

# Leading indicator of cross-border traveller volume, December 2020

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## Highlights

In December, the number of American residents and returning Canadians crossing the border from the United States in automobiles remained low, as restrictions on non-essential travel continued throughout the month.

US travellers made 61,000 car trips to Canada through land ports with electronic sensors, down 93.8% compared with December 2019.

Meanwhile, 146,000 Canadians returned from the United States through these ports in automobiles in December 2020, down 92.4% from the same month a year earlier.

## Travel restrictions continue

Restrictions on non-essential travel across the Canada–US border, which initially took effect in March, were extended on December 21, 2020, for another 30 days.

## Car arrivals by United States residents remain low

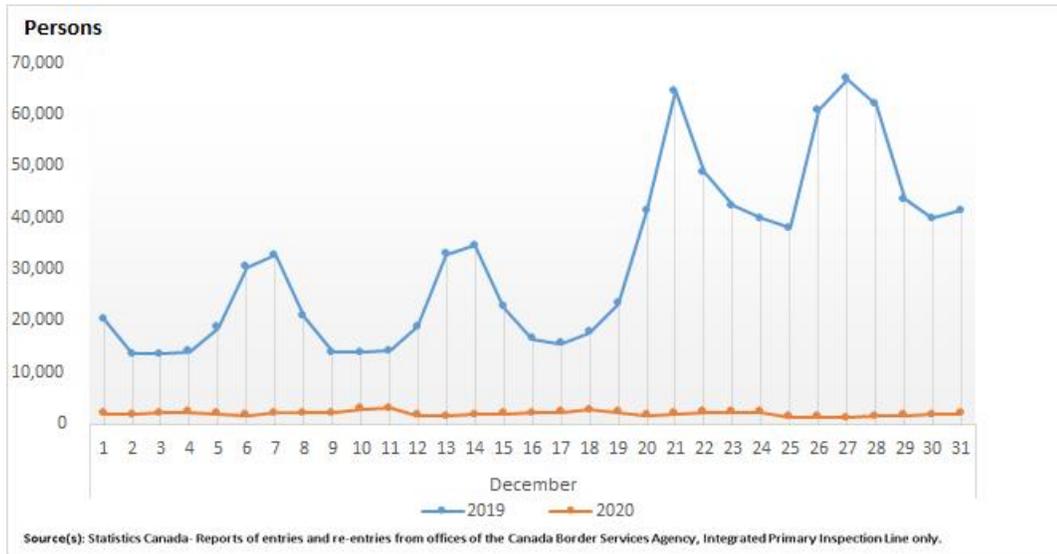
In December, US residents took 61,000 trips to Canada in US-licensed automobiles through 111 land ports equipped with the automated Integrated Primary Inspection Line (IPIL), down 93.8% from the 977,200 trips taken in December 2019.

The largest year-over-year percentage declines were at IPIL ports in Yukon (-96.0%) and Quebec (-95.1%). Car arrivals in Ontario and New Brunswick declined 94.4% in December compared with the same month a year earlier.

In 2019, an upsurge in crossings occurred in the weekend preceding Christmas, with almost 65,000 US residents arriving on December 21, and then in the three days after the holiday (December 26 to 28), when almost 190,000 arrived. No such upsurges occurred this year as December 11 was the busiest day, with 3,000 US residents crossing the border.



**Infographic 1 – United States residents entering Canada in US-licensed automobiles, December 2019 and December 2020**



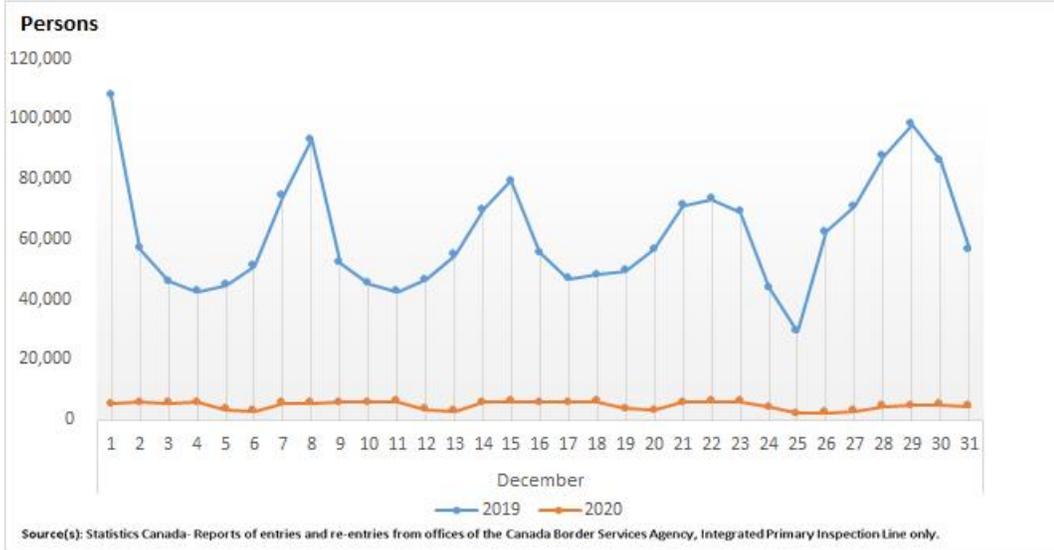
**The number of returning Canadians remains flat**

