

# Aircraft movement statistics: Major airports, November 2021

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## Highlights

In November, there were 374,217 aircraft movements at Canada's major airports. This was 55,829 more take-offs and landings than in November 2020, but 59,531 fewer than in November 2019, before the pandemic.

In November, both domestic and international traffic edged closer to pre-pandemic levels, with total domestic traffic at 87.4% of the number recorded for November 2019, movements to the United States at 56.9% and other international at 68.3%.

Toronto/Lester B. Pearson International was Canada's busiest airport, followed by Vancouver International and Abbotsford, British Columbia.

## Uncertainty looms

On November 26, 2021, the WHO declared a new variant of concern: Omicron. As a precautionary measure, Canada announced additional border measures, including revised airport testing rules and a travel ban to a list of nations. The travel ban was lifted on December 18, but the federal government reinstated its advisory to avoid all non-essential travel outside Canada on December 15.

While Omicron did not appear to have an impact on November data, the rise in infections in Canada, attributable to the highly contagious variant has introduced considerable uncertainty for the winter travel season. By early January 2022, Canadian carriers had begun slashing schedules amid weak demand and staff shortages. The most recent data can be found in the [Weekly aircraft movement statistics](#).

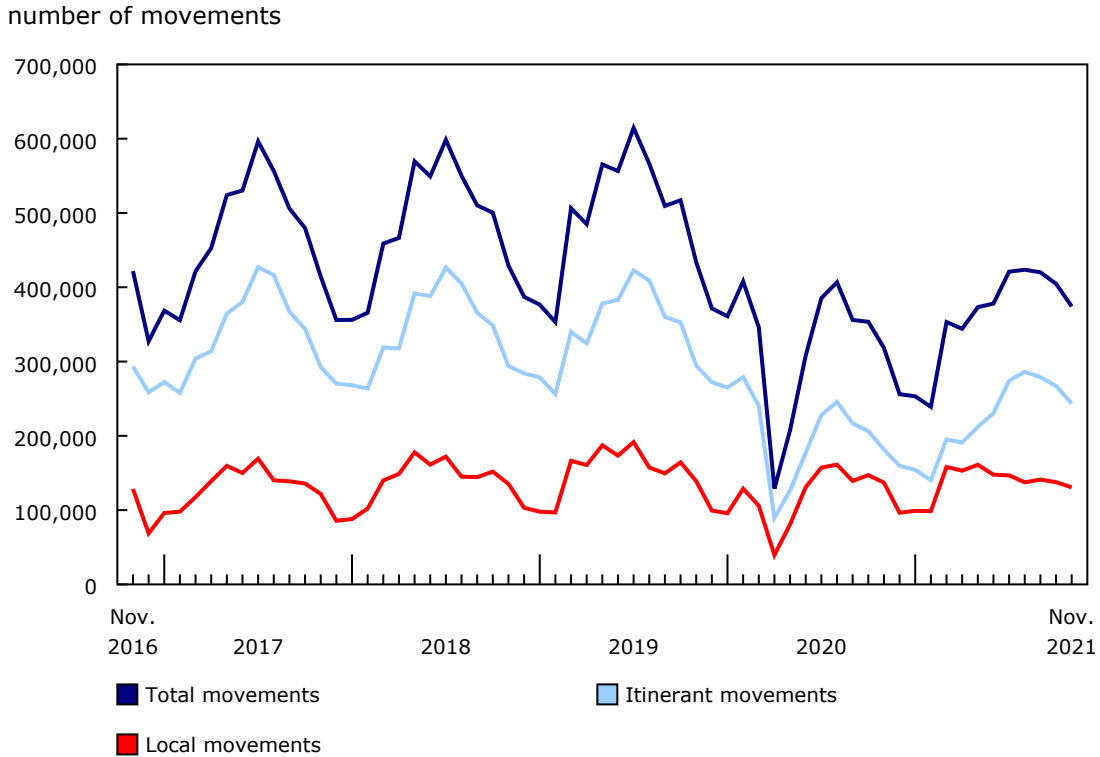
## Total movements edging closer to pre-pandemic levels

Total aircraft movements (take-offs and landings) at the 90 Canadian airports equipped with NAV CANADA towers and flight service stations were 374,217 in November, an increase of 17.5% from November 2020. Itinerant movements (from one airport to another) rose 34.3% to 243,596, while local movements (within the vicinity of the airport) dipped 4.6% to 130,621.

