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Canadian Cross-Country Time: 25 NM Definition Explained

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Executive Summary

Under Transport Canada's Canadian Aviation Regulations (CARs), **cross-country flight time** is now a defined term. Subsection 400.01(1) says it is "the flight time recorded when a flight follows standard navigation procedures along a pre-planned route to a destination that is at least 25 nautical miles from the point of departure" (laws-lois.justice.gc.ca). The definition was added by SOR/2025-241, published in Canada Gazette, Part II, Volume 159, Number 26 on **17 December 2025** (gazette.gc.ca), and the regulations came into force on the day of that publication, with only a small set of other provisions delayed (gazette.gc.ca).

The definition answers the forward-looking question, but it does not answer the historical one. The Regulatory Impact Analysis Statement (RIAS) that accompanies the amendment is expressly "not part of the Regulations". It says there is no requirement to complete the entire flight plan to log cross-country time (gazette.gc.ca), and it says guidance will appear in an Authorized Person bulletin and later in the Authorized Person Policy Manual. As of 2 November 2026, no published rule on how earlier entries should be treated in a later application was found, and Transport Canada's bulletin page as read carried a 2022 modification date and no cross-country content (tc.canada.ca). This report therefore claims neither that older hours are grandfathered nor that they must be deleted.

The practical method is a **source-date and route-evidence worksheet**. It keeps the original entry untouched, records which rule edition was used to classify it, and puts the current review in separate columns. The report's worked example starts from a hypothetical 120-hour historical bucket, reviews a scoped 30-hour sample, finds 22 hours fully supported and 8 unresolved, and shows why the other 90 hours remain unreviewed rather than passed or failed.

The classification matters because licence experience is counted in cross-country hours: the Aeroplane Private Pilot Licence standard requires 5 hours of solo cross-country time (tc.canada.ca), the Commercial Pilot Licence 20 hours of cross-country pilot-in-command time (tc.canada.ca), and the Airline Transport Pilot Licence 100 hours of cross-country time, 25 of them by night (tc.canada.ca). An imported American flag is not

a substitute: the United States has several cross-country definitions, one of which uses more than 50 nautical miles (www.ecfr.gov). Electronic logbooks differ too; one major vendor states cross-country time can be logged regardless of distance (support.foreflight.com).

Introduction and Background

This report is written for Canadian professional pilots, and for pilots assembling licence or rating experience from years of personal logbook entries. It addresses one decision: which evidence in a personal record supports a cross-country classification under the **current Canadian definition**, and which earlier or incomplete entries need a documented review before they are used in a new application. It is about personal experience records, not about how to plan or fly a cross-country flight.

The jurisdiction is Canada, and every legal statement below refers to the Canadian Aviation Regulations (CARs, SOR/96-433) administered by Transport Canada. Canadian pilots who hold or apply for a flight crew permit, licence or rating must keep a personal log; CAR 401.08(1) requires every applicant for and holder of such a document to "maintain a personal log in accordance with subsection (2)" (laws-lois.justice.gc.ca), and that log documents the experience acquired for issuance of the permit, licence or rating (laws-lois.justice.gc.ca). The log therefore carries evidentiary weight when a total is later used in an application.

For years the classification of cross-country time rested on interpretation. A publisher's archived 2017 explanation put the point bluntly: "Wouldn't it be great if XC was defined in the CARs? Alas, it's not." (www.aviationsolutions.net) That page now opens with a notice that a definition took effect on 17 December 2025 and "supersedes the information in this article" (www.aviationsolutions.net), and it labels the body as an archived reference for practice before the amendment (www.aviationsolutions.net).

Three layers must be kept apart throughout this report. **Law** is the text of CAR 400.01(1) and the amending regulations. **Guidance and history** includes the RIAS, Advisory Circular text, publisher explanations and any future Authorized Person bulletin. A **suggested worksheet** is this report's proposal for organizing a review; it is not a Transport Canada form, and its field names are not statutory fields. Facts were read on pages retrieved up to 2 November 2026, and each fact is labelled with its source edition.

