



TwiTips: Canadian Driving Details

<http://TourTheTwilightSaga.com>

A Novel Holiday Travel Guidebook

Tour the Twilight Saga

Canadian Driving Details

Are You Licensed to Drive in Canada?

To legally drive within British Columbia:

- Canadian Twilighters must have a valid driver's license, issued by their home province.
- US and other foreign Twilighters must have a valid driver's license, issued by their home state or country no less than 12 months prior to driving in Canada.

What is an International Driving Permit?

An International Driving Permit (IDP) is a booklet, about the size of a passport, which provides a translation of your existing driver's license into different languages. It is designed to be used in combination with—not *in place of*—your valid driver's license. In other words: by itself, no legitimate IDP grants driving privileges to anyone, anywhere.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Driving_Permit

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/after-transportation-driving.asp>

Who Needs an IDP?

Twilighters from countries where English is the primary language **do not need** an IDP to drive in Canada or the US.

Twilighters from all other countries **should have one**.

- If a car rental agent cannot read and understand your driver's license, good luck getting a car.
- If stopped by a law enforcement official—for any reason—plan on encountering a significant delay getting back on the road if the officer cannot read and understand your driver's license.

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers/after-transportation-driving.asp>

Canada Does Not Issue IDPs to Foreign Nationals

To learn how to obtain an IDP, visit your government's website and look for a Department of Transportation section, or the like. Be sure to begin IDP application at least a month (preferably 3 months) in advance of your holiday.

Beware of Scam IDP Websites

Scam IDP websites are out there and eager to take your money. When applying for an IDP, use only the Internet sources recommended by your government.

<http://businesstravel.about.com/od/internationaltravel/a/International-Drivers-Permit-Scam.htm>

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Know Before You Go

Even if you're an experienced driver, it is important to familiarize yourself with **Canadian Driving Regulations** before driving in Canada. Below is a link to British Columbia's basic Driver's Manual. At the very least, read the chapters about **Rules of the Road** and **Signs, Signals, and Road Markings**.
<http://www.icbc.com/driver-licensing/driving-guides/Pages/Learn-to-Drive-Smart.aspx>

Oddly enough, like the Washington State Drivers' Manual (TTTS Book 1), British Columbia's manual doesn't include a full explanation of **Parallel Parking Rules** in North America. Thus, we've provided them below.

- First, parallel parking refers to parking a vehicle with its wheels parallel and next to the curb or side of the road.
- While in Canada or the US, unless there are signs (or angled, white lines) indicating that vehicles should be parked at an angle, park parallel to the curb on roads where parking is allowed.
- In the absence of signs saying otherwise, you can parallel park on both sides of a one-way road.

<http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/dandv/driver/handbook/section2.8.2.shtml>



[©2010 Lauren Hall-Lew, image segment (enhanced)]

The most important parallel parking rule in Canada or the US:

Your parked vehicle must be **facing in same direction** as the nearest lane's **direction of traffic**.

The image above was shot in the UK. If this photo was snapped in Canada or the US, one of these vehicles would be sporting a costly parking ticket.

Additional Information Important to Driving in Canada

We strongly recommend reading the **BC Passport**, *Driving and Parking in Vancouver* article link provided below. There, along with other helpful tips, you'll learn that:

- Seat belts are mandatory for both drivers and passengers in British Columbia.
- Headlights should be on at all times, day and night.
- Some Canadian traffic lights **blink green**, instead of shining steadily green. Blinking green traffic lights don't turn red unless a pedestrian presses the walk button to stop traffic in order to cross the street.
- On streets with blinking green lights, the cross street has no traffic light at all, only a stop sign. Vehicles cross when the opportunity [safely] presents itself.

