

OTTAWA REPORT

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March Break Travel Tips

Reading Week in February and March Break are two of the busiest travel periods in Canada. If you are planning a holiday, either within Canada or out of the country, be sure to check out the Government of Canada's travel.gc.ca website for up to date travel tips. You will find help with all aspects of travel, from trip planning and packing to a safe return to Canada, including: country-specific Travel Advice and Advisories; the Registration of Canadians Abroad service, a free, mobile-friendly way to keep connected to Canada in case of an emergency abroad or at home; the Travel Smart mobile web app; the Travel Insurance Factsheet that guides Canadians on the type of travel insurance to purchase and on what should be included in the policy.

Don't forget to purchase travel insurance?including health insurance?as foreign hospitals can be very expensive, and your provincial or territorial health plan will not cover you when you leave Canada. Before packing your suitcase, you should be aware of what is and is not allowed on a plane. Check the Quick Searchable Guide for what you can or cannot carry in your carry-on or checked baggage at travel.gc.ca/travelling/air.

If you do require consular help while abroad, Canadian citizens can request assistance. [Travel.gc.ca/assistance](http://travel.gc.ca/assistance) provides information on how to contact Canadian embassies and consulates worldwide, and what to do and how to get help in case of an emergency.

Canada records record trade in 2014

Canada's two-way trade surpassed \$1 trillion for the first time in 2014. Canada recorded a trade surplus of \$5.2 billion with overall growth in exports reaching double digits at 10.3 percent. Exports to the United States reached more than \$400 billion, an 11.6-percent growth, and exports to the European Union grew by 14.6 percent.

2014 was the most successful year for trade in Canadian history, with the conclusion of the historic Canada-European Union trade agreement and the landmark Canada-Korea Free Trade Agreement. These accomplishments provide world-class Canadian products with preferential access to more than half of the world's economy, laying the foundation for future export growth, while protecting and creating jobs.

Protecting Canadians from repeat violent offenders

Prime Minister Stephen Harper has announced the Government's intent to introduce legislation to end the practice of automatic early release for repeat violent offenders. Under the Corrections and Conditional Release Act, federal offenders serving fixed-term sentences are allowed to serve the final third of their sentence in the community under supervision and subject to conditions.

The Government has determined that this is the wrong approach when it comes to repeat violent offenders. Therefore, under the proposed legislation, repeat violent offenders who have previously received a prison sentence of five years or more that includes a serious violent component will no longer be granted statutory release after serving two-thirds of their sentence.

These changes complement other tough on crime actions introduced by our Government, including; tougher prison sentences for sexual offences against children, serious gun crimes, impaired driving, and selling drugs to children; providing the courts with the discretion to end sentence discounts for multiple murders; and, repealing the Faint Hope Clause which allowed offenders serving a life sentence with a parole ineligibility period of more than 15 years to apply for parole after serving 15 years in prison.

These measures reflect the Government of Canada's ongoing commitment to keep our streets and communities safe while ensuring that the rights of victims are placed over those of criminals.

National AED program saving lives

The Government of Canada is partnering with the Heart and Stroke Foundation (HSF) to install 2,000 Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) in recreational hockey arenas across the country by March 2016. Over 1,300 AEDs have been installed in recreational arenas across the country to date, and almost 11,000 people have been trained on how to properly use them.

Having an AED accessible for all users in arenas and recreational facilities where moderate to high physical activity takes place can mean the difference between life and death in the event of a cardiac arrest. In fact, three lives have already been saved using AEDs installed as part of this initiative.

With February being Heart Health Month, it's an opportune time to apply for an AED through the National AED initiative. Any

recreational arena in Canada can apply by visiting the HSF website. Once all arenas are equipped, funding may be available for AEDs to be installed in other high-traffic non-arena based recreational facilities.

If you would like to contact me on any issue, please call 905-953-7515 or visit my website at www.loisbrown.ca. I look forward to hearing from you.