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Backgrounder: Summer 2026 Operational Readiness

Canada's Air Navigation System at a Glance

- ▶ NAV CANADA is a private, not-for-profit corporation that owns and operates Canada's civil air navigation system, serving more than 18 million square kilometres of airspace.
- ▶ The organization employs more than 2,800 air traffic service professionals, including approximately 2,100 air traffic controllers and 700 flight service specialists across a range of locations and roles.
- ▶ Since privatization in 1996, NAV CANADA has invested more than \$3.5 billion in modernization, safety, and infrastructure.
- ▶ Current annual investment in operational training exceeds \$77 million.

Staffing: Where We Stand

Air navigation service providers globally are managing workforce pressures following the pandemic. NAV CANADA is no exception, but measurable progress is being made.

Metric	Figure
ATS professionals licensed since 2023	600+ (including 300+ ATC)
Net staffing growth vs. attrition (2024–2025)	26%
Applicants in 2025	49,000
Top candidates evaluated in 2025	7,000+
Students hired into training in 2025	~500
Students currently in training nationally	~500
Expected students entering training (2025–2028)	~1,500
Retired controllers rehired on contract	50+
Training schools at record capacity	7 + 1 contractor (CAE)

These figures represent record levels of recruitment, training, and licensing activity for NAV CANADA.

Summer-Specific Readiness Measures

- ▶ Critical Staffing Incentive Plan: A multi-million dollar initiative to maximize controller coverage during peak operational periods, supported by CATCA.
- ▶ Management return to operations: Staff who recently moved to management roles incentivized to temporarily return to frontline duties for the summer season.
- ▶ TOIL blackout periods: Accumulated time-off-in-lieu restricted during peak operational windows.
- ▶ Enhanced coordination with airlines and airports: Data-sharing initiatives and proactive demand management. Prior Permission Required protocols for GA/BA traffic at peak facilities.
- ▶ FAA coordination: Daily cross-border traffic management to minimize downstream impacts from U.S. delays.

Technology as a Force Multiplier

NAV CANADA's technology strategy increases capacity and reduces controller workload.

- ▶ Arrival Manager (AMAN): Implemented at all Area Control Centres. Optimizes sequencing, reduces controller workload, maximizes runway capacity.
- ▶ \$40M+ Simulation Modernization: Launching 2026 with Micro Nav. Adaptive learning technologies improve training throughput and success rates.
- ▶ Space-based ADS-B: Comprehensive surveillance over oceans and above 12,500 feet.
- ▶ AI-enabled capacity forecasting: Advance notice of capacity conditions for airlines and airports.
- ▶ Trajectory-Based Operations (TBO): Launching 2031 at Edmonton Centre. Aircraft follow optimized trajectories with minimal controller intervention.
- ▶ Digital Aerodrome Air Traffic Services (DAATS): Remote service delivery enabling multi-unit licensing and simultaneous management of multiple facilities.

Partnership with CAE

NAV CANADA's partnership with CAE is a made-in-Canada collaboration. CAE instructors deliver initial training using NAV CANADA's curriculum, adding capacity for 500 additional students through 2028, operating alongside NAV CANADA's seven training schools at record capacity.

Track Record: Major International Events

- ▶ 2025 G7 Summit, Kananaskis, Alberta: Complex airspace management supporting VIP movements and heightened security protocols.

- ▶ 2018 G7 Summit, Charlevoix, Quebec: Coordinated airspace restrictions and VIP traffic management across Eastern Canada.
- ▶ 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics: Sustained high-tempo operations over a multi-week international event with global media scrutiny.
- ▶ Canadian Grand Prix, Montréal: Annual management of one of North America's largest private aviation surges, demonstrating sustained capability for recurring international events.

The Global Context

The ATC staffing challenge is global. ANSPs across North America and Europe report staffing approximately 25 per cent below optimal. The U.S. needs an estimated 1,500 additional controllers. Canada's gap of approximately 200 is proportionately smaller, and the organization is further advanced in its recovery than many peer jurisdictions.

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