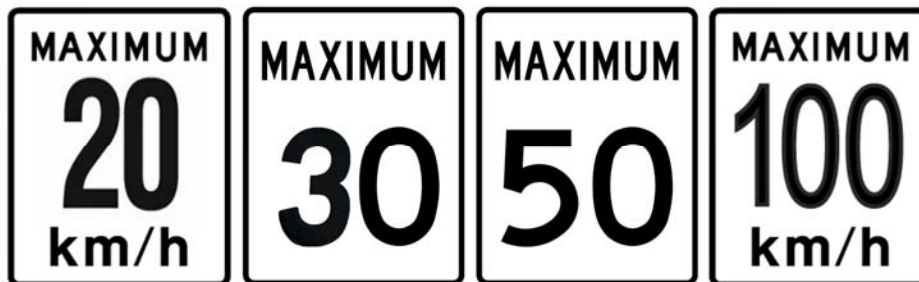
<http://bcpassport.com/vancouver-information/vancouver-vital-information/driving-and-parking-in-vancouver/>



Canadian Speed Limits

Highway distances in Canada are measured in **kilometers**—not miles. Thus, speed limits are posted in **kilometers-per-hour**. Although the unit symbol is km/h, most people in English-speaking countries refer to this measurement as “kph.”

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Speed_limits_in_Canada



Because some Canadian speed limit signs aren't marked with the km/h identifier, US Twilighters easily can find themselves inadvertently speeding. In 2013, it was almost an hour after crossing the US/Canadian border before CD Miller finally realized that she'd been driving at a rate of 30 *mph* in a 30 *km/h* speed zone—18 km/h over the limit.

***Please Note:** As soon as you arrive in Canada, adjust the settings of your GPS/SatNav device to display meters/kilometers instead of miles, and km/h instead of mph. Your device may not offer this option until you are actually there. (Miller's didn't.)

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[©2006 Sav127 at wikipedia] [©2013 CD Miller]

Speedometer Conundrums

US Twilighters driving their personal vehicle to Canada, or anyone who rents a car in the US and drives to Canada, will see mph in large print on the speedometer, with km/h in small print. [Pic above, left.] If you rent a car in Canada, the opposite will be true. [Pic above, right.] Thus, you'll have no worries while driving in Canada.



[©2013 CD Miller]

Unfortunately, Speedometer Design Varies Widely

As seen in the pic above, the car Miller rented in Seattle happened to have a speedometer with *very* small km/h numbers. This made it particularly difficult to judge her speed in km/h.

After reaching her first night's Vancouver area lodgings, Miller Googled km/h to mph speed limits, scrawled a rudimentary speed limit conversion table on a piece of paper, and taped it to the dash of her rental car the next morning.

She found this so helpful, we created a **Speed Limit Conversion Table** to print and bring with you. It is freely posted on our website.

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Tour the Twilight Saga Speed Limit Conversion Tables

For US Auto in Canada		For Canadian Auto in the US	
Sign Says: km/h	Drive At: mph	Sign Says: mph	Drive At: km/h
20	12	20	32
30	18	25	40
40	25	30	48
45	28	35	56
50	31	40	64
55	34	45	72
60	37	50	80
70	43	55	88
80	50	60	96
90	56	65	105
100	62	70	113
110	68	75	120
120	75	80	128

<http://www.TourTheTwilightSaga.com/TipsB2/B2SpeedTables.pdf>

Our PDF also includes a Speed Limit Conversion Table for Twilighters driving a Canadian automobile in the US. (*Tour the Twilight Saga* Book One—the Olympic Peninsula, as well as TTTS Books Three and Four.)

Because of the difference between km/h and mph, Twilighters operating a Canadian car in the US easily can find themselves inadvertently driving far slower than the posted limit. This can anger those driving behind you, especially when traveling on small highways where passing isn't convenient, and may lead to other drivers engaging in unsafe passing practices. Wherever you go, it is best to ensure that you drive at the speed limit.

***Please Note:** As soon as you cross into the US, adjust the settings of your GPS/SatNav device to display miles instead of meters/kilometers, and mph instead of km/h.