The Current Canadian Definition of Cross-Country Time

What the Text Says and Where It Sits

The definition is added to subsection 400.01(1) "in alphabetical order" by section 2(3) of the amending regulations (gazette.gc.ca). In the consolidated CARs, the operative text reads that cross-country flight time is the flight time recorded when a flight "follows standard navigation procedures along a pre-planned route to a destination that is at least 25" nautical miles from the point of departure (laws-lois.justice.gc.ca). The Justice Laws consolidation page for section 400.01 states that the Regulations are "current to 2026-09-30 and last amended on 2026-06-17" (laws-lois.justice.gc.ca), and a version-history page identifies a version of the section running from 2025-12-17 to 2026-09-30 (laws-lois.justice.gc.ca). The text read on the current page is the same definition. Pilots preparing an application should open the live consolidation, because a later amendment would change what "current" means.

The definition has four elements that a record must be able to speak to: the flight time was **recorded**; the flight followed **standard navigation procedures**; the route was **pre-planned**; and the **destination** was at least 25 nautical miles (NM) from the point of departure. Each is examined in the next section.

Effective Date and the Delayed Provisions

The amending regulations were published in the Canada Gazette, Part II, on 17 December 2025. Their coming-into-force section provides that they take effect "on the day on which they are published" in Part II, subject to exceptions (gazette.gc.ca). The exceptions are provisions that come into force "in the sixth month after the month in which they are published" (gazette.gc.ca), so most provisions took effect on publication. The cross-country definition, added by section 2(3), is not among the delayed provisions, based on the reading of the Gazette's coming-into-force section. This is the basis for treating **17 December 2025** as the date from which the written definition has applied to flights.

That date is not a statement about the status of flights before it. Whether and how earlier flights count in a later application is the transitional question treated in a later section, and no source read for this report answers it.

What the Law Is, and What It Is Not

The RIAS is the explanatory statement published with the amendment, and it states that it "is not part of the Regulations" (gazette.gc.ca). It is useful for understanding intent, but it is not a rule that a logbook entry can be tested against.

Earlier guidance wording exists too. Transport Canada's Advisory Circular AC 100-001 glossary, as read on 2 November 2026, defines cross-country flight as "a flight between a point of departure and a point of arrival following a pre-planned route using standard navigation procedures" with no distance figure (tc.canada.ca). That is guidance text, and it does not carry the 25 NM element of the regulation. If the two ever appear to differ, a pilot should rely on the regulation text and ask Transport Canada which guidance document is current.

Reading the Elements: What Each One Needs From a Record

Standard Navigation Procedures and the Pre-Planned Route

The route element quoted above requires a flight that follows standard navigation procedures along a pre-planned route. In the consultation, one stakeholder suggested removing the requirement that the route be pre-planned. Transport Canada declined, determining that "the word 'pre-planned' is a key aspect" of cross-country training because the purpose is to train on longer flights and learn the preparation they require (gazette.gc.ca). For a personal record, that makes the **planning evidence** a first-class item: the route and destination as they existed before departure.

Transport Canada also declined a request to add diversions, reasoning that "cross-country flying is a practice of tracking pre-planned routes, not diverting from them" (gazette.gc.ca). The same text recognizes diversions as navigation procedures included elsewhere in pilot training, so this is a statement about what the cross-country definition covers, not about whether diversion training has value. The archived 2017 publisher text, by

contrast, said any navigation training exercise such as a diversion "was generally considered" cross-country time under the earlier practice (www.aviationsolutions.net). That contrast is exactly why older entries need a documented review rather than a bulk assumption.

The 25 NM Destination Test

The distance element is that the flight goes to "a destination that is at least 25" nautical miles "from the point of departure" (laws-lois.justice.gc.ca). Three points follow from the source text.

