instincts when buying.
- Note that if you buy a car from out of Alberta province, it must pass an [Alberta Out of Province Vehicle Inspection](#) before licence plates can be issued.
- If you need a rental car, well known dealers such as Enterprise and Budget are in the Calgary area.

## RECREATION

### Explore Calgary

- Calgary city guide
    - Visit Calgary has excellent [guides](#) depending on the season
  
  - Shopping
    - [CF Chinook Centre](#)
    - [CORE Shopping Centre](#)
    - [South Centre](#)
    - [Cross Iron Mills](#)
    - [Market Mall](#)
    - [Sunridge Mall](#)
    - [Various discount shopping including Goodwill, Value Village, Salvation Army Thrift store, MCC Thrift store \( all sell discounted new and used clothes and furniture\)](#)
  
  - Sightseeing / Attractions
    - [Calgary Zoo](#)
    - [Calgary Tower](#)
    - [Heritage Park](#)
    - [Prince Island Park](#)
    - [Fish Creek Park](#)
    - [Glenbow Museum](#)
    - [Telus Spark](#)
    - [Studio Bell](#)
    - [Fort Calgary](#)
    - [Various Calgary Cinemas](#)
- and,
- The July Calgary Stampede for terrific summer fun. Often described as The Greatest Outdoor Show on Earth, with marching bands, livestock, stalls for all sorts of food and a terrific atmosphere involving Calgarians and visitors from around the world – many proudly wearing cowboy gear.
  - The Scotia [Saddledome](#) for hockey.
  - The [McMahon Stadium](#) for Canadian football.
- 
- Useful Tourist Websites
  - [Visit Calgary](#)

### Alberta Ski Hills

- **Winsport** – In Calgary, very good training hill or for getting your legs back at the start of the season. Limited terrain. Used to be called Canada Olympic Park.
- **Nakiska** - Closest – can be icy.
- **Sunshine** – Lots of variety, in contrast to the name can have flat light conditions.
- **Lake Louise** – Good variety and good snow, and about a two-hour drive, often busy.
- **Panorama** – About a three-hour drive, very good terrain, great on-site accommodation and facilities. More of a destination hill for overnight or weekends.
- **Norquay** – Located at Banff. Fairly steep terrain.



## GETTING ADVICE

### Canadian Society

- Social customs – for example, tipping
  - Canadians appreciate politeness and expect others to adhere to the proper protocol for any given situation.
  - It is normal in Canadian society to tip when service has been provided, tips can range from 10 to 20 percent depending on how happy you are with the service level.
  - Legal drinking age in Alberta is 18. Please note; drinking age varies throughout Canada.
  - When entering a household, it is common in Canadian society to remove shoes to keep the floors clean.

### Contacting Ireland

When dialling an Irish telephone number from Canada:

- dial 011 + 353 + telephone number

When dialling a northern Irish telephone number from Canada:

- dial 011 + 44 + phone number

There are also several phone and online programs (Skype) and applications (WhatsApp, Google Duo) which can offer free video and audio (often to mobiles only) or applications which can offer cheaper calls when dialling landlines from Canada to Ireland.

### Sending mail to Ireland

Canada Post (often found inside drugstores i.e.: Shoppers Drug Mart or Rexall) is a local postal service which can send letters and parcels internationally.

More information can be found on the [Canada post site](#).

Always remember, there are restrictions on what can and can't be posted from and to Canada.

### Podcasts and Irish related news sites

There are many Irish related news sites now available online for free and on subscription, additionally there an increasing number of Irish podcasts. Some examples include:

- [Irish News](#)
- [Irish Times](#)
- [Irish History Podcast](#)
- [Irish Man Abroad Podcast](#)

## Public Services

Calgary public libraries are located throughout the city and are free to register and use. The library has a vast amount of resources (physical and digital), in house and online services including:

- Free meeting rooms
- In-Library Chromebook loans
- Up to \$5 of free printing per month
- Three hours of computer use per day
- Free Wi-Fi

You can register online or in person at local library. The direct website is calgarylibrary.ca.

## Recreation / Leisure centres

Calgary is an active city with dozens of recreation/ leisure centres located throughout. These include fitness centres, soccer centres, sailing schools, golf courses and art centres.

More information can be found here.

## Emergency telephone number – 911

**Remember 911** is the number to **call** any time you have an emergency requiring police, fire or an ambulance. Always **call 911** when someone's health or safety is at risk.

## Calgary – Local Cultural Activities

- Concerts, music nights, poetry, Irish & Celtic events at the ICS.
- The Liffey Players are a community theatre group that specialises in Irish Plays. Web accessed by www.liffeyplayers.com. They often rehearse at the ICS Centre.

