

Information Byway



NORTH WESTERN ONTARIO
TOURISM ASSOCIATION

www.nwota.com

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BORDER CROSSING INFORMATION

As of April 29th, anyone coming across the border is allowed to bring 5 kg (11 lb.) beef, 5 kg (11 lb.) wild game, no restriction on amount of chicken, no restriction on amount of pork. The total amount of meat products that is being imported cannot exceed 20 kg (45 lb.). Customs officers are telling travellers NO PET FOOD can be imported unless it is absolutely vegetarian, or with lamb, and does not have the words "by product" "meat" on the packaging. Potatoes are restricted because of the mop top virus. Some other items that are restricted are live bait (leeches, minnow), flower bulbs & firewood; however, this list is ever changing. NWOTA will work with Canada Customs to try to get updates that may be of concern to the tourism industry to the NWOTA office so that members can be informed. A list was provided that will be posted on the NWOTA website.

As of July 2003, commercial importations of ANY AMOUNT must be processed by either using a Customs broker; importer preparing their own paper B3 commercial entry, or importer preparing B3 commercial entry on the office computer, CCEPS (Customs Commercial Entry Processing System). An officer will walk importer through the use of the computer the first time. This service is available 24 hours a day.

REQUIREMENTS WHEN CROSSING THE BORDER

Everyone travelling to Canada should have adequate identification to present to an Officer, when requested. Primary documents (Passport, Birth Certificate, Naturalization Certificate) show the Citizenship of a person, and a secondary identification (driver's license, health card, picture identification, etc.) normally indicates person's name and date of birth. Suitable identification is needed to allow the person forward into Canada, but it also facilitates the person's re-entry to the country that issued the document, or to the country they are coming from as a visitor. Children should also have identification, and if they are not travelling with parent(s) or legal guardian, they should have letter or documentation to confirm whom they

are travelling with, name(s) and contact numbers should an Officer wish to contact someone.

It may also be beneficial for travellers to have proof of insurance. This is a form provided by the insurance company stating proof of coverage while in Canada. Visitors that have had one less serious conviction (where the penalty imposed could be for a term not exceeding ten years) and it is ten (10) years old or more, are admissible to Canada. Those persons, who are inadmissible to Canada because of convictions, are eligible to apply for Criminal Rehabilitation after five years has elapsed. Convictions are equated to the Canadian Criminal Code. If a person is travelling and staying in Northwestern Ontario, they

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can apply by mail (allowing 4-6 weeks processing time) for the Criminal Rehabilitation at the Thunder Bay or Fort Frances CIC office. Applications are normally processed at Canadian Consulate offices in the USA but do take much longer. Persons with serious convictions must apply thru a Canadian Consulate. Persons whose conviction(s) are less than five years are inadmissible to Canada.

The border crossings are staffed with an Immigration Officer in Fort Frances, Sunday through Saturday from 8 am – 12 am; in Rainy River, Tuesday through Saturday from 8 am – 4 pm.

Operators that are looking for specific information are advised to ask for a full time inspector or the supervisor on duty.

A Remote Area Border Crossing Permit (RABC) may be used to determine whether a person can enter Canada. The fee for an RABC is \$30.00 (Canadian), compared to the \$200.00 processing fee at the border. If the permit is granted then the individual will be allowed entry. The Remote Area Border Crossing Permit can be applied for at the Canadian Immigration office in Thunder Bay. Applications and information about an RABC is available by calling 1-807-624-2162. The application should be mailed in approximately 6-8 weeks minimum prior to planned entry.

NWOTA is currently making updates to our website
www.nwota.com.

Pick up your copy of the “Information ByWay” newsletter or the minutes of meetings.

Check out the calendar of events. Contact the office if you know of an event that is happening in your community.

If you are unable to download newsletters from our website and would like to remain on the mailing list via Canada Post, please make sure you indicate this when renewing your 2004 NWOTA Membership.

NOTES FROM NOTO’S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR **DOUG REYNOLDS**

DRINKING WATER REGULATIONS

Concerns over the new drinking water regulations continue to attract more calls to the NOTO office than any other single issue. We have been urging the government for some time to rewrite these regulations to make them appropriate to our industry. Our lobbying and your letters are finally paying off. The Environment Minister recently announced that systems that were to come under the regulation this July, mostly in larger resorts and campgrounds, have a six month extension. They have also started consultations with the industry to look at how to fix these badly flawed regulations.

NOTO recently took the lead in advocating that regulation of these small systems be moved back to local health units from MOE. We have health labs in place in our communities to do the testing, inspectors who visit our facilities and a track record of success with this simple system. A number of other organizations have jumped onto the NOTO bandwagon, and are supporting us in advocating for this change.

We have had ongoing discussions with MOE staff, policy staff in the minister’s office and others. After our presentation to the North Bay Chamber of Commerce, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce picked up the issue, and is advocating the position put forth by NOTO. We have also kept this issue alive in the media, most recently in a discussion with the MOE minister carried on CH News throughout Ontario.

