

Russ's How-to Guide: Importing a vehicle from the U.S.

So I've been asked by a few people to document my experience of importing a vehicle from the US. Here is my step-by-step guide.

Step 1:

- Find your car.

Sounds simple enough, but we all know how hard finding the **right** car can be. The internet is your best friend. Check the usual autotrader.com and similar sites. Most cars have some kind of enthusiast following, so a good idea is to check out dedicated sites and message boards for that make and model. Make sure the car can legally be brought into Canada. Check Transport Canada's admissibility list.

http://www.riv.ca/english/US_vehicle_admissibility.pdf

Step 2:

- You've found the car, now you need to pay for it and get it home

Now, to bring your car across the border you need the title in your name. You have a choice here:

- A) You send money and hope the seller sends you a signed title (An Escrow service may be helpful here).
- B) You go to where the car is, pay the seller and get the title yourself

I chose to go to the car and get the title. I chose this route because I wanted to see the car in person before I paid money for it, and because it wasn't too far away. So through emails the seller and I had agreed on a price and I would come down to see/buy the car. The seller and I had some discussions about payment and agreed on a bank draft; how you do it is up to you and the seller.

Step 3:

- Insurance

Now to be able to drive your new baby home you've got to start some paperwork. If that scares you, you're going to have future problems because there is a lot more paperwork ahead. Go to an insurance broker and ask for a 'Temporary Binder of Insurance' (approx. \$50 – depends on the value of the vehicle). This will cover you from the time you buy the policy until you get the car to its "Final Destination". But, it's for a set amount of time from the minute you buy it (they do actually write the time down to the minute on the paper!)

- **The insurer needs the year, make, model and VIN**

Step 4:

- Get 'er done!

I headed out in the morning and drove down to see the car. All looked good so I bought it. You each sign the Title and a Bill of Sale. Now you need a license permit. Head down to the DMV and wait. Eventually you will get to the head of the line and you can now buy your permit. In the state of Oregon you buy a permit for \$20USD that allows you 21 days.

- **The DMV needs the title, your Binder of Insurance, your Driver's license**

Step 5:

- Head home

Make your way back home. When I hit the border I stopped and left the car at a storage facility. US Customs needs at least 72 hours with the paperwork before you can cross. So, if you are like me, you would need to go inside and get things started. Otherwise, if you have the title before you leave, then you can fax all your paperwork before you go and get the vehicle.

- **US Customs needs the Title, Bill of Sale, your completed Form 1, a copy of your Driver's License and 72 hours notice**

Step 6:

- Dealing with the Border

The US Side:

So now you've left your paperwork with US Customs and the required 72 hours have passed. Head into the US Customs office, the border guy will then come outside and check that the VIN on his paperwork matches the VIN of the car. He will then go back inside and stamp your original title and send you on your way.

- **US Customs needs the Title, Bill of Sale, your completed Form 1, a copy of your Driver's License and 72 hours notice**

The Canadian Side:

Now you take the car across the border and tell the custom's officer that you are importing this car. He will ask you the value of it, fill out a form, give it to you and tell you to take it inside. Once inside Canada Customs they will start some more paperwork for you.

RIV

Assuming your car is 15 years old or newer you will have to go through the **Registrar of Imported Vehicles**. You start your paperwork here (you'd might as well) or do it later and mail off a cheque for \$206.70 + \$100-if your vehicle has A/C.

Taxes & Duty

You will have to pay your GST (Currently 6%) and Duty (Currently 6.1%?) if the vehicle is made outside of the US. You will be asked to provide proof of purchase price, bring a receipt from your bank!

- **Canada Customs needs the Title, Bill of Sale, your completed Form 1, a copy of your Driver's License, and proof of purchase price**

Disclaimer: Your Border experience may vary, maybe it's the shirt you wear, maybe it's the crazed look in your eyes, maybe it's the border guard put his underwear on backwards. Sometimes you'll get the third degree/rubber glove interrogation, whether you deserve it or not. Just have everything in order and tell the truth.

Step 7:

- Now the fun starts

Now that you've got your car across the border and your heading home make a stop an insurance broker and get a proper permit/storage insurance. I had one place tell me that they couldn't issue a storage policy for a car that hasn't yet been registered with ICBC and another place that told me they do it all the time. Anyways. Call the RIV (1-888-848-8240) and fax them your form 1, they will tell you to call back in 24-48 hours. I called them back after lunch and they had my form 2 ready and emailed it to me in PDF format.

- **The RIV needs your Form 1**

Step 8:

- Inspections

Now you have everything you need to get the car inspected. You will need to do a Federal inspection and a Provincial inspection. When the RIV sends your Form 1 they will also send you a list of approved Federal inspection facilities. Basically they have a deal with Canadian Tire, and since they are close that's where I went. For the sake of simplicity I had them do the Provincial inspection at the same time.

- **Canadian Tire needs a copy of your Title, A recall letter from the manufacturer, your Form 1 and Form 2**

Step 9:

- Insurance

Once you have passed your inspection and your forms are stamped and you have your inspection sticker in the corner of the windshield you can go to your insurance agent and register the car in Canada. You will have a grace period from aircare for as long as your first insurance term (ie, buy a years insurance, get a year's grace from aircare). You will have to pay PST (6%) on the purchase price of the vehicle when you first license it as well as other associated license fees.

- **Your agent will need the title, form 2, and inspection reports**

Step 10:

- Enjoy

Now the car is yours and you do whatever you'd like with it!

APPENDIX

1. Important Phone #'s / More information
2. Inspection Details
3. Where to get forms

1. PHONE NUMBERS

Registrar of Imported Vehicles

1-888-848-8240

Fax: (416) 626-0366

info@riv.ca

Hours of service

Mon. to Fri.: 7:00 a.m. to 12:00 midnight (EST)

Sat. and Sun.: 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (EST)

Canada Border Services Agency

In Canada: 1-800-461-9999 (English); 1-800-959-2036 (French)

Outside Canada: (506) 636-5064 (English); (506) 636-5067 (French)

www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca

Transport Canada

In Canada: 1-800-333-0371

Outside Canada: (613) 998-8616

Fax: (613) 998-4831

www.tc.gc.ca

Toyota Customer Experience Center

Phone: 800-331-4331

Mon - Fri, 5:00 am - 6:00 pm PT

Sat, 7:00 am - 4:00 pm PT

Fax: 310-468-7814

<http://www.toyota.com/about/contact/>

Pacific Customs Brokers

<http://www.pcb.ca/vimp.asp>

Phone:

Toll-Free @ (888) 538-1566

Local (Vancouver) @ (604) 538-1566

Email: vehicles@pcb.ca

2. INSPECTION DETAILS

To pass inspection

- . [Recall clearance letter](#)
- . The vehicle must bear a manufacturer's valid U.S. statement of compliance label at the time of importation.
- . The Registrar of Imported Vehicles will mail a Canadian statement of compliance label to you after passing the federal inspection.
- . Valid alpha-numeric 17-digit VIN
- . Metric speedometer and odometer labels (provided by inspection centre)
- . Daytime running lights
- . Infant restraint kit
- . Child tether anchorage
(refer to [Admissibility List](#))
- . 8 km/hour bumpers (refer to [Admissibility List](#))
- . French supplementary restraint system label for airbags that require periodic maintenance

3. FORMS

- Form 1 – US Customs
- Form 2 – RIV
- Temporary Binder of Insurance – ICBC
- Title – Vehicle seller
- Bill of sale – DMV or ICBC or Hand written
- Letter of Recall – Vehicle Manufacturer
- Temporary license - DMV