

TRANSPORT CANADA: Overview of Mandate, Programs and Expertise



Presentation to the Ring of Fire Regional Assessment Working Group

David Zeit, Regional Senior Environmental Supervisor

June 5, 2025



Transport Canada's Mandate & Mission

Mandate:

Transport Canada is responsible for federal transportation laws, regulations, policies and oversight programs that aim to create a world-class transportation system.

Mission:

To serve the public interest through the promotion of a safe and secure, efficient and environmentally responsible transportation system in Canada.

Multimodal Organization

Transport Canada Regulates 4 modes of transportation:

- Marine
- Rail
- Aviation
- Road

Multi-modal Directorates:

- Transportation of Dangerous Goods
- Environmental Policy
- Innovation Centre

Areas of Focus

Transport Canada's activities focus on:

- Oversight (How TC promotes, monitors or enforces compliance with our safety and security requirements)
- Regulation
- Inspection
- Enforcement
- Education, outreach and awareness

Marine Safety



2025-07-02

Marine Safety Program

The Program's top priority is to help keep boaters and seafarers safe in Canada while protecting the marine environment. To this end, TC:

- develops and implements policies and regulations, and administers the *Canada Shipping Act, 2001*;
- oversees both recreational and commercial vessel safety;
- partners with other federal government departments and agencies to improve Canada's marine safety and security system;
- delivers initiatives that protect Canada's coasts for future generations while growing the economy; and
- develops systems to prevent and respond to marine pollution incidents.

Marine Safety Program

- Transport Canada has the authority to regulate vessels operating in Canadian waters. This includes how a vessel is constructed, navigation requirements, requirements for environmental protection, and certification of seafarers.
- As a federal authority, TC can provide expertise in determining whether a navigation safety assessment should be considered within the impact assessment process.

Navigation Protection Program (NPP)

The public right to travel on navigable waters is protected by law in Canada. This applies to all navigable waters that the public may use for travel or transport, whether or not the water is on the list of scheduled waters of the *Canadian Navigable Waters Act* (CNWA).

TC's Navigation Protection Program (NPP) helps keep Canada's navigable waters open for transport and recreation. The program administers the:

- *Canadian Navigable Waters Act*, and
- the *Wrecked, Abandoned or Hazardous Vessels Act* (WAHVA)

Navigable Waters Definition

Under the CNWA, a navigable water is any body of water, including a canal or a man-made waterway, that is used for travel or transport. This can be for business, recreation, or by Indigenous Peoples exercising their rights from the Constitution Act of 1982.

NPP - Program Responsibilities

The Navigation Protection Program:

- approves and sets terms and conditions for works in navigable waters;
- manages obstructions in navigable waters;
- addresses irresponsible vessel management;
- provides authorization to people to salvage, remove, or dispose of abandoned boats;
- enforces rules against dewatering or depositing materials into navigable waters; and
- assesses navigable waters for additions to the schedule.

Navigation Protection Program

In the case of Northern development, the NPP will most often be engaged in regard to:

- New watercourse crossings (e.g. bridges for new roads or rail)
- The overprinting of water bodies by mines
- The use of water bodies for waste rock storage and tailings
- The rechanneling of watercourses

Information most often required by the NPP:

- A description of proposed works and activities and how they interact with water bodies
- Physical characteristics of affected water bodies
- Current, historical and potential future use of affected waters by Indigenous communities and the public

Indigenous Participant Funding Program

The IPFP funds projects and initiatives designed to support the capacity of Indigenous communities and organizations to participate in the CNWA process. Consultation activities funded under the IPFP are focused on:

- Potential adverse impacts from decisions contemplated under the CNWA;
- How these adverse impacts affect the rights of the Indigenous peoples of Canada (potential or established Aboriginal or Treaty rights recognized and affirmed under section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982); and
- Measures to mitigate and/or accommodate any potential adverse impacts on the rights of the Indigenous peoples of Canada.