Compared with November 2019, before the pandemic, total movements were down 13.7% in November 2021, the closest to levels in March 2020. Itinerant movements were down by 17.4%, while local movements were 6.0% lower.



**Chart 1**  
**Total aircraft movements at major airports, by class of operation**



Source(s): Tables [23-10-0002-01](#) and [23-10-0009-01](#).

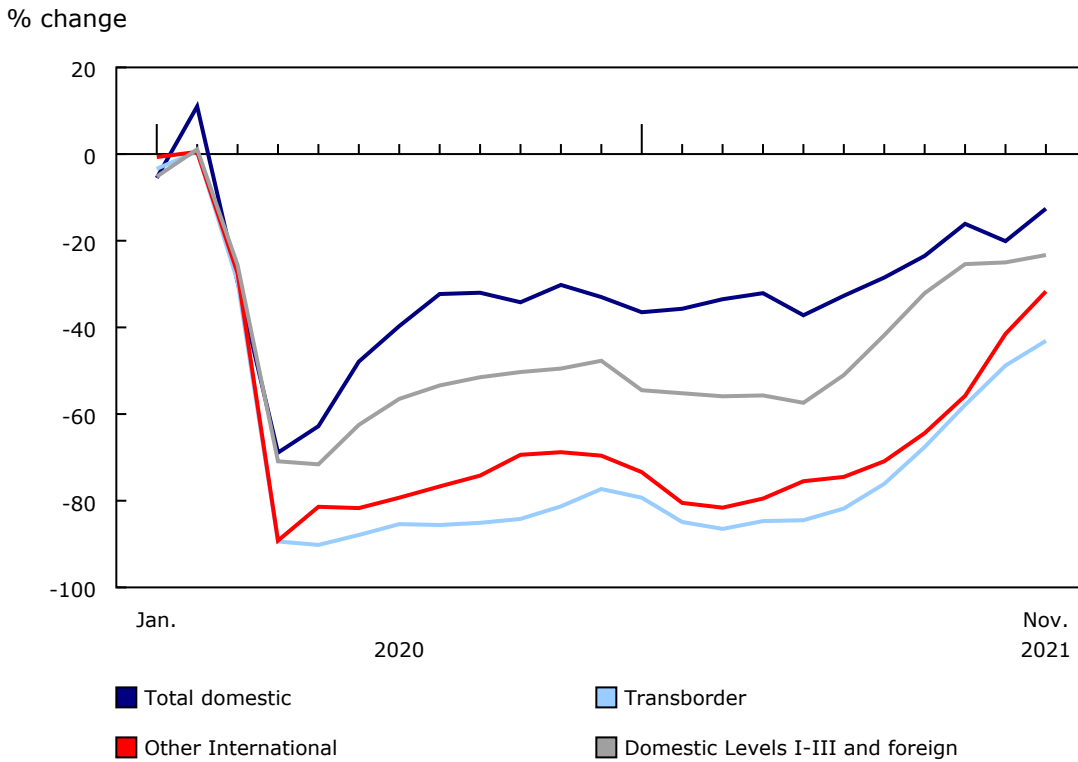
On March 11, 2020, COVID-19 was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization and, in the months that followed, total aircraft movements remained well below historical levels. Unless otherwise specified, comparisons are made with the same month of 2019 (also referred to as "pre-pandemic"), when aircraft movement levels were in line with historical trends.

### Domestic and international traffic up

There were 213,051 domestic movements (within Canada) in November, representing 87.4% of the level from November 2019.

While movements by larger commercial Level I-III and foreign carriers were down 23.3%, private aircraft movements were 15.4% higher than in November 2019. Other commercial movements (a grouping that includes some flight training operations) also increased (+5.2%).

