

Air Canada adding baggage fees to U.S.-bound flights

Written by The Canadian Press
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Air Canada agents process passengers at the airport in Halifax on June 10, 2011. (The Canadian Press/Andrew Vaughan)

MONTREAL — Air Canada AC.B-T is going to start charging passengers a fee to check even one bag when they fly economy class to the United States.

Infants travelling on an adult's lap will still be allowed one car seat and one stroller at no additional cost, but luggage checked on their behalf will also face the new charge.

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The country's largest carrier informed passengers on its website that it plans to begin charging \$25 for the first checked bag.

It is also increasing the current charge for a second bag to \$35 from \$30, bringing the total cost of two checked bags to \$60.

There will also be a new \$70 charge for second bags on some international flights, though the first checked piece remains free of charge.

The charges apply to tickets issued beginning next Wednesday for travel on or after Oct. 11.

The checked bags must have a maximum weight of no more than 23 kilograms.

The Montreal-based carrier isn't changing its baggage fees for flights within Canada.

The first bag is free but a second checked bag costs \$20.

Most U.S. carriers charge \$25 for the first bag and \$35 for the second checked bag on flights to Canada.

WestJet Airlines doesn't charge a fee for first checked bags on any of its flights.

A \$20 fee applies for second bags and \$50 for additional checked bags.

Porter Airlines only charges \$20 for second checked bags on its flights within Canada and to the United States.

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Air Canada said last month that it planned to further trim costs and raise fares to offset higher fuel prices, which CEO Calin Rovinescu described as “the single largest challenge facing our industry.”

The airline posted a \$46-million loss in the spring quarter ended June 30.

However, that was a big improvement from the net loss of \$318-million a year earlier.

On the Toronto Stock Exchange, Air Canada shares lost two cents to \$1.65 in morning trading Friday.