- **Threshold:** "at least 25" includes exactly 25 NM, so the threshold is inclusive on the face of the text.
- **Reference point:** the distance is measured from the point of departure. Transport Canada kept that wording because removing it "could cause ambiguity and unnecessary confusion about the measuring of flight distance" (gazette.gc.ca).
- **Rationale:** Transport Canada described 25 NM as "a safety distance" beyond which a flight plan or flight itinerary filed with air traffic services or a responsible person is needed (gazette.gc.ca).

The RIAS also records that two commenters asked whether the 25 NM distance "must be in a straight line" (gazette.gc.ca). In the passages read, the consultation summary records the question but does not set out a measurement method. This report therefore supplies no measuring procedure. The worksheet below stores the **distance basis** used by a reviewer as an open field, labelled as the reviewer's choice until Transport Canada guidance says otherwise.

Planned Versus Flown, and Incomplete Flights

The definition speaks of a route that is **pre-planned** and a **destination** at least 25 NM away. It does not, in the text read, say in terms what happens when a flight is shortened. The RIAS consultation summary shows that stakeholders raised the question, wanting to know whether a pilot must complete the flight "by landing at the destination airport" to log the hours as cross-country (gazette.gc.ca). Transport Canada's response in the RIAS is that "there is no requirement to complete the entire flight plan in order to log cross-country time" (gazette.gc.ca).

That sentence is **context from an explanatory statement**, not regulation text, and it leaves open how many minutes of an interrupted flight qualify. This report does not infer an answer, and it does not import the United States landing concept from 14 CFR 61.1 (see the comparison section). The worksheet therefore records an early return as an **unresolved question** until current Transport Canada guidance says how the minutes are counted.

Why the Classification Matters: Personal Records and Licence Experience

What CAR 401.08 Says About the Personal Log

CAR 401.08 is the Canadian record-keeping provision, and its personal log is the document in which the experience is recorded. For each flight, the entries include the flight crew position in which the holder acted (laws-lois.justice.gc.ca), the flight conditions "with respect to day, night, VFR and IFR" (laws-lois.justice.gc.ca),

and, for aeroplane and helicopter flights, "the place of departure and the place of arrival" (laws-lois.justice.gc.ca). For aeroplanes the log also records "all of the intermediate take-offs and landings" (laws-lois.justice.gc.ca). Entries may be made only by the holder or someone the holder has authorized (laws-lois.justice.gc.ca).

Two observations follow, each a reading of the section text rather than a quotation. The listed entries include departure and arrival places but no separate cross-country field, so a cross-country total is a **derived classification** that a pilot must be able to justify from other recorded facts. And the section as read does not state a retention period, a required medium, or an inspection right, so this report asserts none. Where a paper log is lost, Standard 421 allows an affidavit or statutory declaration "sworn before a Commissioner of Oaths" in place of it (tc.canada.ca), and that affidavit's experience breakdown separates cross-country hours "by day and by night as pilot-in-command, co-pilot and dual" (tc.canada.ca).

Where Cross-Country Totals Are Counted

Standard 421 (Flight Crew Permits, Licences and Ratings), as read in November 2026, counts cross-country time in many places. The figures below are from that standard, and an applicant should confirm them in the live edition before relying on them.

- **Recreational permit (aeroplane):** 15 hours of dual instruction including at least 2 hours of cross-country time (tc.canada.ca).
- **Private Pilot Licence (aeroplane):** 17 hours dual including 3 hours cross-country and 5 hours instrument (tc.canada.ca), plus 12 hours solo including 5 hours cross-country with a flight of at least 150 NM (tc.canada.ca).
- **Commercial Pilot Licence (aeroplane):** 200 hours total, of which 100 are pilot-in-command, including 20 hours of cross-country pilot-in-command time (tc.canada.ca), and a solo cross-country flight of not less than 300 NM total distance with full stop landings at 3 different aerodromes (tc.canada.ca).
- **Instrument rating:** 50 hours of cross-country flight as pilot-in-command, 10 of them in the appropriate category (tc.canada.ca).
- **Airline Transport Pilot Licence (aeroplane):** 1,500 hours total flight time, 900 of them in aeroplanes (tc.canada.ca), with 100 hours of cross-country flight time, 25 of them by night (tc.canada.ca), and a separate 100 additional cross-country hours as pilot-in-command or 200 as co-pilot, or a combination (tc.canada.ca).