**Chart 2**  
**Percentage change compared with the same month in 2019, domestic, transborder and other international movements**



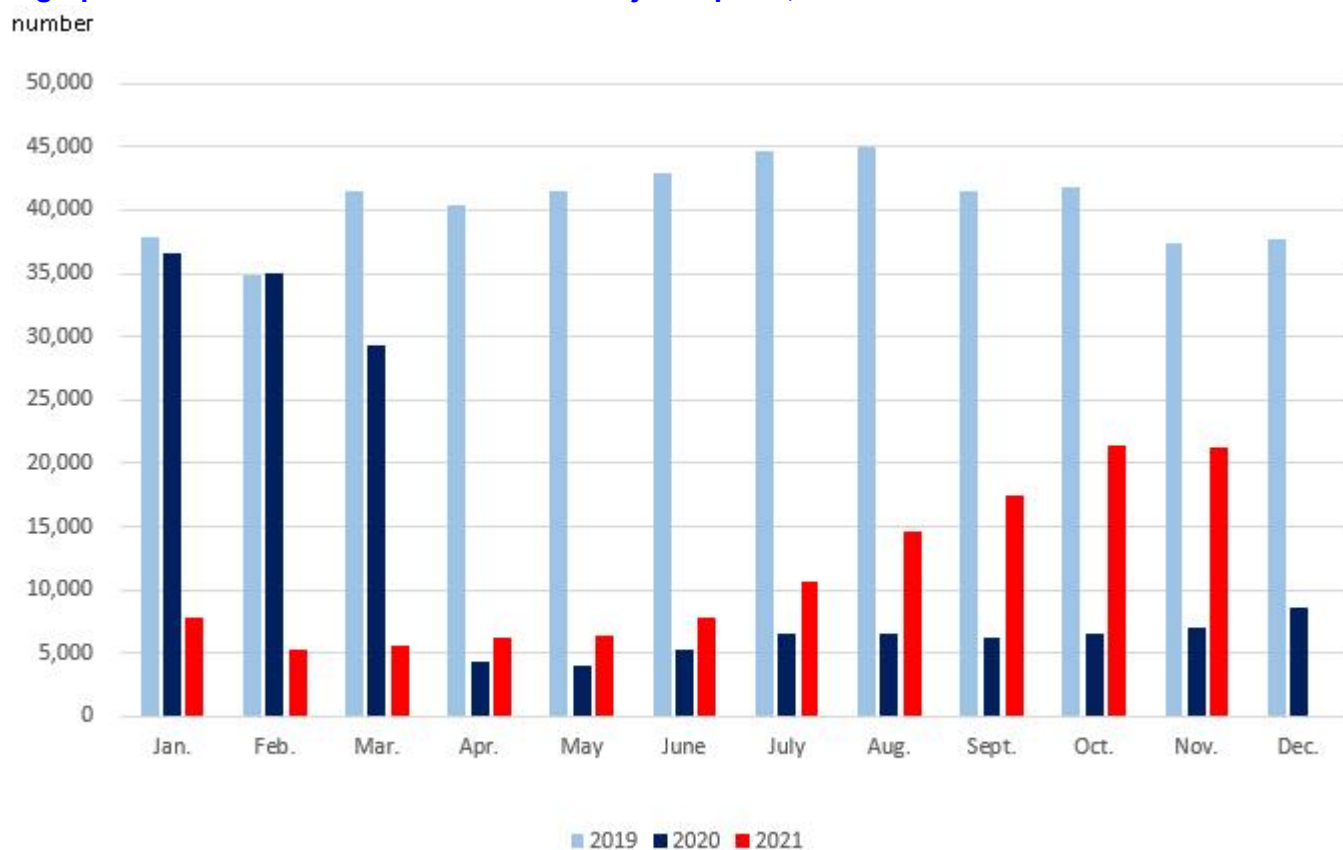
Source(s): Tables 23-10-0008-01 and 23-10-0015-01.

Transborder movements (flights to and from the United States) totalled 21,251, more than half (56.9%) the amount recorded in November 2019. Other international movements were at 9,294, or 68.3% of the level from November 2019.

On a monthly basis, transborder traffic edged down (-190 movements) from October. With the re-opening of the land border to the US on November 8, several airports where companies had been transporting Canadians across the border by air during the closure reported sharp declines. Conversely, movements to and from the US at the busiest passenger hubs (e.g., Toronto/Lester B. Pearson, Vancouver International, Montreal/Pierre-Elliott-Trudeau and Calgary International) increased.