## Education

- Irish classes @ the ICS are on Tuesday evenings.
- Music classes @ the ICS are on Saturday mornings.
- The Irish Cultural Society Choirs practices on Wednesday evenings at the Irish Cultural Centre

## Calgary Local Media

- Some local news and radio include:
  - CTV news
  - Global news Calgary
  - Calgary Sun
  - CBC Calgary

## Mobile Phones in Canada

- You may have arrived in Canada with a mobile phone already however it may be worth checking if the device you brought has LTE internet. Some devices from outside Canada will not work correctly when in Canada, this may mean slow or no internet on your mobile phone.
- Remember in Canada to shop around and compare mobile phone providers, phone internet data can be expensive, so it is worth shopping around for the best deals.
- Some useful Calgary phone applications to download include:
  - 311 app
  - YYC transit app
  - Calgary public library app

## Childcare

- Parents can find information about licensed child care programs and contracted family day home agencies with the Child Care [Look-Up Tool available through the Government of Alberta](#)

## Legal Advice - Immigration Lawyers and Advice

- To find a lawyer or to see if there are registered [check the Law Society of Alberta site](#).

## Scams

If you get a phone call or an email supposedly from the **Canada Revenue Agency (CRA)** saying you are owed a tax refund if you follow specified actions ----- just remember the flow of money is usually toward the CRA. If you are owed tax money the correspondence is usually by mail. If you have activated an online registration with the CRA they send you an advisory email to go online into your own registered account. You may also get a threat to be taken to court. The threat usually contains a time pressure such as you need to respond with 24 hours. You will likely come to know that the CRA staff do not have a reputation for doing anything quickly.

A typical phone call is that you are in trouble with your **Visa or MasterCard Account**. Remember Visa and MasterCard are competitors so you will never get a legitimate call from an organization that mentions both.

There are numerous scams involving **apartments**. Con artists usually come across as friendly and helpful.

**“Always be nice, but trust only a few, and always paddle your own canoe!”**

*(Advice from my mother-in-law, so it must be true!)*

Trusting people is a nice quality but advice is to **“Trust, but confirm, and confirm in writing.”** If in doubt check out on the web by typing Scams, talk to friends or phone the police on a non-emergency line, or ask the caller to provide a phone number and seek the information of that number on the web. It is usually not a good idea returning the phone call or responding to the email.

## Part III - Applying for Residency?

[Permanent residency \(PR\) in Canada](#) is a status granting someone who is not a Canadian citizen the right to live and work in Canada without any time limit on his or her stay. Temporary workers (on holiday visas) may be able to apply for PR if they meet certain criteria. Depending on your skillset, you may also use PR to initially immigrate to Canada (arrive in Canada as a PR).

The process is usually straightforward however, every application is different, and some applications may require the assistance of a professional to review the related documents. The system is currently points based with PR draws every few weeks; point's requirements go up and down, **therefore patience is key.**

**You may require the help of an immigration lawyer to assist you with your application.**

### [What Permanent Residents Can Do](#)

As a permanent resident, you have the right to:

- get most social benefits that Canadian citizens receive, including health care coverage
- live, work or study anywhere in Canada
- apply for Canadian citizenship (after criteria is met)
- protection under Canadian law and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

**You must pay taxes and respect all Canadian laws at the federal, provincial and municipal levels.**

### [How to apply for PR](#)

First you need to determine if you are eligible, [there are tools on the CIC website](#) which will help you determine this, once you enter your information, they will also provide you with a checklist of what to do next. It is important you read the information as you may be able to apply for PR under a different category such as a Province Nomination.

### [Usual Documents Required](#)

- passport or travel document
- [language test results](#) – CELPIP is common test
- [education credential assessment report](#) if
  - you're applying through the Federal Skilled Workers program, **or**
  - you want to get points for the education you got outside Canada
- [provincial nomination](#) (if you have one)
- [written job offer from an employer in Canada](#) (if you have one)

If you are invited to apply for PR, most applicants will also need to submit the following:

- [police certificates](#)
- [medical exams](#)
- [proof of funds](#)

## Part IV - Applying for Citizenship?

### Ready to apply for Citizenship?

Applying for Canadian citizenship is the final steps for most immigrants within Canada, the first step **prior to submitting any application forms** is to check you are eligible.

There is a [calculator on the CIC website](#) which will ask a series of questions to determine your status within Canada.

**You may require the help of an immigration lawyer to assist you with your application.**

### **Eligibility questions you will be asked include:**

Since becoming a permanent resident, have you:

- been physically in Canada for at least 1,095 days in the five years before you apply
- filed income taxes (if required by the Income Tax Act) for any three taxation years that are fully or partially within the five years before you apply.

**To ease the application process, it is important that you create a log of each time you have been absent from Canada (visited another country such as Ireland) as you will be asked for this information to determine your physical presence requirements.**

Additionally, usually you are required to take a citizenship test, support is available [online at the Government of Canada website](#).

Processing times can vary so it is important to [check online to get the latest estimated timelines](#).

Please note; you may not be eligible for citizenship if you:

- have a criminal record
- are facing criminal charges in or outside Canada
- have been ordered to leave Canada
- have been refused Canadian citizenship because of misrepresentation
- have had your Canadian citizenship revoked
- have not met the terms and conditions of your permanent resident status.

----- The end for now! -----