The 150 NM and 300 NM flights in the licence standards are separate licence flight requirements. They are not the same thing as the 25 NM element of the definition, and a record should not conflate them. A related helicopter detail is that Notice of Standard Amendment NSA 2025-008, issued 10 November 2025 (wwwapps.tc.gc.ca), was described as clarifying the definition of cross-country flight. Separately, the Commercial Pilot Licence – Helicopter solo cross-country flight in Standard 421.31(4)(c)(ii) is stated as a flight to a point a minimum of 45 minutes of flight time at normal cruising speed from the point of departure, a licence flight requirement distinct from the 25 NM definition (wwwapps.tc.gc.ca) (tc.canada.ca).

Because one block of hours can feed pilot-in-command, night and co-pilot subtotals, the review should work entry by entry, not on totals.

Old Entries and the Transition Question

What the Sources Do and Do Not Say

The distinctive problem is an imported cross-country total that was created under an explanation which said Canada had no formal definition. The sources read for this report show these facts and gaps.

- **A written definition applies from 17 December 2025:** see the earlier section on the effective date.
- **The RIAS is explanatory, not law**, and in the passages read it does not set a general policy for reclassifying earlier flights.
- **Guidance was promised:** Transport Canada said it would be included in an Authorized Person bulletin and later the Authorized Person Policy Manual.
- **No bulletin was located:** the bulletin page as read said bulletins help "keep up to date with changes to standards", but it listed no cross-country bulletin and was dated 2022. The policy manual was not obtained.
- **The pre-change publisher text is explicitly archived:** the notice labels the body as a reference for practice before the amendment. The archived body itself said the term was undefined in the CARs, which is the explanation older totals may have relied on.

The honest conclusion is **unknown**. No source read states that older hours are grandfathered, and none states that they must be deleted. The proposed practice is to preserve every original entry unchanged, and to record the review separately so that whichever transitional answer Transport Canada gives can be applied without having destroyed the original record.

A Review Sequence in Seven Steps

The following sequence is a suggested practice, not a Transport Canada procedure.

- **Identify the requirement:** name the Canadian permit, licence or rating and the experience line (for example PPL solo cross-country hours) that the total will support.
- **Fix the rule edition:** open CAR 400.01(1) in the live consolidation and write down the date opened.
- **Freeze the original:** copy each entry's date, record ID and XC minutes exactly as logged, with any imported flag.
- **Collect planning evidence:** attach what shows the planned destination and route, or write "not preserved".
- **Compare with the definition:** test destination distance, planned route and navigation evidence, entry by entry.
- **Subtotal separately:** total only confirmed entries, in a separate column or file from the original bucket.
- **List what is open:** record each unresolved entry and ask an Authorized Person or Transport Canada for the current position.

Source-Date and Route-Evidence Worksheet

Table 1 below labels each source type used in this report, so that a reviewer can record which kind of authority supported a classification. It separates law, explanatory statement, historical interpretation, national procedure for another country, vendor documentation and suggested worksheet fields.