Rail Safety

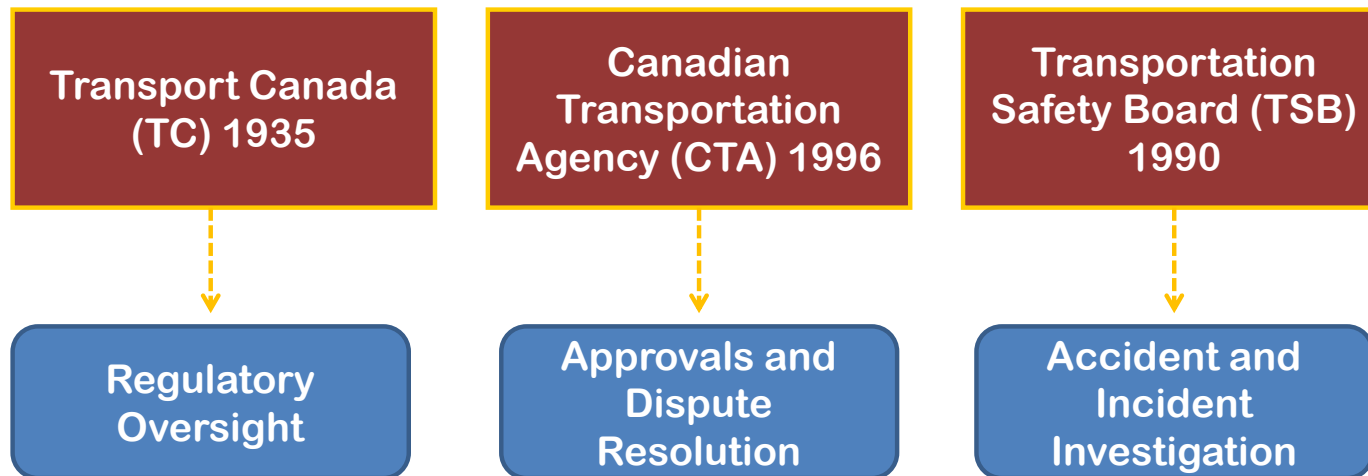


2025-07-02

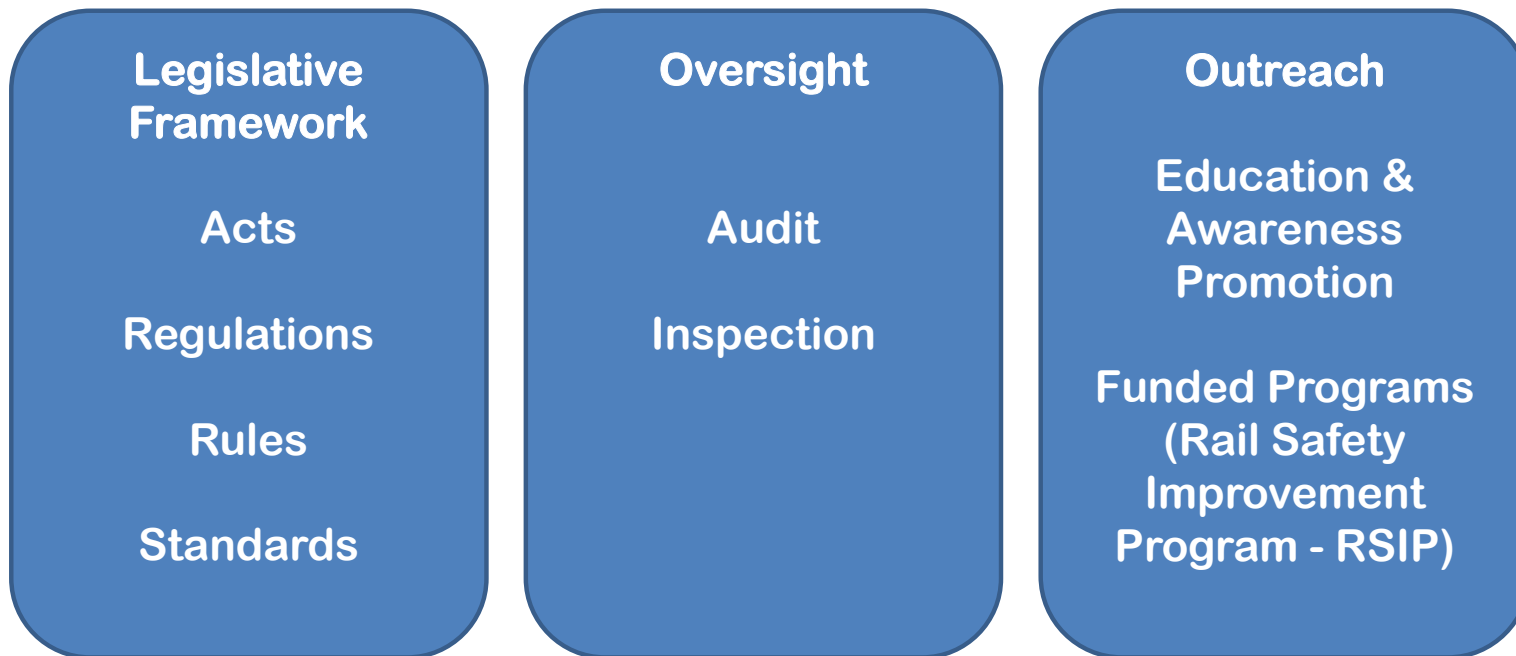
Rail Safety Program:

- TC's Rail Safety Program, under the authority of the *Railway Safety Act*, is responsible for developing, implementing and promoting rail safety policy, regulations, standards and research necessary for the safety of railway operations.
- The Program fosters safety within the rail transportation system and provides oversight of the rail industry through regulation, outreach and oversight. It also promotes public safety at crossings, identifies the risks of trespassing, and provides funds to improve safety at grade crossings.

Rail Safety Regulatory Agencies



TC Rail Safety Responsibilities



Civil Aviation



2025-07-02

Civil Aviation Program

The Civil Aviation Directorate promotes the safety of the national air transportation system through its regulatory framework and oversight activities.

- **Regulatory framework:** TC develops policies, guidelines, regulations, standards and educational materials to advance civil aviation safety in Canada.
- **Oversight activities:** TC verifies that the aviation industry complies with the regulatory framework through certifications, assessments, validations, inspections and enforcement.

The Civil Aviation Program can provide expertise and advice on all aviation-safety related matters concerning major projects.

Roads



2025-07-02

Roads

Provincial and territorial governments are responsible for the planning, design, construction, operation, maintenance and financing of roads and highways within their jurisdiction. The federal government (TC/IC) acts as a funding partner on some transportation projects.

TC is responsible for developing and administering regulations and policies related to roads:

- *Motor Vehicle Safety Act*
- *International Bridges and Tunnels Act*

Conducts research and testing related to road safety and new technologies:

- school bus safety,
- child car seats,
- driver assistance technologies
- zero emission vehicles

Transportation of Dangerous Goods Program

- The TDG Program, under the authority of the *Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act, 1992*, develops, administers and oversees the policies, regulations and standards necessary for the safe transportation of dangerous goods by all modes of transportation in Canada, and provides expertise in emergency response in the event of release of dangerous goods.
- This Program also works to prepare for and coordinate the response to safety and security threats and incidents that may impact the national transportation system regarding chemical, radiological, biological, nuclear or explosive substances.

Transportation of Dangerous Goods Program

TC's Transportation of Dangerous Goods Directorate activities consist of:

- Developing and enforcing safety standards for the safe transportation of dangerous goods;
- Conducting compliance monitoring of modal (air, rail, marine, road) shippers and importers, assessing emergency response assistance plans, means of containment standards and facilities; and,
- Operating the Canadian Transport Emergency Centre to provide advice on emergency response operations for incidents involving dangerous goods.

Innovation Centre

- A multi-modal research, development & deployment organization focused on emerging transportation technologies.
- Partners with government, industry and academia to conduct research on new and emerging technologies that have the potential to improve the efficiency, environmental performance, safety and security of Canada's transportation system.
- Examples: connected and automated vehicles, emission reduction technologies, alternative power-trains, rail climate change adaptation, AI-integration, drone technology.