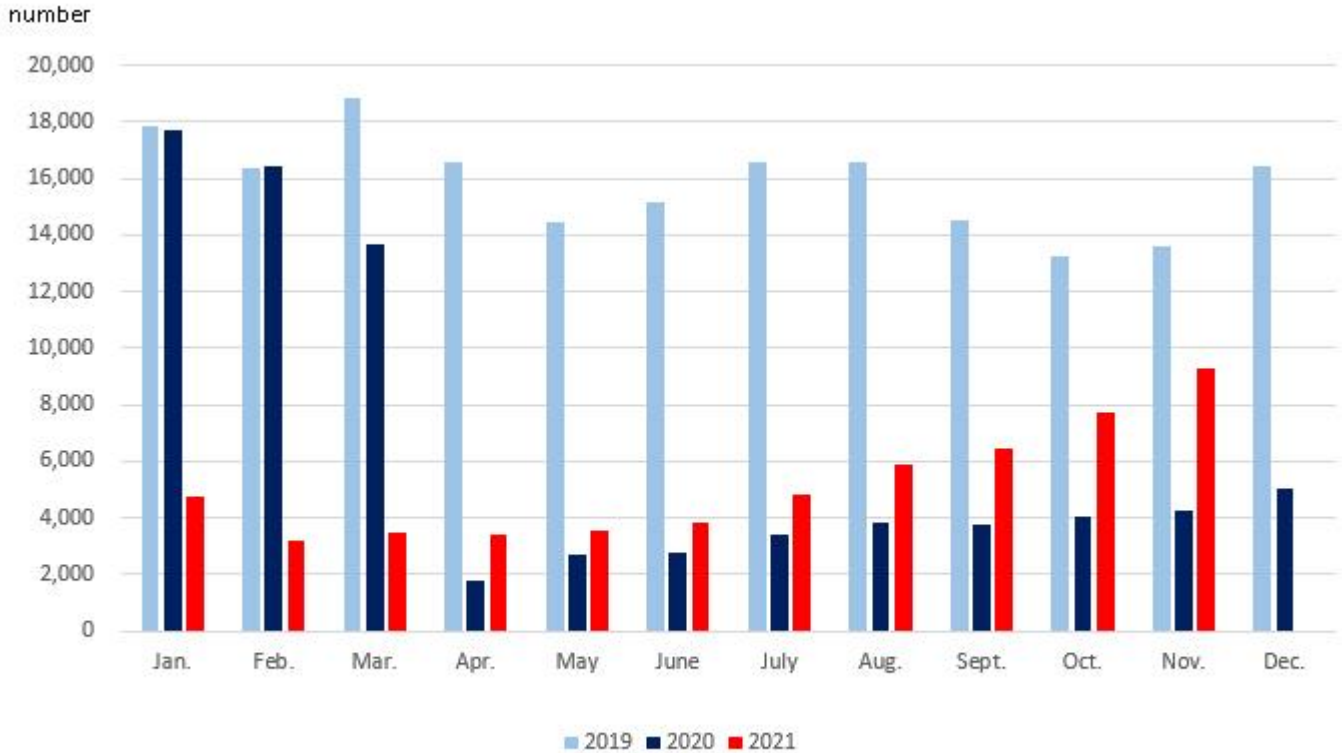
Other international traffic rose from October (+1,544 movements) with increased traffic to sun destinations.

### Infographic 1 – Transborder movements at major airports, 2019 to 2021



Sources: Tables 23-10-0008-01 and 23-10-0015-01.