Source	Type	Edition or date read	How to use it in a review
CAR 400.01(1), definition added by SOR/2025-241	Law (Canada)	In force 17 December 2025; consolidation page read November 2026 (laws-lois.justice.gc.ca)	The test for flights after the change. Record the edition date beside every conclusion.
RIAS in Canada Gazette, Part II	Explanatory statement, not law	17 December 2025	Labelled context only, for example on incomplete flights.
AC 100-001 glossary	Transport Canada guidance text	Read 2 November 2026	Earlier wording without a distance; cite as guidance, never as the test.
AviationSolutions page 812	Publisher explanation, archived body	Originally June 2017, notice after 17 December 2025 (www.aviationsolutions.net)	Evidence of what pilots were told before the change; not legal authority.
14 CFR 61.1(b)	Law (United States)	eCFR page read November 2026	Not a Canadian test. Used only to read an imported American flag.
Vendor documentation	Tool behaviour	Dated per page	Explains what a total in an import means; not an authority position.
Worksheet fields	Suggested practice	This report	Not statutory fields and not a Transport Canada form.

The table's main lesson is that a reviewer should never write "meets the Canadian definition" without recording **which row** supplied the test. The next paragraph explains the worksheet itself.

Table 2 lists the suggested fields. Original and revised figures sit in different columns, and nothing in the revised columns overwrites the original entry.

Field	Column group	What to record
Original flight date and record ID	Original	The date and identifier exactly as first logged; never edited.
Original XC minutes	Original	The cross-country figure as first recorded, including any imported flag.
Rule or source used originally	Original	The explanation relied on at the time, for example the archived 2017 view, or "unknown".
Departure and intended destination	Evidence	Places as they appear in the record, with the source of the destination (plan, flight itinerary, instructor note, none).
Planned-distance evidence	Evidence	The document or entry showing the destination was chosen before departure, and the distance basis the reviewer used (an open field until guidance exists).

Field	Column group	What to record
Actual route and landing	Evidence	Intermediate landings, early return, diversion, or "not preserved".
Navigation evidence	Evidence	What shows that standard navigation procedures were followed; "none preserved" is a valid entry.
Current-review rule edition and date	Review	CAR 400.01(1) as consolidated, with the date the reviewer opened it.
Current-review conclusion	Review	Supported, not supported on the face of the evidence, or unresolved.
Reviewer and source	Review	Who decided, with a name and date, and whether an Authorized Person or Transport Canada was consulted.
Approved correction	Revised	A new figure only after a qualified reviewer confirms it; stored beside, not over, the original.
Unresolved question	Revised	The exact open point, for example "minutes counted for an early return".

Reviewer notes should be new, dated entries by a named person, not edits of history, and any doubt about who may annotate a log belongs with Transport Canada.

Worked Fixtures (Hypothetical Examples)

Table 3 applies the current wording to seven **(Hypothetical Example)** flights. The distances are assumed to be measured from the point of departure on a basis that is not in dispute, because the published material read does not settle the method. The minutes are invented for illustration. None of these cases is a Transport Canada ruling.

Fixture (Hypothetical Example)	Facts assumed	Current-review result against CAR 400.01(1)	Counts toward present-day subtotal?
A: 24 NM planned destination	Destination chosen before departure, 24 NM from departure, 55 minutes.	The destination is below "at least 25" (laws-lois.justice.gc.ca), so the destination element is not met on its face.	No. Original entry preserved.
B: exactly 25 NM	Pre-planned destination exactly 25 NM from departure, navigation evidence kept, 60 minutes.	"At least 25" includes 25 (laws-lois.justice.gc.ca); all elements evidenced.	Yes, 60 minutes, after reviewer confirmation.
C: 26 NM	Pre-planned destination 26 NM away, plan and navigation evidence kept, 62 minutes.	Distance element met; route and navigation evidenced.	Yes, 62 minutes, after reviewer confirmation.
D: 60 NM of manoeuvring	Sixty NM of accumulated flying around an area, no qualifying planned destination, 120 minutes.	The text requires a route "to a destination"; accumulated distance is not a destination test.	No on the face of the text; record the reason.
E: planned qualifying destination, early return	Planned destination 40 NM away, aircraft returned after 30 minutes of a 75 minute plan.	The RIAS says the entire plan need not be completed, but no minute-counting rule was found.	Unresolved; obtain current Transport Canada guidance.