In December, 92.4% fewer Canadian residents returned from the United States in Canadian-licensed automobiles via the 111 IPIL ports, compared with December of 2019. The number of returning Canadians fell from 1.9 million last year to 146,000 in December 2020.

The largest year-over-year percentage declines were in Yukon (-99.2%) and British Columbia (-97.2%), with Manitoba and Saskatchewan each posting decreases of 95.1%.

In 2019, more than 270,000 Canadian residents returned home from the United States on the weekend following Christmas Day (December 28 to 30). This year, a trickle of Canadians crossed the border after Christmas because of restrictions on non-essential travel.

### Infographic 2 – Canadian residents returning from the United States in Canadian-licensed automobiles, December 2019 and December 2020



**Table 1**  
**United States residents entering Canada in US-licensed automobiles**

	December 2019	December 2020	December 2019 to December 2020
	thousands		% change
<b>Canada</b>	<b>977.2</b>	<b>61.0</b>	<b>-93.8</b>
Newfoundland and Labrador	...	...	...
Prince Edward Island	...	...	...
Nova Scotia	...	...	...
New Brunswick	45.1	2.5	-94.4
Quebec	124.2	6.1	-95.1
Ontario	560.0	31.1	-94.4
Manitoba	16.0	1.2	-92.4
Saskatchewan	5.0	0.6	-88.9
Alberta	7.5	1.3	-82.4
British Columbia	218.4	18.2	-91.7
Yukon	1.0	0.0	-96.0
Northwest Territories	...	...	...
Nunavut	...	...	...

... not applicable

**Note(s):** Indicators include only Canada–US border crossings by automobile at land and ferry ports recorded by the Canada Border Services Agency's Integrated Primary Inspection Line system.

**Source(s):** Statistics Canada, reports of entries and re-entries from offices of the Canada Border Services Agency.

**Table 2**  
**Canadian residents returning from the United States in Canadian-licensed automobiles**

	December 2019	December 2020	December 2019 to December 2020
	thousands		% change
<b>Canada</b>	<b>1,911.8</b>	<b>146.0</b>	<b>-92.4</b>
Newfoundland and Labrador	...	...	...
Prince Edward Island	...	...	...
Nova Scotia	...	...	...
New Brunswick	169.1	15.3	-91.0
Quebec	177.7	13.0	-92.7
Ontario	1,037.8	99.8	-90.4
Manitoba	61.1	3.0	-95.1
Saskatchewan	18.4	0.9	-95.1
Alberta	27.1	2.3	-91.7
British Columbia	419.1	11.8	-97.2
Yukon	1.4	0.0	-99.2
Northwest Territories	...	...	...
Nunavut	...	...	...

... not applicable

**Note(s):** Indicators include only Canada–US border crossings by automobile at land and ferry ports recorded by the Canada Border Services Agency's Integrated Primary Inspection Line system.

**Source(s):** Statistics Canada, reports of entries and re-entries from offices of the Canada Border Services Agency.

### Note to readers

Counts of cross-border travel by automobile through 111 land ports equipped with the Integrated Primary Inspection Line (IPIL) system are available by the traveller's state or province of residence and by the province of entry into Canada, based on the licence plate of the automobile used to enter Canada.

The Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) uses various data sources to collect information on travellers entering the country. The IPIL system accounts for the largest share of travellers entering Canada by automobile.

The IPIL data exclude automobile travellers who cross the Canada–US border using a NEXUS card and at ports that are not equipped with the IPIL system. These counts also exclude US travellers entering Canada in automobiles with Canadian licence plates and Canadian travellers returning to the country in automobiles with US licence plates.

As such, the IPIL data represent only a subset of Canadian and US residents entering Canada by automobile. In 2019, for example, the 111 IPIL ports covered by this indicator captured approximately 80% of cross-border automobile traffic between Canada and the United States.

Please note that this is the final monthly release of the Leading indicator of cross-border traveller volume. Starting with February 2021, the monthly Leading indicator of cross-border traveller volume and the quarterly Leading indicator of international arrivals to Canada by air will be integrated in a single monthly release titled Leading indicator of international arrivals to Canada.

### Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [5005](#).

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](mailto:STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca)) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; [STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca](mailto:STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca)).