

Aircraft movement statistics: Major airports, January 2022

Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time in *The Daily*, Thursday, March 24, 2022

Highlights

In January, there were 264,879 aircraft movements at Canada's major airports. While this was an increase of 4.6% from January 2021, it was 70.3% of the number recorded during the same month in 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Movements to and from the United States and other international locations stood at 49.5% and 61.9% (respectively) of their January 2019 levels, halting nine consecutive months of recovery.

Toronto/Lester B. Pearson International was Canada's busiest airport in January 2022.

A turbulent beginning to the New Year

At the end of November 2021, a new COVID-19 variant of concern, Omicron, was identified by the World Health Organization. By mid-December, the Government of Canada had reinstated its advisory to avoid non-essential travel outside Canada and on December 21, required all travellers entering Canada to provide a negative COVID-19 molecular PCR test, regardless of trip length.

January 2022 began with major carriers slashing their schedules and suspending routes. For example, Air Canada halted flights to some sun destinations from the end of January through April 2022.

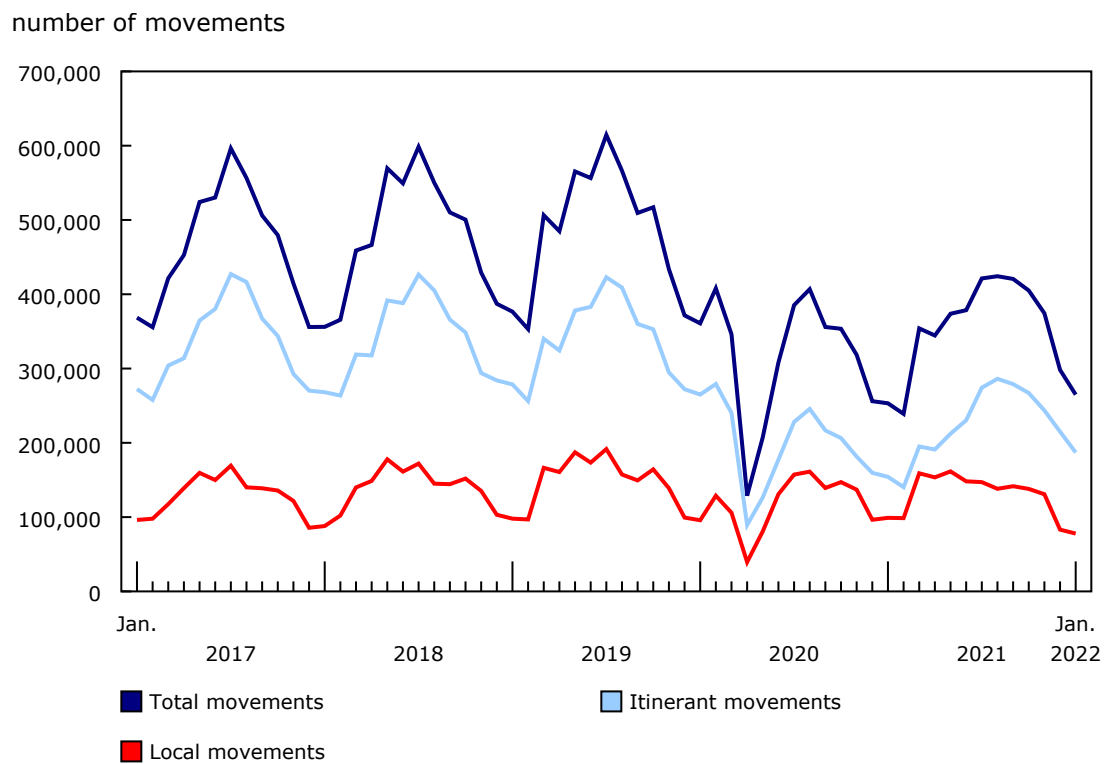
Total movements in January

There were 264,879 total aircraft movements (take-offs and landings) at the 90 airports with NAVCANADA towers and flight service stations in January, 4.6% higher than in January 2021. Itinerant movements (from one airport to another) rose 21.3% to 187,039 while local movements (within the vicinity of the airport) fell 21.4% to 77,840.