Fixture (Hypothetical Example)	Facts assumed	Current-review result against CAR 400.01(1)	Counts toward present-day subtotal?
F: legacy entry, no preserved plan	Old entry marked XC, 75 minutes, no plan or destination evidence kept.	The pre-planned element cannot be shown from the record.	Unresolved; do not reconstruct from memory.
G: imported American flag	Import carries a "more than 50 NM" flag, 95 minutes, no Canadian plan.	The 50 NM wording belongs to 14 CFR 61.1(b), not to CAR 400.01(1).	Unresolved until Canadian elements are evidenced.

On the table's figures, only fixtures B and C would enter a present-day subtotal, 122 minutes in all, and only after a qualified reviewer confirms each case. Fixtures A and D are not hidden or deleted; they stay in the historical record with the reason noted. Fixtures E, F and G are exactly the cases where the uncertainty in the sources must stay visible, and a missing plan should stay "unknown" instead of being rebuilt from an operational flight plan or a roster as though it proved the whole legal test.

Comparing Authorities and Tools

Canada vs FAA Cross-Country Time

The United States (14 CFR 61.1(b)) does not have one cross-country definition. Its general paragraph includes "a landing at a point other than the point of departure" (www.ecfr.gov), and it applies "except as provided in paragraphs (ii) through (vii)" (www.ecfr.gov). For some experience requirements the point of landing must be at least a straight-line distance of more than 50 nautical miles from the original point of departure (www.ecfr.gov), while another paragraph uses more than 25 nautical miles (www.ecfr.gov). The Canadian definition has a single sentence and no landing requirement in its text. An imported FAA flag therefore says only that a United States test was applied to that flight; it is neither sufficient nor necessary for the Canadian classification, and this report derives no Canadian rule from the American one.

For record keeping, the United States rule requires a person to "document and record" time "in a manner acceptable to the Administrator" (www.ecfr.gov), with entries for each flight or lesson (www.ecfr.gov). The CAR 401.08 provisions described earlier are Canada's counterpart, and the two should not be merged.

Electronic Logbooks and Their Cross-Country Fields

Established electronic logbooks document their own behaviour, and none of the pages read states an automatic Canadian 25 NM calculation. ForeFlight's support page says "cross-country time can be logged regardless of the distance flown" and that any distance requirement comes from the regulations for a certificate (support.foreflight.com). It also says its logbook can be used by Canadian pilots while its currency and rating progress reports "are based on FAA regulations" (support.foreflight.com), and its region setting offers United States or Europe (support.foreflight.com). LogTen's help says that cross-country "will auto-fill from Total Time" in one configuration (support.logten.com), and that the only time field not auto-filled from total time is night (support.logten.com).

MyFlightbook's home page describes bulk import from spreadsheets or other electronic logbook programs and print layouts including Jeppesen and EASA styles and airline-style grids (myflightbook.com), and its import documentation lists a user-supplied cross-country column measured in hours (myflightbook.com), alongside separate properties for time "within 25nm of the departure airport" (myflightbook.com) and time "within 50nm" (myflightbook.com), plus further distance bands. It also lists a flag for flights under Canadian Part 604 private operations (myflightbook.com). None of those pages describes a retroactive conversion to the 2025 Canadian wording. Safelog's Canada page states that its presentation "will closely mimic" standard Transport Canada logbooks (www.dauntless-soft.com), which concerns layout rather than classification.

Other tools serve other roles. AcuLog describes itself as a service that audits, transcribes and imports pilot flight records into an import-ready digital logbook (aculog.com), and a 2016 Garmin post announced a simple import and export tool for Garmin Pilot logbooks (www.garmin.com). An hour-building publisher states that Transport Canada requires specific cross-country time for both the Private and Commercial Pilot Licences (navaid.dev), which is a licensing statement and not a classification rule. The consequence for a review is that an imported "XC" number may be a user-entered figure, an auto-filled copy of total time, a distance-banded property, or an FAA-flavoured flag. The worksheet's "Original XC minutes" column should say which, so that a reader of the file later understands what the number meant when it was created.

