

## TAKING THE HASSLE OUT OF TRAVEL

For many Canadians, summer means travel. And whether you're planning a long trip or just a long weekend away, you'll enjoy it a lot more if you're ready for anything. So to help you leave your worries on the doorstep, here are some tips to make your next trip stress-free.

### Buy insurance

Purchasing adequate travel medical insurance will give you the peace of mind and protection you need when travelling. Take note of the insurer's important toll-free numbers and take them with you, in case you need to call for service or file a claim during your trip.

### Make sure someone knows where you are

Always leave a copy of your itinerary with reliable friends and family members, along with addresses and phone numbers where you can be reached while away.

### Check your passport

... especially if you haven't dusted it off in a while. Make sure your passport is valid and current. It's a good idea to make sure that your passport expiry date falls several months after you intend to leave the country you're visiting; in fact, some countries require it. If you need to apply for a new passport or renew your old one in a hurry, Passport Canada offers an expedited service.

### Do your research

Before you leave, check to see if there are any official government travel advisories, new visa requirements or other bits of useful advice related to the country you're visiting. You can find it all at [www.travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories](http://www.travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories).

### Travel-proof your home

- Make sure your home alarm system is working and monitored.
- If you're going to be away for more than a few days in a row, ask a family member or a friend to check on your home daily. This can discourage burglars or help identify a problem — like a plumbing leak — before significant damage is done.
- Install light timers to make your home look occupied.
- Don't let your mail pile up. Have a neighbour pick it up regularly for you. Or stop delivery of your newspaper and ask that your incoming mail be held at the post office.
- If you plan on being gone for a couple of weeks or more, empty and unplug your refrigerator and leave the doors open to prevent odor and mildew.
- Don't communicate your travel dates on social networking sites. You never know who might be watching.

### Protect your health

- Visit a clinic to get any required vaccinations if you're going abroad.
- Renew your prescriptions and make sure you take an extra supply in case you're delayed. Take medications in your carry-on baggage rather than in checked suitcases in case your luggage gets lost.
- Take a written list of your important prescriptions, and any other relevant information on your medical history, in case of an emergency.