



Exchange Checklist

Below is a summary of steps which will assist you in pursuing this exchange opportunity:

1. Apply to the Exchange Committee and upon approval your name will be forwarded to the Deputy Chief, Administration, Fire Prevention, and Training. The Deputy Chief will work in conjunction with the City's Corporate Services Law Branch and prepare the exchange contract.
2. Communicate with your exchange partner to confirm that your accommodation arrangements are adequate and/or make alternative arrangements. It is the sole responsibility of the exchange partners to satisfy each others accommodation needs.
3. Apply for your visa and /or work permit at the Embassy or Consulate of the Country where you are exchanging to.
4. Confirm with your Union representative that they have made the proper provisions in their constitution to accept your exchange partner as a “guest member”.
5. Work with your Department, the Exchange committee, and your exchange partner to finalize the exchange agreement and resolve any obstacle that might encumber the exchange.
6. Sort out your vacation arrangements and finalize any entitlement discrepancies with your exchange partner prior to the physical exchange taking place.
7. Finalize the starting dates of your exchange relative to the term of the exchange.
8. Contact your health insurance company and ensure that you have comprehensive coverage for those members of your family who are traveling that you are familiar with the procedure involved should you need it.
9. Confirm with the appropriate Workers Compensation Organization you are still entitled to coverage while working in an overseas country.
10. Contact the ERD Disability Management Consultant and take WCB Packages with you for precautionary measures in the event of you having a work injury.
11. Research school possibilities for your children with your exchange partner.
Make sure that you ask your exchange partner if there are any enrolment and/or additional enrolment fees.



12. Research airfare possibilities. As soon as you have accepted your exchange in writing, you should start researching airfare possibilities. The sooner you can book and pay for your airfares the more you will be able to save. You may also like to look at the best way to see the work through purchasing an “around the world ticket”, these tickets are often open for one year and allow you to schedule your route with a variety of stops. In some countries, special packages can be arranged which allow you to travel within the country of your destination. Talk to airlines or travel agents about Tickets. (most air tickets are only good for 364 days).
13. Make a detailed list of information your exchange partner might require. Included should be personal workplace skills and experience as well as helpful tips regarding accommodation, utilities, surrounding amenities in the local area, emergency contacts for any concerns.
14. Reread the Employment Exchange Agreement and fulfill your obligations. Ensure that you understand the clauses of the employment exchange agreement, and how the terms, conditions and responsibilities impact on you during the exchange term.
15. Obtain any inoculations or vaccination required by you and your family. Contact the Capital Health Authority Traveller's Health Service 10320-100 Street, www.cha.ab.ca/travellers.
16. Research exchange rates, tax laws, cost of living and any general information on the area you are exchanging to. Can you afford an exchange? If your spouse is working can you afford to only have one income during the exchange?
17. Review the expiring dates of any licenses, policies or memberships that might lapse in your absence from your home. Resolve any absence problems.
18. Develop a book of contacts, helpful hints, suggestions and instructions on anything that might be of assistance to your exchange partner. You should aim to make this exchange a success by communicating with your exchange partner specific information in regard to :
 - the climate
 - cost of living
 - heating of your home
 - dangers, pests
 - interesting sights
 - schools
 - shopping
 - recreation centres
 - day cares
 - hospitals
 - medical clinics
 - length of drive to work
 - churches



It is better to provide your exchange partner with all the information about the city from the beginning rather than allow them to find out once they have arrived in the country. Particularly, the not so good points as this can lead to early termination and also has consequences for you in that you will have to return home early. You and your exchange partner have agreed to be adaptable during this exchange; however, unexpected surprises are not appreciated on either side. Most of the problems that arise in exchanges are related to personal/home issues, order from lack of information at the commencement. From your own perspective ask as many questions as you can and supply similar information to your exchange partner.