Aircraft movements in January 2022 were at 70.3% of the amount recorded in January 2019, before the pandemic began, with itinerant movements at 67.1% and local movements at 79.5%.



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 movements lagging

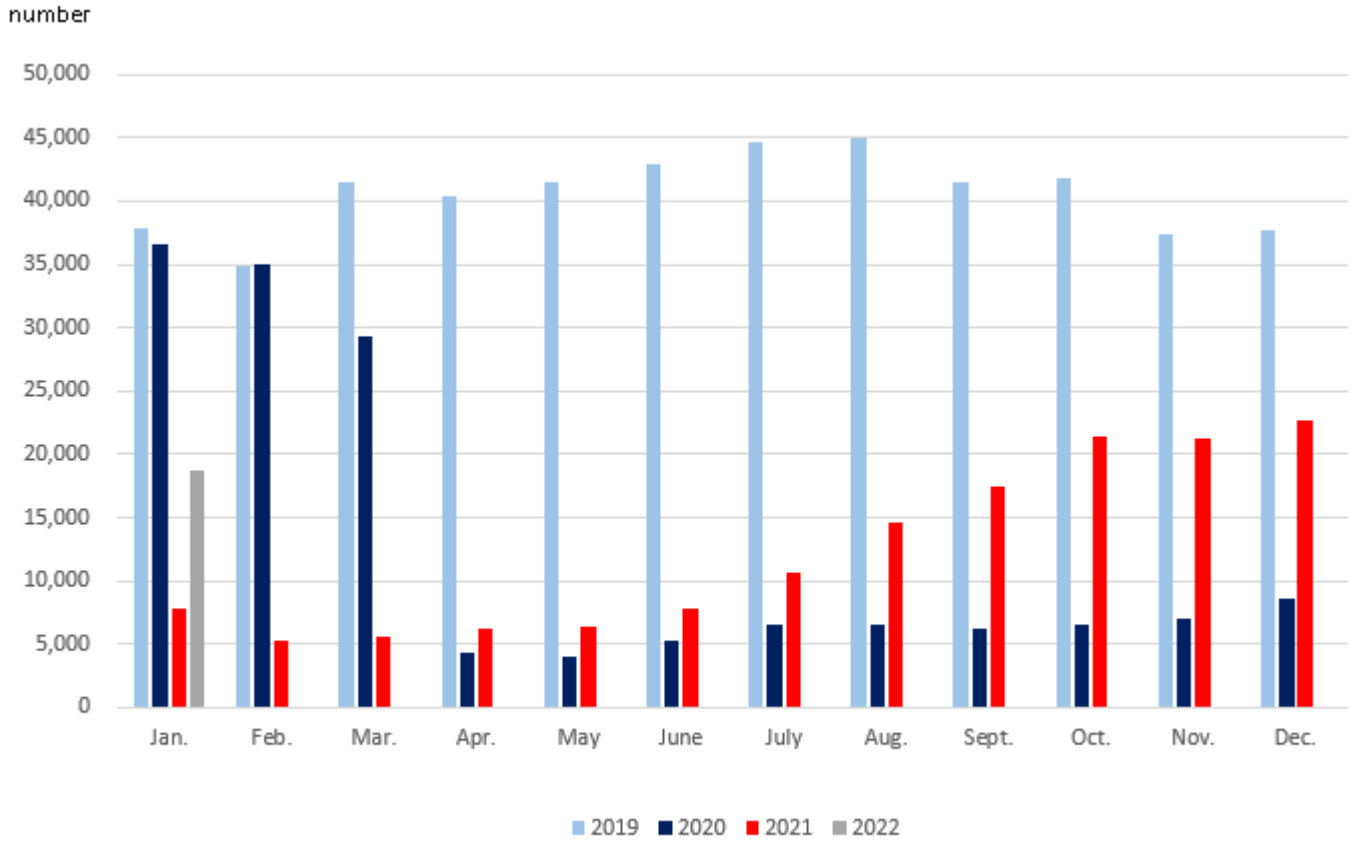
Total domestic movements (within Canada) in January 2022 were at 70.5% of the amount recorded in January 2019. Movements by Level I-III and foreign carriers within Canada were 62.9% of the level recorded before the pandemic (January 2019).