Where Pilot Logbook Fits

Pilot Logbook is an invitation-only electronic logbook made by a line pilot; a pilot who wants to try it can request an invite at pilots.landing.aero (the publisher's own product). This article has not independently verified its export, summary or print-layout features, and nothing here is an approval by any authority or a claim of automatic Canadian cross-country eligibility or retrospective conversion. A practical use of any logbook is evaluative: export a small sample, run a summary on a handful of entries, and check whether the output preserves the original XC minutes, the route and any remarks in a way the worksheet columns above can use. A pilot whose records live in another logbook, a spreadsheet or paper can follow the same worksheet without it; the method does not depend on any one product. Spreadsheet import and CSV export are documented by several vendors (myflightbook.com) (support.logten.com) (support.foreflight.com), which is how a worksheet can be built outside any logbook.

Data Analysis and Evidence

The Dated Facts

The evidence base is small and mostly primary. The numbers that carry weight are these.

- **25 nautical miles:** the distance in the definition, measured from the point of departure.
- **17 December 2025:** the Part II publication date and the date of coming into force.
- **6 comments:** the number received on the cross-country definition, from three flight schools, two individuals and one association (gazette.gc.ca).
- **2017:** the original publication year of the archived explanation that said no definition existed.
- **Licence thresholds:** 5 hours solo cross-country for the aeroplane PPL, 20 hours cross-country pilot-in-command for the CPL, and 100 hours cross-country (25 by night) for the ATPL.

Six comments is a record of consultation, not a measure of how many pilots have old entries. No count of affected readers was found, and none is asserted.

Worked Calculation: Record, Coverage and Subtotal (Hypothetical Example)

A pilot has a **120-hour** historical cross-country bucket, imported from an older logbook. The bucket is a recorded total, not a verified one. The pilot reviews only an explicitly scoped **30-hour** post-change sample, meaning flights flown on or after 17 December 2025, and finds **22 hours** with complete supporting evidence and **8 hours** unresolved.

- **Original recorded bucket:** 120 hours, or 7,200 minutes.
- **Review coverage:** 30 hours reviewed, which is 25 percent of the bucket by hours.
- **Supported within the reviewed sample:** 22 hours, or 1,320 minutes, which is 73.3 percent of the sample.
- **Awaiting clarification:** 8 hours, or 480 minutes, which is 26.7 percent of the sample.
- **Not reviewed:** the remaining 90 hours, or 75 percent of the bucket. These are neither audited nor assumed to meet or fail any requirement.

The 73.3 percent supported rate applies to the sample only. Extending it to the bucket (which would imply about 88 hours) is a forecast about unreviewed flights, and the sources give no basis for it. Likewise, the 22 supported hours are not automatically a creditable subtotal: they become one only after a qualified reviewer confirms each case, as in the fixtures above. The exercise separates three quantities that are often blurred, the **preserved record** (120), the **review coverage** (30 reviewed, 90 not) and the **creditable application subtotal** (the confirmed part of the 22). It does not decide the retrospective legal question.

Implications and Future Directions

The immediate implication is procedural. A pilot or instructor who maintains a large imported file should expect to hold two parallel views of the same flights: the original record as logged, and a current review under the written definition. Keeping them in different columns avoids a situation where a later clarification forces a reconstruction.

Three developments would change this report's conclusions. First, Transport Canada's promised Authorized Person bulletin and policy-manual edition (gazette.gc.ca) may set out how incomplete flights are counted and how distance is measured, which the published consultation summary leaves open. Second, a statement about pre-change entries would settle the transitional question. Third, a further amendment to Standard 421 could change the hour figures; the November 2025 helicopter clarification shows the standard is revised in step with regulatory changes. Nothing in the sources read predicts the timing of any of these.