Environmental Policy Directorate

- TC's Environmental Policy Directorate supports the delivery of the government's goal of reducing the harmful impact of all transportation modes on Canada's environment, and to consider the impact of environmental changes on the national transportation system.
- The Directorate is divided into three groups:
 - Clean Water Policy
 - Clean Air Policy and Analysis
 - Climate Change Adaptation and Planning

Clean Water Policy

The Clean Water Policy group has expertise in the development of policy measures and options, as well as regulatory requirements, relating to various marine topics including:

- vessel end-of-life management (vessel abandonment);
- ship-source marine aquatic invasive species (hull biofouling);
- management of ship waste; and
- support for the protection and recovery of endangered species by managing adverse vessel impacts, including underwater noise and vessel strikes.

Clean Air Policy and Analysis

The Clean Air Policy and Analysis group seeks to reduce air emissions including greenhouse gases from the transportation sector. It has expertise related to:

- regulations, policies and programs to reduce emissions across the transportation sector domestically and internationally;
- efforts underway across the federal government to increase domestic and global adoption of emerging technologies, such as alternative fuels, in the transportation sector; and
- the next generation of voluntary action plans to reduce GHG emissions by improving the efficiency of the domestic rail and aviation sectors.

Climate Change Adaptation and Planning

The Climate Change Adaptation and Planning group supports efforts to advance climate adaptation in the Canadian transportation system. The team has expertise related to:

- climate change impacts to transportation modes;
- climate change risk and vulnerability assessment;
- research and development on climate risks and adaptation solutions for northern transportation systems; and
- technical, engineering, policy or planning approaches that support decision-making and may be effective at mitigating the risks posed to transportation infrastructure and operations by the changing climate.

Funding Programs



2025-07-02

National Trade Corridors Fund (NTCF)

The NTCF helps fund transportation infrastructure projects in Canada. These could include work to airports, ports, railways, and access roads. The NTCF funds projects that:

- improve the flow of goods and people in Canada
- increase the flow of trade in and out of Canada
- help the transportation system to:
 - withstand the effects of climate change
 - better adapt to new technologies and innovation
- address the transportation needs of Arctic and northern communities

Funding is spread out over 11 years, ending March 31, 2028.

Airport Capital Assistance Program

- The ACAP funds rehabilitation projects for local and regional airports and aerodromes.
- It was established in 1995 to assist airports with safety-related capital infrastructure projects and, in so doing, to ensure the continued safety of the Canadian travelling public.
- As of 2023, the ACAP has invested over \$1.25 billion for 1,239 projects at 201 airports across the country.

Airport Capital Assistance Program

In addition to supporting personal travel and tourism, smaller local and regional airports provide:

- year-round access to remote, northern communities
- essential air services, including air ambulance, search and rescue, aerial policing, and forest fire response
- scheduled and charter air services that link communities to regional, national, and international markets for goods and services
- commercial air services (for example, aerial photography and flying schools)
- corporate aircraft and general aviation

Airport Capital Assistance Program

Although these airports play an essential role in Canada's air transportation sector, they can struggle to raise enough revenue for operations, particularly in the case of small, remote airports. The ACAP addresses this issue by funding projects that:

- improve airport safety
- protect airport assets (such as equipment and runways)
- reduce operating costs

Airport Capital Assistance Program

- **Priority 1** – Airside projects – e.g. runway, taxiway and apron rehabilitation, airfield lighting systems, aircraft rescue and firefighting vehicles and equipment
- **Priority 2** – Heavy mobile equipment – e.g. Runway snow blowers, snowplows and mobile equipment shelters
- **Priority 3** – Air Terminal Building improvements – e.g. sprinkler systems, removing asbestos, creating barrier-free access

TC's Role in the Regional Assessment



2025-07-02

TC's Role in the Regional Assessment

Potential Areas of Engagement include:

- Navigation safety – e.g. shipping through James Bay
- Establishment of a marine terminal
- Crossings of navigable waters by roads or rail
- Dewatering, infilling or overprinting of navigable waters
- The construction and operation of new rail lines
- The construction of new aerodromes or airports
- The expansion of existing aerodromes and airports
- Climate adaptation of transportation infrastructure
- Transportation of dangerous goods

Questions?