19. Coordinate a network of friends, family and baby-sitters that might be an asset to your exchange partner and make a list of contact numbers. Everyone likes to feel welcome, appoint family and or friends to help your exchange partner to become familiar with your area and welcome them to the neighborhood. Find a crew member that will befriend your exchange partner at the station and guide them through the politics of the working environment. Leave a list of phone numbers of people who are willing to be contacted and their relationship to you.
20. Resolve your banking arrangements and prepayment of any bills in your absence. Your salary is paid by ERD and you must make arrangements to access these funds in your exchange. (I.e. make sure your interact card/bank debit card will be able to work in the other country. Make arrangements for the wire of funds after you have settled in your new location.
21. Consult your home and contents insurance that your insurance is in order. You must notify all of your insurance companies of your absence for the term of the exchange. You should make sure that all your normal insurances will stay in force during the term of the exchange and while you have your exchange partner in your home. Exchange of motor vehicles is not recommended, however, should you agree to this; ensure that you have adequate insurance coverage for those circumstances.
22. Make sure your passports are current or apply for new ones.
23. Clarify with your exchange partner the terms of any accommodation arrangements. Most people who exchange their accommodations pay their own mortgage and tax bills. They usually agree to have the visiting exchange family pay for the utilities and telephone bills for the duration of the exchange. They also usually agree to maintain the property and provide instructions for maintenance. In addition, most families who exchange accommodations appoint a family member, trusted friend, or neighbour to oversee their property and assist the visiting family with problems. They also



usually provide the visiting family with the basic household arrangements: furniture, TV, microwave, linen, utensils, etc. Bikes, sports equipment and other personal effects can enhance your exchange if you are willing to share them with your exchange partner.

The unique advantage of exchanging accommodations is the both you and your exchange partner are in the same situation with each others property, therefore, there is underlying mutual respect. The object is to be as fair as possible on all levels. Ultimately any arrangement must be balanced. Rushing into any arrangement just to proceed with the exchange can lead to disappointment and resentment.

You should be adaptable and willing to expect the unexpected before commencing this program; however, you also have the right to negotiate an equitable arrangement with your exchange partner that leaves both parties with the sense of fair play.

24. Check that your power of attorney has been appointed to handle any personal or business matters in your absence. A power of Attorney can be a family member, a trusted friend or a lawyer that you appoint to deal with specific bank account, negotiate a specific property transaction or represent you regarding another task that you have assigned.
25. Make wills up. Be prepared.
26. Maintain your communication with your exchange partner before and during the exchange. Provide your exchange partner with as much information as possible and expect that same in return. Be clear about your expectations of what information you want provided to you during your absence and similarly what information your exchange partner expects forwarded.
27. Try to ensure that every effort is made by yourself to cover any other possible event that will make your exchange partners term more comfortable. Fire Departments are not responsible for costs incurred by exchanges. You need to carefully consider all your financial requirements for the period of the exchange.
28. Purchase medical insurance for your family.
29. Have a letter from the Chief endorsing your exchange and as a letter of introduction to other departments.
30. Have a personal resume of your career and a list of all training you have received.



31. Get in touch with the Consulate or Embassy of the country you are exchanging to. Find out what is needed to obtain a work visa and temporary residency for your family.

Although an exchange may be the highlight of your career, you and your family are likely to encounter surprises and challenges. Adequately evaluate the strength of yourself and your family to cope with these challenges before applying for the program. Do not expect an exchange to repair a troubled marriage. An exchange is a dynamic opportunity if you are in the right frame of mind to appreciate this experience.

It is not uncommon for exchange partners to think they understand each other, only to discover at a later date they do not. Accents and localisms can often be taken the wrong way. It is important you are clear on any essential issues. If you do encounter a misunderstanding, diplomacy goes a long way. An exchange takes time and patience to evolve, in the end the experience is usually worth it. Ensure that you ask your exchange collaborator as many questions as you can. Keep a log of information collected and an on going list of questions that might pop into your mind. Most of all when you are there recognize and respect the differences.

The above points are starting points for you. There will be many other issues to consider depending on your circumstances. Exchange participants must be adaptable and open to new ideas and opportunities. One final comment is to remind you that your lifestyle will be different both personally and at work, but that is why you are part of the program. Experience as many differences as you can and enjoy your exchange.