**Infographic 2 – Other international movements at major airports, 2019 to 2021**

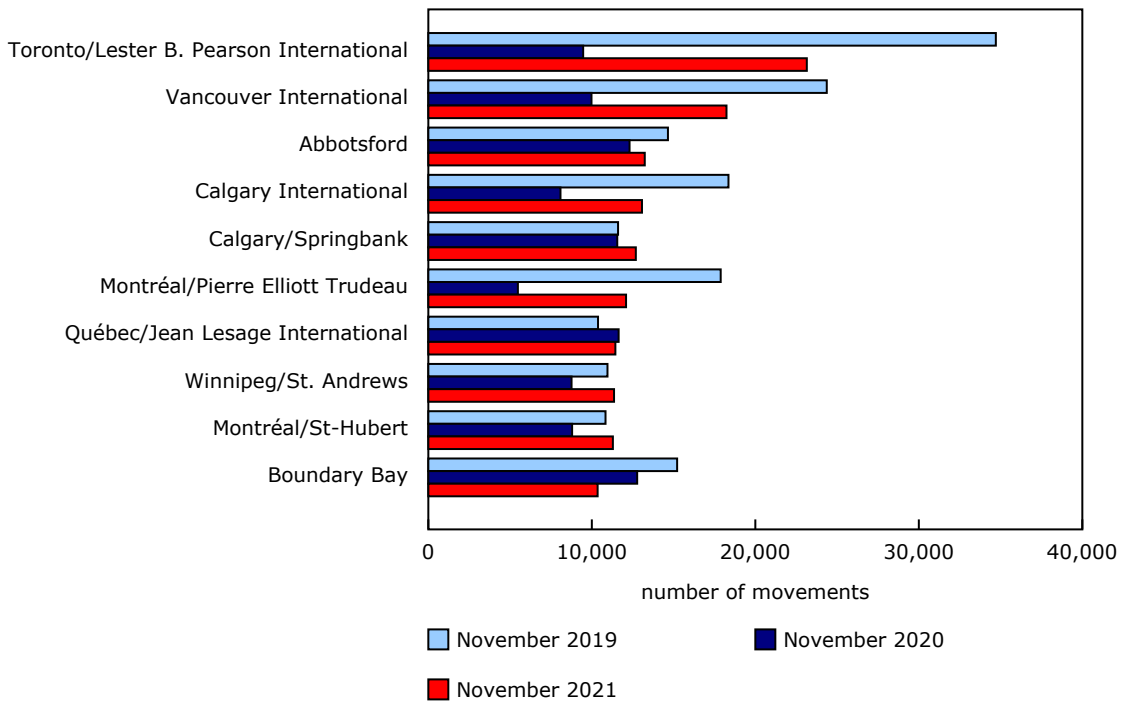


Sources: Tables 23-10-0008-01 and 23-10-0015-01.

**Pearson remains on top**

Toronto/Lester B. Pearson International recorded the highest number of movements (23,149) for the third consecutive month. It was followed by Vancouver International (18,236) and Abbotsford (13,237). Peak movements at Abbotsford occurred on November 17, the same day a state of emergency was declared in British Columbia due to catastrophic flooding in the area.

**Chart 3**  
**Total aircraft movements at the top 10 Canadian airports in November, 2019 to 2021**



Source(s): Table 23-10-0002-01.

### Note to readers

The Aircraft Movement Statistics: Major Airports Survey collects data on itinerant and local aircraft movements at major airports in Canada.

Major airports include all airports with either a NAV CANADA air traffic control tower or a NAV CANADA flight service station.

On November 5, 2020, NAV CANADA recognized the increase in air traffic at Red Deer Regional Airport in Alberta before the COVID-19 pandemic and changed its status from a flight service station to offer air traffic control services at the airport for 16 hours per day. As a result, effective November 1, 2020, monthly aircraft movement data for the airport are available in tables [23-10-0002-01](#) to [23-10-0008-01](#) (airports with NAV CANADA towers). Data prior to November 2020 remain available in tables [23-10-0009-01](#) to [23-10-0015-01](#) (airports with NAV CANADA flight service stations).

An aircraft movement is defined as a take-off, landing or simulated approach by an aircraft, as defined by NAV CANADA.

Data for November 2020 may have been revised.

The data in this monthly release are not seasonally adjusted.

**Available tables:** [23-10-0002-01](#) to [23-10-0015-01](#) .

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

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; [infostats@statcan.gc.ca](mailto:infostats@statcan.gc.ca)) or Media Relations ([statcan.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.statcan@statcan.gc.ca](mailto:statcan.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.statcan@statcan.gc.ca)).