

Progress in metric conversion

Since the *White paper on metric conversion in Canada* was tabled in the House of Commons on January 16, 1970, implementation of the SI metric system has been gradual but steady. Since 1972, under the guidance of Metric Commission Canada, such widely varied aspects of Canadian life as temperature, precipitation, grocery store products, road signs, much of the construction and automotive industries, grain sales, wines, seeds and fertilizers have been adapted to metric, and the process is continuing. In 1979 the petroleum industry, from oil well to service station, will convert to metric. It appears that the metric commission's original goal of Canada being substantially converted to the metric system by the end of 1980 will be realized.

Although conversion to metric is primarily voluntary in Canada, legislation has had to be introduced in Parliament to enable metric units to be used. In some cases legislation requiring only metric has been necessary to avoid the confusion of two systems. Conversion of the relevant acts is being generally accomplished by a series of four omnibus bills. The first of these, covering nine acts, received royal assent on August 5, 1977. The second omnibus bill, covering seven acts, received first reading in the House of Commons on December 20, 1977.

In view of the widespread implementation of metric conversion in Canada to date, most quantities in the *Canada Year Book 1978-79* appear only in SI metric or in neutral units such as dollars or dozens.

Relative weights and measures: SI Metric, Canadian Imperial and United States units

The following are conversion factors for units used in the present edition of the *Canada Year Book*, and some others in common use. Conversions are from SI metric to traditional units. For a full listing of the mathematical relationships between traditional units and SI metric, readers are referred to *Canadian Metric Practice Guide*, published by the Canadian Standards Association, 178 Rexdale Blvd., Rexdale, Ont. M9W 1R3. The same number of significant digits is used in the conversion factors which follow as is used in the *Canadian Metric Practice Guide*. If users do not need this level of accuracy, they can round off figures at any number of digits, either in the calculations or in the results. It is a requirement in SI metric to use spaces instead of commas to separate groups of three digits; a space is optional with a four-digit number. Although this practice is not imperative with neutral units, it is taking place in many cases now and will undoubtedly come about generally through standardization. In all Statistics Canada publications, a period is used as a decimal marker.

Area

1 km² (square kilometre) = 0.3861022 square miles
1 ha (hectare) = 2.471054 acres

Length

1 m (metre) = 39.37 inches
= 3.281 feet
= 1.094 yards
1 km (kilometre) = 0.6213712 statute miles = 3,280.840 feet
= 0.5399568 nautical miles = 3,282.937 feet