



More On Border Crossings

Last month in this space we reported the thoughts and some of the experiences of Canadian independent reps who pointed out the differences in crossing the border between Canada and the United States since September 11, 2001. Coinciding with that article, there appeared a report in a web newsletter of the Canadian Professional Sales Association (www.cpsa.com) that objectively described some things reps making that crossing would be wise to keep in mind.

CPSA is “a national association of nearly 30,000 sales and marketing professionals located in communities of all sizes in every part of Canada.”

An article entitled “Crossing the U.S. Border, the Impact of Post 9/11,” details many of the changes that have occurred in what was once a very simple process. According to the article, “In light of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security developed a color-coded threat level system to communicate with public safety officials and the public at large so that protective measures can be implemented to reduce the likelihood or impact of a terrorist attack. Listed below are the colors associated with the threat level:

- Green — Low Risk
- Blue — Guarded Risk
- Yellow — Elevated Risk
- Orange — High Risk
- Red — Severe Risk

“While U.S. citizens are probably more aware of the color-coded threat levels than visitors, visitors to

the United States should familiarize themselves with the code in order to better prepare for business trips.”

The CPSA article continued, “The Homeland Security Advisory System can place specific geographic regions or industry sectors on a higher alert status than other regions or industries, based on specific threat information.”

Documentation Makes it Easier

So what does this mean for Canadians crossing the border into the United States?

“The requirements of U.S. authorities for identification upon entering the United States have recently become much stricter. The most important formality on entering the United States is providing proof of your Canadian citizenship. Canadians should carry a Canadian passport for all visits to the United States. A Canadian passport is the best document to prove your Canadian citizenship and your right to return to Canada. Canadians are required to be in possession of proof of citizenship (such as a birth certificate) and a valid official photo identification (such as a driver’s licence).

“To enter or transit the United States, you may also be asked for:

- Evidence of residential status.
- Employment or educational ties to Canada.
- Proof that the trip is for a legitimate purpose and is of a reasonable length.

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- Proof of financial support while in the United States.

“All carriers (noticeably airlines, but also rail and bus services) have become much stricter about requiring proof of admissibility to the United States as a result of the heavy fines they face for carrying inadmissible passengers.”

Additional Requirements

“As a traveler using U.S. preclearance facilities at a Canadian airport, you are obligated to meet U.S. entry requirements. You will be interviewed by a U.S. preclearance officer. It is an offense under Canada’s Preclearance Act to knowingly make a false or deceptive statement to a preclearance officer. American officials are authorized to inspect your luggage and can refuse you entry to the United States. While you are in a preclearance area you are subject to Canadian law, including the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Canadian Bill of Rights, the Canadian Human Rights Act, Canada’s Preclearance Act, and Canadian criminal law, including those laws governing drugs and guns.

“If you have a criminal record, no matter how minor or how long ago the offense, you may be refused entry to the United States. There may also be problems in transiting U.S. airport facilities. A pardon for an offense issued by Canadian authorities is not recognized under U.S. law for purposes of entry into the United States.”

The article concludes by alerting Canadian citizens that for additional information about crossing the Canada-U.S. border, it is advisable to refer to the Consular Affairs Bureau, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, 125 Sussex Drive, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0G2; phone: (800) 267-6788 (in Canada and the United States) or in an emergency situation, call (613) 996-8885 (collect).

Commenting on the information contained in the article, Terry Ruffell, president of CPSA, emphasizes, “There should be no difficulty in crossing the border to attend international trade shows. If you have the proper identification and other documentation, and it doesn’t look like you’re bringing products over the border to sell, you shouldn’t have any problems at all. In short, be prepared, make sure your story is straight, and there should be no problems.” □

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