

# Aircraft movement statistics: Major and select small airports, August 2023

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## Highlights

In August, Canada's major and select small airports recorded a total of 530,737 aircraft movements. This was a decrease of 1.2% from August 2022 and was 10.8% below the same month in 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Aircraft movements at airports in British Columbia were down 5.7% year over year in August 2023; this decrease was slightly offset by an increase of 5.5% at airports in Ontario. Declines were reported in 7 of the 13 provinces and territories compared with August 2022.

## States of emergency declared to combat wildfires

In August 2023, wildfire conditions prompted both British Columbia and the Northwest Territories to declare states of emergency, with upwards of 65,000 in British Columbia and 20,000 people in the Northwest Territories subject to either evacuation orders or alerts during the month. Kelowna International Airport in British Columbia was closed to commercial flights for several days to prioritize aerial firefighting. In the Northwest Territories, all non-firefighting support activity was cancelled at airports in Fort Smith, Hay River, and Yellowknife following the evacuation of nonessential personnel.

## Recovery of aircraft movements stall during summer of 2023

The summer months of June, July and August are traditionally the busiest period of the year for the air transportation industry. High demand for travel in the summer of 2022 resulted in double-digit year-over-year growth in aircraft movements each month. In 2023, overall monthly aircraft movements during the summer months were down slightly from those reported the previous year.

## Total aircraft movements down in August

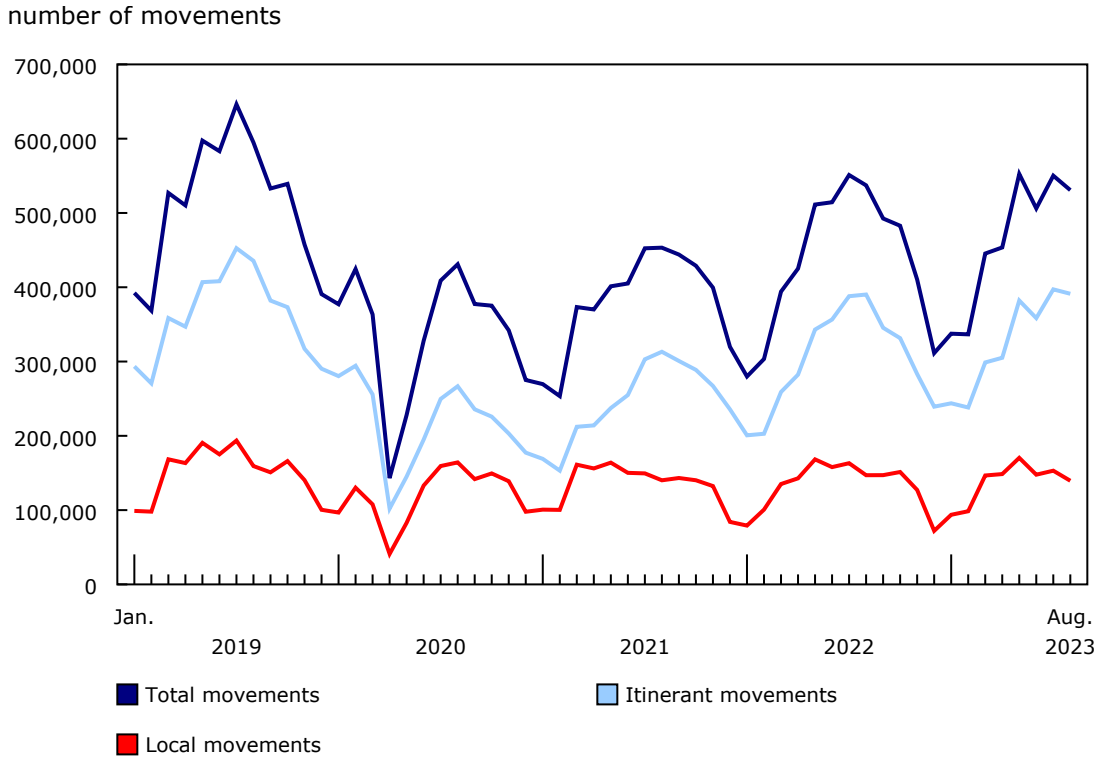
Total aircraft movements (take-offs and landings) at the 90 airports with NAV CANADA towers and flight service stations, combined with 33 select small airports, totalled 530,737 in August, down 1.2% from August 2022.

Local movements (within the vicinity of the airport) were down 7,485 to 139,508 in August 2023, partially offset by an increase in itinerant movements (from one airport to another), which were up 1,029 to 391,229.

Total aircraft movements in August were 10.8% below the pre-pandemic August 2019 level; local movements were down 12.4%, while itinerant movements were 10.2% below the August 2019 level.



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



Source(s): Table 23-10-0296-01.

