

Don't be Left Out - Get that NEXUS Card

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I love my NEXUS card and so does everyone I have ever met who has one. Who doesn't appreciate perks like express lanes?

NEXUS, a joint program of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection Service and the Canada Border Services Agency, provides expedited border-crossing to pre-screened, approved travelers in multiple ways:

- NEXUS cardholders may use dedicated "NEXUS only" lanes at land border crossing locations, which move much faster than the regular lanes.
- NEXUS cardholders are subjected to only minimal immigration and customs questioning, hastening their crossing. Information relevant to their admission is provided by a scan of their NEXUS cards, and border officials often determine that further questioning is not needed.
- NEXUS cardholders are provided expedited airport security screening, including the use of self-serve kiosks and dedicated lines (and may not be required to remove their shoes, open laptops or display liquid toiletries in clear plastic bags).
- In Niagara Falls, the Whirlpool Bridge is reserved for the exclusive use of NEXUS cardholders. As a result, it is rarely crowded and generally enables crossings to be completed in only a few minutes.

When crossing by car, each occupant must have a NEXUS card in order for that car to use a NEXUS lane. Cardholders become accustomed to enjoying expedited crossings and reluctant to give those up, and non-cardholders then become at risk of being excluded by cardholders from cross-border trips.

For example, I read a story some years ago about a young boy from Hamilton whose father told him he could bring a friend with him to a Buffalo Sabres' game. He was excited to bring his friend "Billy" until he remembered that Billy did not have a NEXUS card. There was no question: father and son were not going to endure an extra twenty to thirty minutes or so of time in traffic in the regular lanes each way; a NEXUS-holder friend would instead need to come.

It would in fact benefit everyone if more people had NEXUS cards. NEXUS cardholders can be processed in a quarter of the time that it takes to process non-cardholders, permitting border resources to be re-deployed to provide additional, faster service to others.

According to Ron Reinas, General Manager of the Peace Bridge, an analysis shows that "if fifty (50) percent of our traffic were NEXUS, there would be next to no delays at any time on the bridge."

Although NEXUS cards are great for most frequent travelers, cardholders' cards can be confiscated and/or their membership revoked if an inspecting officer at the port of entry believes that the activities

described at inspection require a work permit or other employment authorization. Travelers unsure of whether they are at risk should contact an immigration professional for further assessment.

NEXUS enrollment may be done at www.nexus.gov and www.nexus.gc.ca. Cards are good for five years and cost (USD) \$50.00 and (CAD) \$70.00 (and free for children nineteen and under). Applications may also be submitted in person at the Fort Erie Enrollment Center (10 Central Avenue, Fort Erie, Ontario L2A 6G6) and the Whirlpool Bridge (2250 Whirlpool Street, Niagara Falls, New York 14305).

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