Seattle, Washington Prices, May 21, 2015				Vancouver, BC Prices, May 21, 2015			
Regular Gas	Midgrade	Premium	Diesel Fuel	Regular Gas	Midgrade	Premium	Diesel Fuel
Price	Station	Area	Thanks	Price	Station	Area	Thanks
2.79 update	Costco 451 Costco Dr & Sperry Dr	Tukwila	highoct 55 minutes ago	129.9 update	Chevron 2783 W 4 Ave & MacDonald St	Vancouver	MARIOWERX 11 minutes ago
2.79 update	ARCO 1124 4th St & Beach Ave	Marysville	mommakd2012 2 hours ago	129.9 update	Esso 4064 Fraser St & King Edward Ave	Vancouver	2crazy 32 minutes ago
2.79 update	Valero 9201 Holman Rd NW & 13th Ave NW	Seattle - NW	abillit 13 hours ago	129.9 update	Chevron 3250 MacDonald St & W 16 Ave	Vancouver	2crazy 34 minutes ago
2.81 update	Costco 16616 Twin Lakes Ave & Johnson Tracts Rd	Marysville	msstarkm 4 hours ago	129.9 update	Petro-Canada 2890 E Hastings St & Renfrew St	Vancouver	ArronElvis 1 hour ago

[©2015 GasBuddy.com]

Gas in Canada

Gas is dispensed and priced in Canada just as it is in the UK.

- Canadian gas is sold by the **liter**, not by the **gallon**.
- The price per liter of gas is posted in Canadian **cents**, not dollars.
- One gallon of gas equals 3.79 liters.

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This can be very confusing for US Twilighters who drive in Canada.

Happily, all you really need to know is that gas commonly costs around **one US Dollar more per gallon** in Canada than it does in America.

If you wish to learn *why* gas is more expensive in Canada than in the US, visit the websites below.

<http://www.tripadvisor.com/Travel-g153339-c13905/Canada:Fuel.Prices.html>

Trip Advisor's Canada: Fuel Prices

<http://blogs.marketwatch.com/canada/2011/03/09/canada-gas-prices-higher-than-u-s-because-of-higher-taxes/>

Canada gas prices higher than U.S.' because of higher taxes

<https://www.nrcan.gc.ca/energy/fuel-prices/4935>

The difference in gasoline prices between Canada and the United States

The **BC Passport**, *Driving and Parking in Vancouver* article (link reprised below) also contains helpful gas-related tips, such as:

- [Canadian] Gas prices usually don't vary much from station to station so there's no point driving around town looking for cheaper gas. It doesn't exist.
- That being said, gas prices fluctuate, and it isn't uncommon for the price of gas to go up or down several cents a liter from one day to the next. Gas tends to go up on weekends and holidays. No big surprise.
- Gas often costs less in outlying areas, so if you're driving to Vancouver, fill up before you cross the [US] border or before you get to town.

<http://bcpassport.com/vancouver-information/vancouver-vital-information/driving-and-parking-in-vancouver/>



[©2009 Myke Waddy]

Canadian Gas Stations

There are a few important differences between Canadian and US gas stations.

- Canadian law requires that you pay at the pump with a credit or debit card, or pay inside with card or cash, *before* you pump your gas. This law is designed to prevent gas-and-dash crimes.
- Foreign credit cards (including US cards—as Miller learned in 2013) may not work at a Canadian gas pump, and you'll have to take your card inside before fueling. There, the attendant will charge your foreign credit card for an amount large enough to cover *more* than the cost of filling a completely empty tank. This practice is intended to ensure that your card is good for the maximum possible amount of purchase.

After filling up, go back inside and they'll issue a refund of the excess amount you were charged to your card.

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[©2009 Myke Waddy]