We continue to send regular updates out to the industry by mail, email and through postings on the Message Board on the NOTO website. NOTO also participates regularly on the www.wellsafe.net website and message board, and this is an

excellent resource for the industry. Anyone who has not yet visited this site and taken part in the survey on the impact of these regulations on your business should do so. The survey results are being presented to government officials to support our position in favor of changes to Reg. 170.

IMPORT REQUIREMENTS FOR PERSONAL USE

MEAT: Requires proof of origin and must be less than 20 kg (45 lb) in total weight.

Beef, no more than 5 kg (11lb). Wild game, no more than 5kg (11 lb). Chicken, no restriction. Pork, no restriction.

PET FOOD: Travellers are being advised “No Pet Food”; unless it is absolutely vegetarian, or with lamb, and does not have the words “by product” or “meat” on the packaging.

FRUITS & VEGETABLES: Fresh, except for rootcrops such as potatoes, carrots, turnip, (non-commercial). Less than 15 packages with total weight less than 250 kg (550 lb). Frozen, canned, dehydrated or dried 20 kg (45 lb) or less.

BAIT: Earthworms can be imported if they are packaged in clean, new containers without soil. Worms should be packaged in fresh artificial bedding. They should also be kept in the commercial bedding for at least 7-15 days prior to crossing the border. ***No live bait such as minnows or leeches is permitted.***

If you have any further questions please visit the CFIA website at CFIA-Importation Information or call 1-800-442-2342

BORDER CROSSING

Despite repeated promises of improvements, we continue to receive ongoing reports of long delays, rude and inappropriate comments and guests being refused entry for minor criminal offenses many years past. In light of these continuing concerns, we wrote to Joe Comuzzi, the FedNor minister, along with our provincial tourism and northern development ministers, expressing our concern. Jim Bradley, our tourism minister, has responded to our letter, and the Ontario Ministry of Tourism has assigned staff to work with us to re-open discussions with Immigration Canada officials.

A key promise made during our meetings with immigration officials almost two years ago was that improved customer service training would be provided to staff at the northwestern Ontario border crossings. The Canadian Tourism Commission offered to deliver this training. The CTC official involved in the discussions at that time told me recently that they had repeatedly offered to deliver the training, but were refused the opportunity.

Immigration officials in the same area recently introduced arbitrary new procedures for issuing work permits to non-Canadian business owners. The industry received no advance notice of this change in procedure, and a check with an immigration lawyer indicated that there were no new regulations, just an arbitrary bureaucratic directive in a local immigration office. These sudden, unannounced rule changes by local immigration officials continue to create confusion, uncertainty and unnecessary work for our industry.

TOURISM LICENSING

The Ontario Ministry of Tourism recently decided to review the Resource Based Tourism License, with the aim of either making it more relevant or eliminating it. A consultant was contracted to conduct the review.

NOTO has been reviewing the issue of tourism licensing for some time, particularly from the stand point of improving security of allocation of Crown Resources. We forwarded a draft of our preliminary discussion document to the consultants and subsequently met with ministry officials.

We believe that a tourism license should provide longer term resource tenure, and attach resource allocations to the tourism business. This would eliminate the practice of MNR arbitrarily reducing outpost bed capacities or refusing to transfer Bear Management Areas when businesses are sold.

Virtually all of our recommendations were incorporated into the consultants report, and the ministries of tourism, northern development and natural resources have

begun the process of working with us toward the process of implementing such a licensing approach. NOTO's licensing discussion document is available in draft form on the NOTO website, and further ideas and discussion are welcome and encouraged.

OUTDOOR ADVENTURE GUIDE

Despite some initial problems and delays, the NOTO Ontario Outdoor Adventure Guide has been a huge success, with virtually the entire initial print run of more than 60,000 having been distributed. We are now in discussions with OTMP to incorporate their Angling Guide into our publication to create an even more comprehensive piece. We anticipate more listings, a larger print run and even broader distribution for this year's NOTO Ontario Outdoor Adventure Guide.

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FOR AREA BUSINESSES TO
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BETTER THE TOURISM
INDUSTRY IN OUR AREA.**

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Dates to mark on your calendar:

Monthly NWOTA Meetings

August 12, 12:00 noon, Emo Inn
September 9, 12:00 noon, Emo Inn

October 7, NWOTA Annual Fall Meeting,
Location to be announced

December 9, 12:00 noon, Emo Inn

NWOTA AND KDCA BOARD MEMBERS TO MEET

At the July 8th NWOTA meeting, conversation was had in regards to some of the benefits to the tourism industry if both groups could meet to have discussions about issues that are affecting the tourism.

It was agreed to initiate a meeting as soon as possible to discuss Northwestern Ontario tourism issues and strategies to tackle these issues.

NWOTA and KDCA executive board members will meet in a few weeks. Reports will be given at monthly meetings and in the Information ByWay newsletter.