

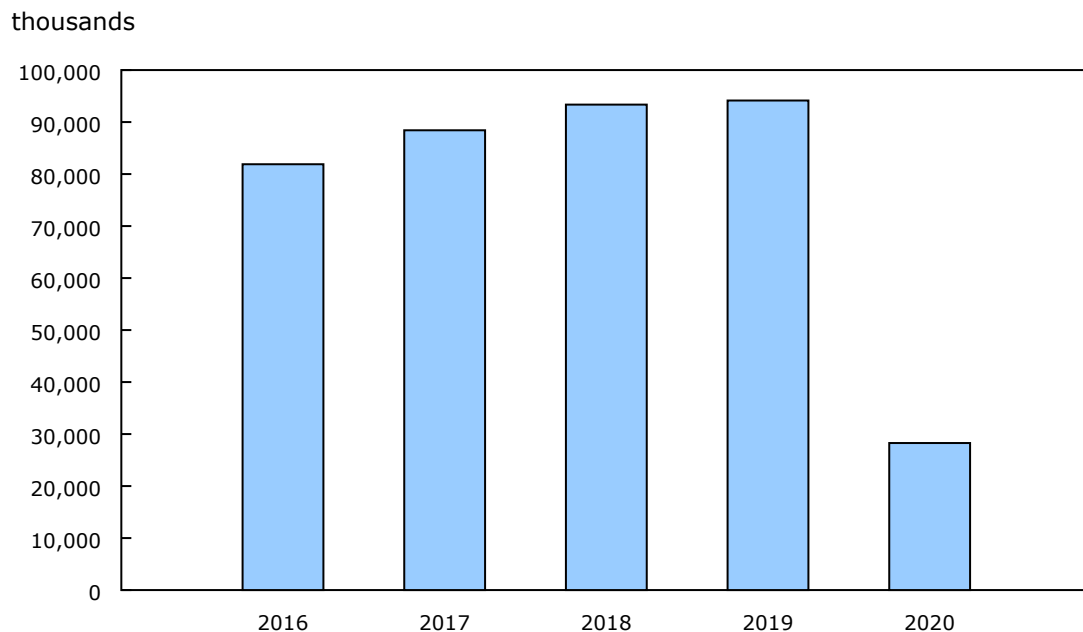
# Annual civil aviation statistics: First look, 2020

Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time in *The Daily*, Monday, June 21, 2021

Given the rapidly evolving COVID-19 pandemic, Statistics Canada is providing a first look at key variables from the 2020 annual civil aviation statistics program. As collection is ongoing for the 2020 reference year, these estimates are preliminary and subject to revision.

Canadian air carriers transported 28.3 million passengers in 2020, down 70.0% from the 94.0 million passengers carried in 2019, the first such decline since the economic downturn in 2009. Domestic traffic (within Canada) was down 66.8% to 16.2 million passengers, while international traffic fell 73.3% to 12.1 million passengers, with most (approximately 70%) passengers flown in the first three months of 2020.

**Chart 1**  
**Passengers carried, Canadian air carriers**



Source(s): Monthly Civil Aviation Survey (5026), Quarterly Civil Aviation Survey (2712), Annual Civil Aviation Survey (2713).