For logbook software, the vendor pages read document cross-country as a user-controlled field or a distance-banded property, not as a Canadian-definition result (support.foreflight.com) (myflightbook.com). A tool that preserved original values alongside reviewed values, and exported both, would fit the worksheet; that is a design observation, not a claim about any product. A pilot evaluating Pilot Logbook or any other program should test that behaviour on a small sample first.

The advice for readers who need a ruling is deliberately plain: ask an Authorized Person or Transport Canada for the current position on the specific case, and write the answer, its date and its source into the worksheet. This report is an explanation of rules and a proposed way of organizing evidence; it does not replace an operator's approved procedures or the decision of Transport Canada or an examiner.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is the Canadian cross-country time definition, and what does 25 nautical miles mean?

In Canada, under CAR 400.01(1), cross-country flight time is the flight time recorded when a flight follows standard navigation procedures along a pre-planned route to a destination at least 25 nautical miles from the point of departure (laws-lois.justice.gc.ca). The distance is a destination test; "at least 25" includes exactly 25.

How is cross-country time logged in Canada, and is there a cross-country field in the log?

CAR 401.08 requires a personal log with departure and arrival places and flight conditions (laws-lois.justice.gc.ca), but the entries listed do not include a separate cross-country field. A cross-country figure is therefore a classification supported by the route, plan and navigation evidence. Record the plan and destination so the classification can be justified later.

Does the 25 NM have to be a straight line, or is flown distance counted?

Stakeholders asked whether the distance must be in a straight line (gazette.gc.ca). The published consultation summary read for this report does not give a measuring method. The definition itself says the distance is from the point of departure. Ask Transport Canada or an Authorized Person for current guidance and record the answer.

What about a flight that returns early?

The RIAS says there is no requirement to complete the entire flight plan to log cross-country time, but it does not state how many minutes of a shortened flight qualify. Treat such an entry as unresolved until guidance is obtained.

Do older cross-country entries still count after the definition change?

Unknown. No source read states that pre-change entries are grandfathered or that they must be removed. Preserve the original, review it separately against the current text, and obtain current Transport Canada or Authorized Person guidance before using it in an application. This is the cross-country time before and after definition change question, and the answer depends on guidance not yet located.

What are the Canadian pilot licence cross-country requirements?

They are set in Standard 421 and vary by licence, for example 5 hours of solo cross-country time for the aeroplane PPL and 20 hours of cross-country pilot-in-command time for the aeroplane CPL. Check the live standard before an application.

Can an American cross-country flag be used?

Not as proof. The United States uses several definitions, including more than 50 nautical miles for some requirements. Review each flagged flight against CAR 400.01(1).

Which electronic pilot logbook works for Canada?

Several programs can store Canadian flights, for example ForeFlight states its logbook can be used by Canadian pilots. None of the pages read states an automatic 25 NM Canadian classification. Whichever program is used, its export and summary output can be tested against this worksheet.

Conclusion

Canada now has a written definition of cross-country flight time: a flight that follows standard navigation procedures along a pre-planned route to a destination at least 25 nautical miles from the point of departure, in force since 17 December 2025. For flights after that date, a pilot can test each entry against four elements: recorded time, standard navigation procedures, a pre-planned route, and a destination at least 25 NM from departure.

For older or incomplete entries, the sources read support a restrained approach. The explanatory statement is not law, the promised guidance was not located, and no transitional rule was found. The record should therefore be preserved as originally entered, reviewed in separate columns with the rule edition and date, and reduced to a creditable subtotal only after a qualified reviewer confirms each case. The 120, 30, 22 and 8 hour example shows the discipline: a recorded bucket, a reviewed sample and a confirmed subtotal are three different numbers. Until Transport Canada says more, uncertainty about earlier hours and shortened flights should stay on the page as an open question.

Source links

Links cited in this article, in order of first appearance. Full addresses are provided for readers using extracted text.

1. https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-96-433/section-400.01.html
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5. https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-14/chapter-I/subchapter-D/part-61/subpart-A/section-61.1
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