On a monthly basis, domestic movements by Level I-III and foreign carriers declined 17.0% from December 2021 to January 2022. This represents a larger decrease than the seasonal average of -0.7% recorded between 2015 and 2019.

Transborder (to and from the US) (-17.6%) and other international movements (-7.1%) also saw uncharacteristic declines on a monthly basis from December 2021 to January 2022. On average, from 2015 to 2019, transborder movements declined to a lesser degree (-2.9%), while other international movements increased (+12.3%) from December to January.

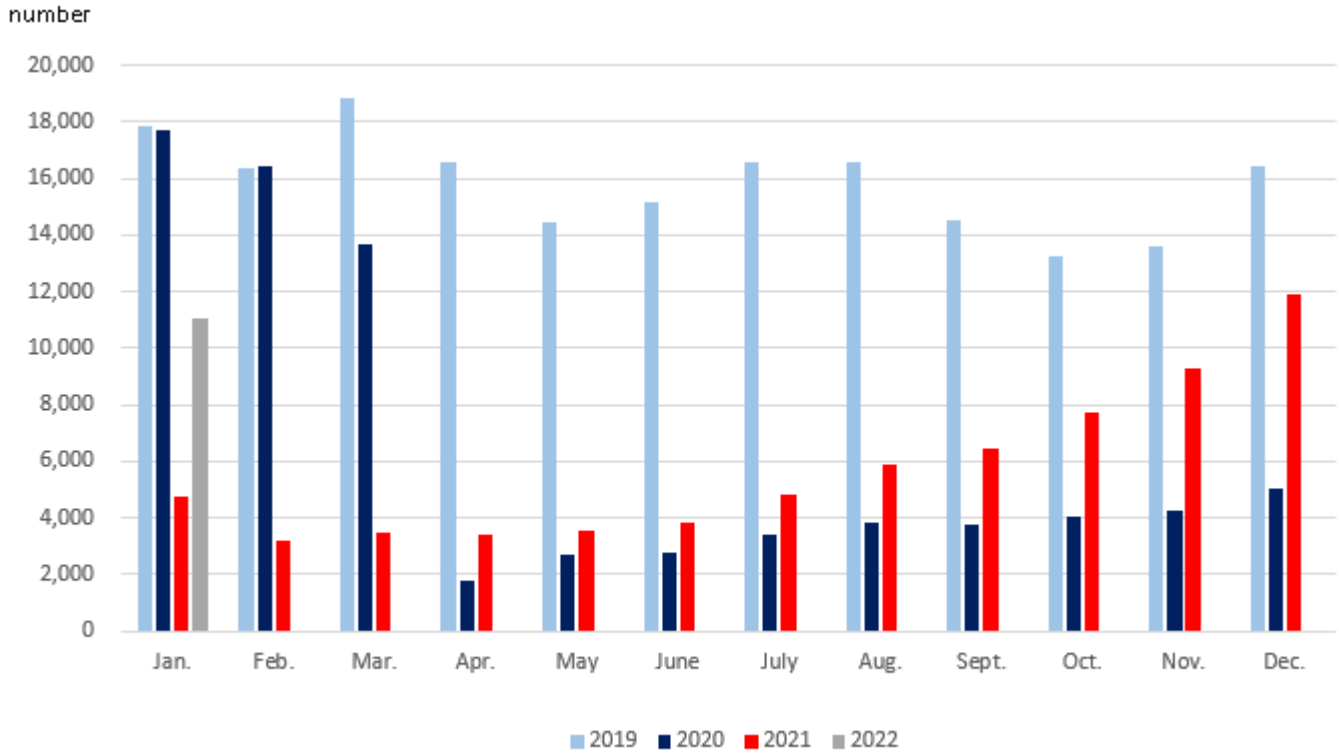
In January 2022, the recovery in international traffic was halted after a period of improvement. Compared with January 2019, before the pandemic, transborder movements stood at 49.5%, and other international movements stood at 61.9%. This followed nine consecutive months of recovery in both sectors (compared with the same month in 2019).