- A 1986 Vancouver bylaw requires all city gas stations to have at least one **full-service pump**. While the vast majority of Vancouver gas pumps are self-serve, pay attention to the signs at the end of each island. They won't all look like the ones above. But, they'll be there, in some fashion.
- **Two Communities Near Vancouver Prohibit Self-Serve Gas Pumping**
If refueling in **Coquitlam** (Twilight Saga Sites #24, 25, and 26) or **Richmond** (Steveston Village, Site #34), you cannot pump your own gas.
<http://blogs.theprovince.com/2014/08/22/by-the-numbers-the-ban-on-self-serve-gas-in-richmond-and-coquitlam/>
BTW: The state of **Oregon** (*Tour the Twilight Saga* Book Three) is one of only two US states that prohibit self-serve gas pumping—though that law may soon be changing in rural Oregonian communities of fewer than 40,000 residents.
<http://www.todayifoundout.com/index.php/2013/08/oregonians-and-people-in-new-jersey-arent-allowed-to-pump-their-own-gas/>
<http://www.thetruthaboutcars.com/2015/05/oregon-may-allow-self-service-gas-rural-counties/>
- According to Trip Advisor's Canada Fuel article:
"Visitors to Canada from more densely-populated countries [such as the US] may be surprised to find that some sections of heavily-traveled Canadian highway can have as much as 100 km (60 miles) or more between gas stations. It is unwise to assume that there will always be a gas station nearby when you need to refuel. If you are doing substantial amounts of highway driving, you need to either plan your fuel stops as part of your route planning, or consider **refueling when your gas gauge reaches the half-full mark.**"
<http://www.tripadvisor.com/Travel-g1533339-c13905/Canada:Fuel.Prices.html>

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[©2013 CD Miller]

Tips for Driving in the City of Vancouver

For many years, Vancouver, British Columbia, was listed as the most traffic-congested city in Canada, and the second-most congested city in all of North America—Los Angeles, California, claiming the top spot.

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/vancouver-traffic-congestion-deemed-worst-in-canada-1.1181451>

http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2013/01/08/metro-vancouver-traffic-worst-canada-north-america_n_2435069.html

In November of 2013, Vancouver's traffic surpassed that of Los Angeles, and it graduated to being labeled the most congested city in all of North America.

http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2013/11/06/vancouver-worst-traffic-congestion_n_4228675.html

While that ignominious designation has been challenged, it doesn't really matter whether or not Vancouver is crowned North America's most congested city. It is a fact that the city is absolutely awful to drive in during rush hours—sometimes, even outside of rush hours.

Common Metropolitan Vancouver Rush Hours

- **Morning:** 6am to 9am
- **Afternoon:** 3pm to 7pm

<http://vancouver.about.com/od/gettingaround/tp/Getting-Around-Vancouver-Bc.htm>

<http://www.roadrules.ca/content/rush-hour-traffic-issues-and-skills>

Tip #1: Do Your Best to AVOID Driving Within the City of Vancouver Entirely

As when visiting other considerably congested, major metropolitan cities, the less driving you do *within* the city, the happier you'll be.

Use public transportation to reach the Twilight Saga sites associated with Downtown Vancouver from your Vancouver area lodgings:

- New Westminster (Site #29)
- Gastown (Site #31)
- Stanley Park (Site #32)

<http://www.TourTheTwilightSaga.com/TipsB2/B2PublicTransportation.pdf>

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Tip #2: If you must drive into Downtown Vancouver, drive to one of the sites listed above *after* morning rush hour has ended (9am). Leave your car there and journey to the other downtown sites via public transportation.

Because all of the New Westminister film sites are on public streets and can be enjoyed at any time of day, we suggest driving there first. When finished at Site #29, leave your car in the New Westminister Downtown Parkade and take a train from **Columbia Station** to Gastown's **Waterfront Station**.

From there, take a **public bus** to Stanley Park. Within the park, you can use the Stanley Park Shuttle or Horse-Drawn Carriage to get around. Have a light lunch at one of the park's venues.

After enjoying Stanley Park, head back to Gastown on a public bus—*or*, board one of Vancouver's **Hop-On/Hop-Off tour busses** to get there.

Please Note: Using a Hop-On/Hop-Off tour bus to travel from Stanley Park to Gastown will change the visit order of film sites found there. Armed with our **Vancouver, BC Twilight Saga Maps PDF**, however, you'll have no problem doing this.

<http://www.TourTheTwilightSaga.com/B2/VBCtsMaps.pdf>

After visiting the last film site in the Gastown chapter, have dinner at one of the many marvelous downtown Vancouver restaurants you'll encounter while returning to Waterfront Station, where you can catch an Expo, Millennium, or Canada Line train back to New Westminister.