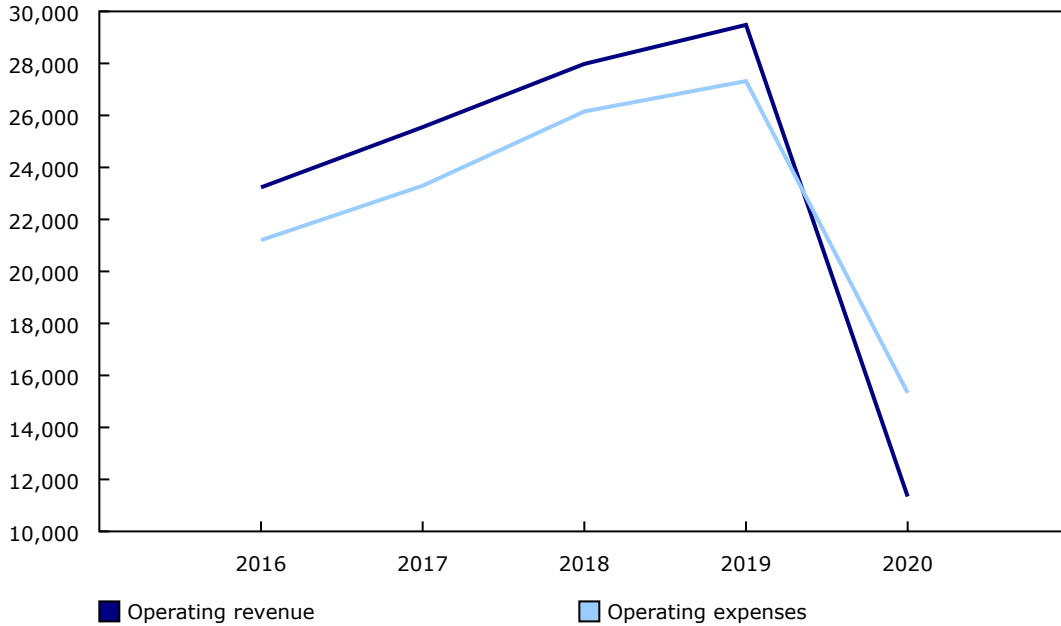
Canadian air carriers provided 63.0 billion (correction) passenger-kilometres of service in 2020, a decline of 73.0% from the previous year. On average, each passenger travelled 2,229 kilometres, down 10.0% compared with 2019, while total hours flown decreased by 58.7% to 1.4 million hours.

In 2020, operating revenue earned by Level I to III air carriers fell 61.5% to \$11.3 billion, pushed down by passenger revenue dropping 68.0% on lower demand for flights amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Operating expenses declined 43.9% to \$15.3 billion, mainly from lower fuel costs, which fell by 63.9%. Fuel expenses fell because of fewer flying hours—total fuel consumed was down 60.0%—and a decline in aviation fuel prices (see the [Industrial Product Price Index](#)). Total employment in the air transportation industry fell 28.7% to 49,941, and airlines paid \$3.1 billion (-39.3%) in wages and salaries.

**Chart 2**  
**Operating revenue and expenses, Canadian air carriers**

millions of dollars



Source(s): Monthly Civil Aviation Survey (5026), Quarterly Civil Aviation Survey (2712), Annual Civil Aviation Survey (2713).

**Note to readers**

*This first look at the 2020 civil aviation statistics covers Canadian Level I, II and III air carriers.*

**Level I air carriers** include every Canadian air carrier that, in the calendar year before the year in which information is provided, transported at least 2 million revenue passengers or at least 400 000 tonnes of cargo.

**Level II air carriers** include every Canadian air carrier that, in the calendar year before the year in which information is provided, transported (a) at least 100,000, but fewer than 2 million, revenue passengers, or (b) at least 50 000 tonnes, but less than 400 000 tonnes, of cargo.

**Level III air carriers** include every Canadian air carrier that (a) is not a Level I or II air carrier, and (b) in the calendar year before the year in which information is provided, realized gross revenues of at least \$2 million for the provision of air services for which the air carrier held a licence.

*The average passenger trip length is calculated by dividing the number of passenger-kilometres by the number of passengers. Trips across Canada and around the world are included in this calculation.*

*Because of rounding, some components may not add up to the total.*

*These preliminary 2020 civil aviation estimates are based on the 2020 monthly civil aviation statistics, quarterly civil aviation statistics, and preliminary collected records from the annual civil aviation statistics.*

*Complete estimates for the 2020 annual civil aviation statistics will be published in early 2022.*

---

**Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [2713](#).**

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)).