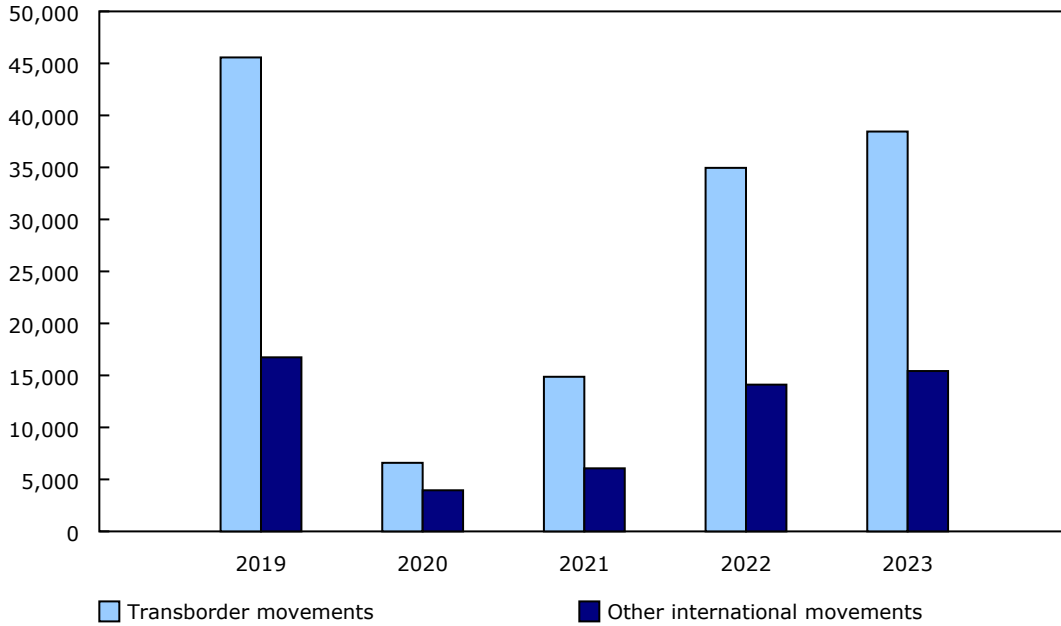
### International movements on the rise

In August, transborder movements (to and from the United States) increased 10.0% year over year to 38,448 but were 15.6% below the August 2019 level. Other international traffic (outside the United States) rose 9.3% from August 2022 to 15,419 in August 2023 and stood at roughly 92% of the movements in August 2019.

Total domestic movements (within Canada) fell 1.1% year over year to 337,362 in August 2023. Much of the decline stemmed from fewer movements in the other commercial movements category (-4,300) and that of private movements (-3,209).

**Chart 2**  
**Transborder and other international aircraft movements in August, 2019 to 2023**

number of movements

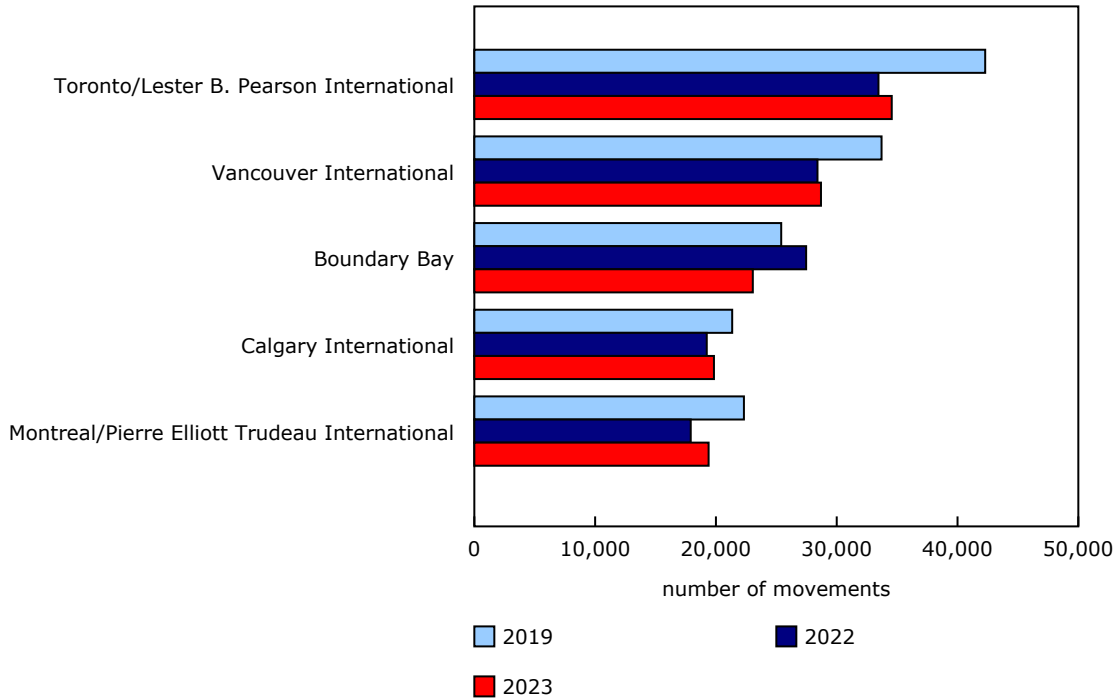


Source(s): Table 23-10-0302-01.

### Decline at airports in British Columbia

In August, the number of movements at airports in British Columbia fell 5.7% (-9,122 movements) from August 2022. In contrast, movements at airports in Ontario rose 5.5% (+6,950 movements) year over year. Toronto/Lester B. Pearson International remained the busiest Canadian airport, with 34,554 movements, an increase of 3.3%. The airport with the largest decline was Boundary Bay in British Columbia (-4,414 movements).

**Chart 3**  
**Total aircraft movements at the top five Canadian airports in August 2019, 2022 and 2023**



Source(s): Table 23-10-0296-01.

**Note to readers**

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

Starting with the October 2022 release, the "Aircraft Movement Statistics: Major airports" series has been replaced by "Aircraft Movement Statistics: Major and select small airports." This series collects data on itinerant and local aircraft movements from both major airports (those with towers and flight service stations operated by NAV CANADA), as well as a selection of airports previously available in the small airport data series. This enhancement improves the overall coverage of aircraft movement statistics in Canada.

Data for previous months may have been revised.

The data in this monthly release are not seasonally adjusted.

On November 27, Statistics Canada will begin a new monthly data release of screened passenger traffic at Canada's eight largest airports. Data are derived from the Canadian Air Transport Security Authority Boarding Pass Security System and include screened traffic at pre-board screening checkpoints at the airports.

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**Available tables:** [23-10-0296-01](#) to [23-10-0304-01](#) .

**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)).