Time your meal so that you return to the New Westminister Downtown Parkade *after* the evening rush hour has ended (7pm). That way, you'll enjoy clear sailing back to your Vancouver area lodgings.

Tip #3: Schedule Drives to Other Vancouver Area Sites during Non-Rush Hours

When traveling to Vancouver Twilight Saga sites that cannot be reached conveniently via public transportation, plan your drive through the city of Vancouver well before or after rush hour times.

Tip #4: Before You Leave Home, Learn About Construction Projects Planned for the Metro Vancouver Area during Your Visit

Vancouver's massive traffic system is subject to numerous construction closures and detours throughout the year. Even if you download the most current US/Canada GPS/SatNav map before departing home, the file may not contain entirely accurate Vancouver road and highway construction project information.

To avoid suffering a construction closure detour, plan ahead by going to the Projects page of the BC Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure website:

<http://www.th.gov.bc.ca/projects.htm>

Click on **Current Transportation Projects**.

Make notes based on this information so that you can program your GPS/SatNav device to avoid construction closures.

***Tip #5: A Paper Map May Come in Handy When Driving in Vancouver, BC**

Even if you planned ahead to avoid areas scheduled for construction during your visit, collisions can occur anytime, anywhere, and cause unexpected detours. Special events, such as marathons, are a

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frequent cause of street closures in the spring and summer. When wildlife ventures on a highway, it is closed until the wildlife leaves.

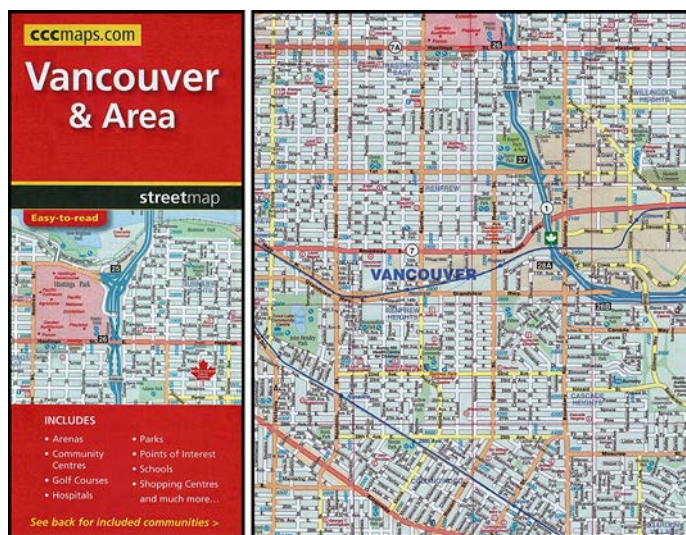
No GPS/SatNav device will be aware of these types of closures. There are smart phone traffic apps that may give you data in real time, however. Detoured Twilighters with smart phones can access the **Drive BC** website to obtain real-time information regarding road conditions and incidents as they are encountered.

<http://www.drivebc.ca>

Metro Vancouver areas under construction can be vast and even planned detours are not always well signed. Spontaneous detours are not signed at all. If you are unexpectedly detoured, pull over to get your bearings and determine a new route.

Any time you are detoured from a route planned for you by your GPS/SatNav device, ignore the directions it gives you. If you don't, the device will likely direct you back to the place where you encountered the closure. You can, however, use it as a map to negotiate a detour.

An old-fashioned, paper map of Vancouver and surrounding areas may come in handy if you cannot rely on your GPS/SatNav program. Either buy one before you leave home and bring it with you, or purchase one at the first Canadian gas station you encounter.



[©2013 www.cccmaps.com]

While there is a wide variety of metro Vancouver paper maps and atlases to choose from, we prefer the **Canadian Cartographics Corporation (CCC)** map.

http://directroute.3dcartstores.com/Vancouver-Area-Map--20307-_p_351.html

Tip #6: Be Patient

At some point in even the most well-planned Vancouver, BC holiday, you'll probably find yourself *parked*, bumper-to-bumper, on the Trans-Canada Highway.

Stressing while stuck in traffic won't make it move any faster.

Every traffic jam comes to an end ... eventually.