

# Annual civil aviation statistics: First look, 2022

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## Highlights

Canadian air carriers transported 68.2 million passengers in 2022, more than two and half times the 26.0 million carried in 2021. This represents close to three-quarters (72.4%) of the number of passengers carried in 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic.

As some data collection is still ongoing, these initial estimates provide a first look at key variables from the 2022 annual civil aviation statistics program.

On March 11, 2020, COVID-19 was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization. In the months that followed, Canadian air travel remained well below historical levels. Unless otherwise specified, comparisons are made with 2019 (also referred to as "pre-pandemic levels"), when airline activity levels were in line with historical trends.

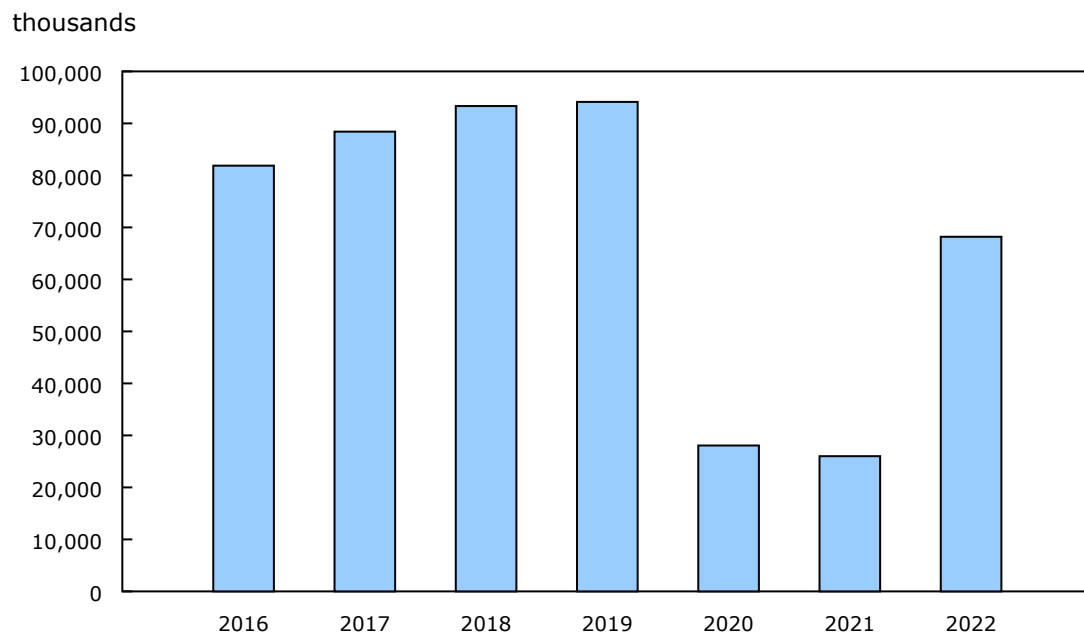
## Recovery takes flight

In 2022, the recovery in air travel gained momentum for both domestic traffic (36.1 million passengers, or 26.1% below 2019) and international traffic (32.0 million passengers, or 29.4% below pre-pandemic levels).

Most of the passengers were carried in the last 10 months of the year. The gradual lifting of COVID-19 travel restrictions started in March 2022 and ended in October, when all remaining restrictions, including vaccination, mandatory use of the ArriveCAN app, and testing and quarantine requirements, were removed.



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



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

## Not yet at cruising altitude

Total traffic reached 168.7 billion passenger-kilometres in 2022, more than three times the total traffic in 2021 and almost three-quarters (72.3%) of the 2019 output. On average, each passenger travelled 2,474 kilometres in 2022, nearly the same as the 2019 level (2,478 kilometres). At 2.7 million hours, total hours flown in 2022 were more than four-fifths (81.9%) of 2019.

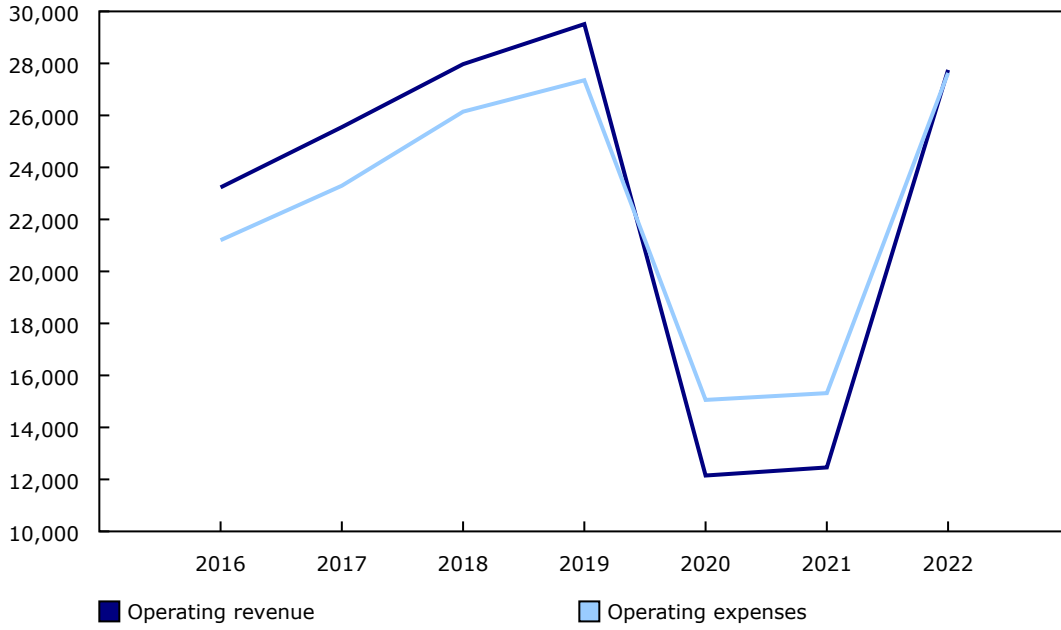
Operating revenue earned by Level I to III air carriers in 2022 totalled \$27.8 billion, just below (-6.0%) the operating revenue earned in 2019. Passenger revenue was 87.7% of the 2019 level, boosted by the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions and pent-up demand for travel.

However, operating expenses (\$27.6 billion) were on par with 2019. While fuel consumption was 14.5% below the 2019 level, costs were up sharply (+22.6%) due to prices, as aviation jet fuel increased by roughly one-third (+33.7%) during 2022, according to the [Industrial Product Price Index](#).

Finally, employment in the airline industry also contributed to higher operating expenses in 2022. Although the number of persons employed was down 9.5% from 2019, wages and salaries were 20.2% higher.

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

millions of dollars



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

### Note to readers

*This first look at the 2022 civil aviation statistics covers Canadian Level I, II and III air carriers. Because of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, no air carrier level changes were applied for reference year 2022.*

**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 2022 civil aviation estimates are based on the 2022 monthly civil aviation statistics, quarterly civil aviation statistics, and preliminary collected records from the annual civil aviation statistics.*

*Complete estimates for the 2022 annual civil aviation statistics will be published in early 2024.*

### 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; [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)).