Infographic 1 – Transborder movements at major airports, 2019 to 2022



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

Infographic 2 – Other international movements at major airports, 2019 to 2022



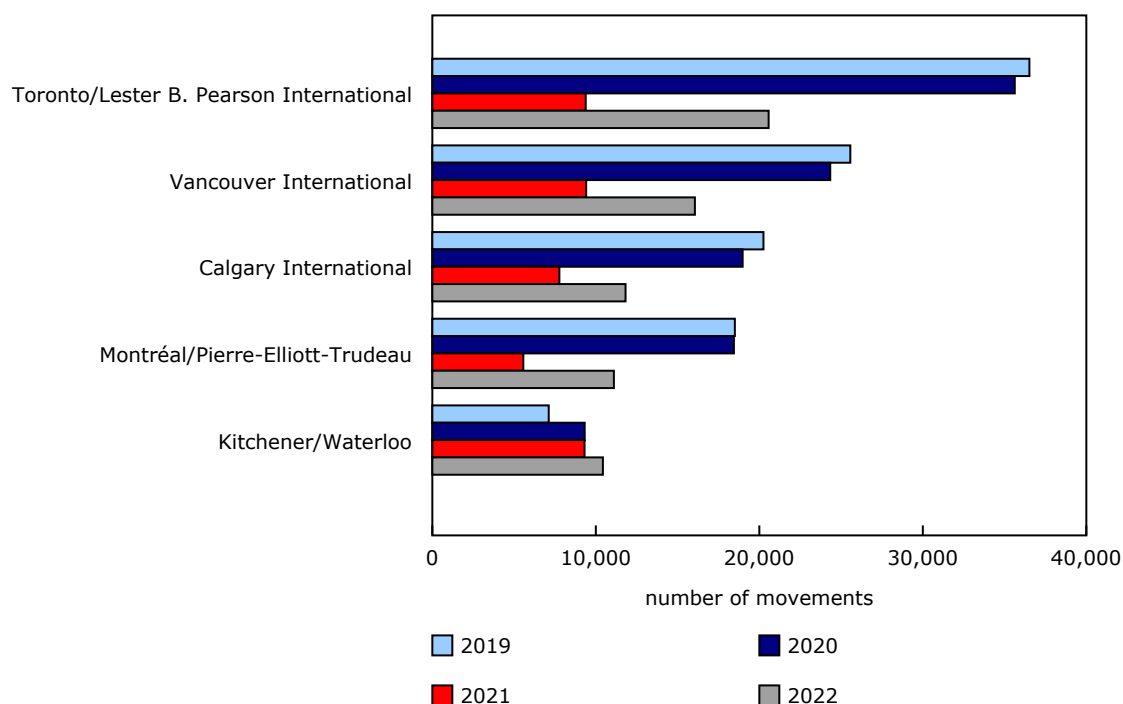
Sources: Tables 23-10-0008-01 and 23-10-0015-01.

Busiest airports

Canada's most active airports in January were Toronto/Lester B. Pearson International (20,569 movements), Vancouver International (16,059 movements) and Calgary International (11,817 movements).

At Pearson, domestic itinerant movements made up 40.6% of all traffic in January 2022. Movements to and from the US made up 34.2%, and other international movements made up 24.9%.

Chart 2
Total aircraft movements at the top five Canadian airports in January, 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 NAVCANADA air traffic control tower or a NAVCANADA flight service station.

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

Data for January 2021 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) or Media Relations (statcan.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.statcan@statcan.gc.ca).