Mexico Buying and Moving Checklist for Canadians

A practical planning worksheet from Andrew Schulhof.

Use this checklist before you send a deposit, sign a purchase agreement, change your Canadian residency ties, or commit to a full time move. Confirm all legal, tax, immigration, insurance, and financial advice with qualified professionals in both Canada and Mexico.

Clarify what you are trying to accomplish.

[ ] Decide whether the property will be a personal residence, a seasonal home, a rental property, or a combination of these uses.

[ ] Write down how many months of each year you expect to live in Mexico.

[ ] Identify the community, climate, airport access, healthcare, language, and lifestyle features that matter most to you.

[ ] Rent in the target neighbourhood during both the high season and the hotter or wetter season before you buy.

[ ] Build a realistic budget that includes furnishing, closing, trust, legal, accounting, insurance, maintenance, management, travel, and currency costs.

Build an independent professional team.

[ ] Choose a local real estate professional with verifiable experience serving foreign buyers.

[ ] Retain an independent Mexican lawyer or qualified adviser who represents your interests rather than the seller or developer.

[ ] Confirm the identity, authority, and role of the Notario Público who will formalize and register the transaction.

[ ] Engage a Mexican accountant before you buy when rental income, a corporation, an RFC, or future capital gains may be involved.

[ ] Consult a Canadian cross border accountant about residency, worldwide income, foreign tax credits, and Form T1135 obligations.

[ ] Use a qualified translator when any legal, tax, banking, condominium, or construction document is not fully understood.

Complete the property and title investigation.

[ ] Confirm whether the property is inside the restricted zone and whether a fideicomiso or another lawful structure is required.

[ ] Obtain and review the registered title, legal description, survey, property tax status, utility status, liens, encumbrances, and seller authority.

[ ] Confirm that construction permits, occupancy permissions, zoning, land use, and condominium registration are valid.

[ ] Review condominium bylaws, meeting minutes, budgets, reserve funds, insurance, arrears, litigation, rental rules, pet rules, and planned assessments.

[ ] For preconstruction, investigate the developer, land ownership, permits, financing, delivery history, remedies for delay, refund rights, and deposit protection.

[ ] Arrange an independent property inspection and obtain written estimates for deficiencies and deferred maintenance.

[ ] Confirm that the closing funds will be handled through a secure and professionally documented process.

Plan the ownership and tax structure before signing.

[ ] Decide whether personal ownership through a fideicomiso, direct ownership outside the restricted zone, or a Mexican corporation is appropriate for the intended use.

[ ] Confirm the expected acquisition tax, Notario fees, registration fees, trust setup fees, annual trust fees, and other closing costs in writing.

[ ] Obtain an RFC and CURP when required and keep valid facturas for capital improvements and deductible expenses.

[ ] Confirm how Mexican rental income, value added tax, lodging tax, and annual filings will be handled.

[ ] Ask a Canadian tax adviser whether the property is personal use property or specified foreign property for Form T1135 purposes.

[ ] Document the Canadian dollar cost of the purchase, improvements, fees, and exchange rates for future Canadian tax reporting.

[ ] Create a written exit plan that addresses resale costs, capital gains, estate planning, beneficiaries, and the transfer of the fideicomiso.

Confirm immigration and Canadian residency consequences.

[ ] Check the current Mexican consulate requirements for temporary or permanent residence because financial thresholds and procedures change.

[ ] Confirm the deadline for entering Mexico after visa approval and the deadline for completing the resident card process after arrival.

[ ] Determine whether the planned stay and personal ties will affect Canadian income tax residency.

[ ] Confirm how long you may be outside your province without affecting provincial health coverage.

[ ] Check passport validity, entry documentation, vehicle rules, pet import requirements, and driving licence requirements.

[ ] Keep digital and paper copies of passports, resident cards, title documents, insurance, prescriptions, emergency contacts, and powers of attorney.

Prepare banking, currency, insurance, and monthly operations.

[ ] Confirm which Mexican bank will open an account for your immigration status and which original documents it requires.

[ ] Compare foreign exchange providers, transfer limits, transfer timing, bank fees, and fraud protection before moving large amounts.

[ ] Create a currency reserve so that a sudden Canadian dollar decline does not disrupt closing or living expenses.

[ ] Obtain property insurance that addresses hurricane, flood, earthquake, liability, contents, vacancy, and rental activity where applicable.

[ ] Purchase private medical and travel insurance that addresses preexisting conditions, evacuation, deductibles, and length of stay.

[ ] Arrange reliable payment methods for property tax, utilities, condominium fees, trust fees, insurance, internet, and management.

[ ] Identify a trusted local property manager, emergency contact, trades network, and backup key holder before leaving the property vacant.

Test daily life before making a permanent move.

[ ] Visit local hospitals, clinics, pharmacies, grocery stores, banks, schools, and government offices before choosing the neighbourhood.

[ ] Confirm internet speed, cellular service, water reliability, electricity reliability, noise levels, road access, parking, and seasonal traffic.

[ ] Experience the heat, humidity, rain, insects, storms, and power interruptions that occur outside the winter tourist season.

[ ] Learn practical Spanish and establish a plan for translation during medical, legal, banking, and emergency situations.

[ ] For children, verify school accreditation, language of instruction, tuition, transportation, admissions, special needs support, and transferability of credits.

[ ] Review the current Government of Canada travel advisory for the specific state and region rather than treating all of Mexico as one risk category.

[ ] Create a family emergency plan for severe weather, medical emergencies, evacuation, lost documents, and loss of communications.

Complete the final review before releasing money.

[ ] Read the complete Spanish purchase agreement and every attachment with independent advice before signing.

[ ] Confirm the exact legal name of the recipient account and independently verify all wire instructions using a trusted telephone number.

[ ] Confirm all conditions, deadlines, remedies, possession terms, included items, warranties, and closing deliverables in writing.

[ ] Receive a final written closing statement and confirm that taxes, fees, commissions, trust costs, and adjustments match prior estimates.

[ ] Confirm when possession occurs, when title registration is completed, and which documents prove your legal interest during the registration period.

[ ] Complete a final walkthrough and document deficiencies, meter readings, keys, remotes, inventory, warranties, and outstanding work.

[ ] Do not release final funds until your independent advisers confirm that the agreed legal and closing requirements have been satisfied.

Important note. This checklist is a planning resource and is not legal, tax, immigration, insurance, or financial advice. Rules and requirements can change, and the correct approach depends on your intended use, location, immigration status, family circumstances, and Canadian residency position.