

Aircraft movement statistics: Major airports – Annual report, 2016

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Aircraft take-offs and landings at the 91 Canadian airports with NAV CANADA air traffic control towers and flight service stations totalled 5.5 million movements in 2016, virtually unchanged (+0.2%) from a year earlier.

Toronto/Lester B. Pearson International, Ontario (458,707 movements) and Vancouver International, British Columbia (325,969) continued to be the most active airports in 2016.

A slight drop in itinerant movements (flights from one airport to another) was offset by a growth in local movements (flights that remain in the vicinity of the airport). Itinerant movements amounted to 4.0 million, while local movements were 1.5 million.

In addition, air traffic at Fort McMurray was further affected by a large wildfire in May which engulfed the region. All commercial air traffic at that airport was suspended until it was re-opened in early June. As a result, itinerant aircraft movements at Fort McMurray fell 29% to 39,679 in 2016, its lowest level of activity since 2004.



In celebration of the country's 150th birthday, Statistics Canada is presenting snapshots from our rich statistical history.

At the dawn of aviation in Canada, aviators took off and landed on everything from cow pastures and race tracks to frozen lakes, exhibition grounds and golf courses. Officially, the first flight at an airfield in Canada occurred in 1915 at Long Branch,

Toronto. Until the 1930s, the average airport runway was made of sod, clay or loam and the terminal that went with it was usually not much more than a lean-to attached to a hanger.

The old grass landing strips have long since given way to surfaces of smoothly paved or concrete runways, with many international airports now accommodating hundreds of take-offs and landings each day. By 1967, there were 4.0 million aircraft movements at major Canadian airports. Five decades later, with the increasing convenience and popularity of air travel, this number had grown to 5.5 million by 2016.

Note to readers

Data for 2012 to 2015 have been revised.

Available in CANSIM: tables [401-0023](#) to [401-0036](#).

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [2715](#).

Additional analytical information is now available in "[Annual Aircraft Movements: Major airports – NAV CANADA Towers and Flight Service Stations](#)," as part of the service bulletin *Aviation* ([51-004-X](#)).

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca).



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