



Cross Border Eventing

Contributed by [HL Sgt. Yeoman Gallant Colin Mackay of Balmaghie](#)

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If you have volunteered to organize an event attracting people from across the US/Canadian international border, you may be asked about modern border crossing regulations.

Two useful web sites to direct the traveler to are the [Canadian Border Services Agency](#) which has information about Americans crossing into Canada and [WTHI](#) which has information about Canadians crossing into America.

Identification

Tell your event attendees that they must carry valid proof of citizenship. A current passport is mandatory for border crossings into the United States. While Canada does not require such for US citizens, they will need it to re enter the US so they can show it to the Canadian Border Officials.

The [Nexus](#) program for frequent border crossers is available for all Canadian and US citizens to apply for, however, there are fees, an interview, etc. making it unappealing for people who cross the border only occasionally. There are also [Enhanced Drivers Licenses](#) issued in both Canada and the US that are acceptable, but they are available only to residents near the borders.

If the event attendee is a citizen of another country, but a legal resident of Canada or the US, they should check with both immigration departments in order to be certain they carry the correct paperwork. These requirements change frequently, so it is recommended that they check prior to each trip to be on the safe side!

Minors

Travel with minors presents another layer of paperwork with which to be concerned. If the attendees are accompanied by their legal dependents, with passports or birth certificates, they should have no difficulty. If the attendee is traveling without their spouse, are a single parent, or traveling with children not their own, they must either have a notarized letter from the other parent/s authorizing them to take their children across the border, or a copy of the legal judgement proving parental custody. Border guards are always on the lookout for kidnapping cases, and possessing such papers will save a lot of grief and time at the crossing.

Explaining the SCA

Now that the traveler has reached the border with proper ID in hand, they may wonder what to say to the border guard. They should say that they are going to a meeting of their "medieval historical society" and they may add the term "the SCA." At the I-5 crossings, the border guards are familiar with these terms. Less well frequented border stations may require additional time and explanations.

The traveler must have some explanation for everything that they are carrying across the line. Tell the Customs officials the minimum necessary to answer their questions. The traveler should be

prepared to be questioned about the amount of gear they are carrying for such a relatively short period of time. Explain to the guard about the non-profit education nature of the SCA and period things like pavilions and garb. Do so politely and most likely the agent will be fine.

Speaking of garb, avoid wearing garb across the border. A border crossing is not the time to "freak the mundanes". Do not attempt to joke with them, unless they start it with you. They are very serious about their work, especially these days.

It is safest to leave weapons, such as blades, at home when crossing the international border. If the traveler chooses to bring them and are questioned, characterize the items as costume props, which is truthfully what they are. It cannot be emphasized enough to avoid joking, especially about weapons.

Note: US Citizens should be aware that Canada does not allow handguns across the border.

Merchants

If the traveler is a merchant, advise them to check with Canadian/US Customs to ensure proper authorization for sales. The Society of Creative Anachronism is not affiliated with individual merchants and is not responsible for ensuring that they have followed due diligence with regards to their business needs. Note: the traveler **must not say** that they are going to "work" at the event. Working in a foreign country is governed by immigration laws

Pets

Are they planning to bring their pet with them? This can be done, but they should weigh the pros and cons of dealing with the additional headache they will inevitably incur. Before leaving home, the traveler must check with their veterinarian for the latest rules and regulations. The vet will know what shots and paperwork are required. You can look here for information about [bring a pet from the US into Canada](#).

To sum up: the event autocrat should advise the traveler to plan ahead. The 49th parallel is an imaginary line to An Tir but a very real modern one if you are traveling to an event on the other side of the line. Be polite and be prepared!