

News Release

Survey reveals manufacturing industry continues to lose millions due to border issues

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 23, 2021—The Canadian Tooling & Machining Association (CTMA), in partnership with the Canadian Association of Moldmakers, (CMM), Automate Canada and the Niagara Industrial Association (NIA), recently conducted a second survey to measure the effects of border closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic within the manufacturing industry.

This updated study was to compare the results to the previous survey about common border crossing issues that have been experienced by those in the industry, who have identified that many of their businesses rely on travel between the U.S. and Canada. There were 91 responses to this follow up survey, which is a substantial increase over the 39 responses in the December 2020 survey.

The severity of the issue continues. In December 2020, an average of 70 per cent of employers reported quarantine orders for employees and visitors and denial of entry by visitors into Canada. In May 2021, this increased dramatically to 87%. An overwhelming 69% have experienced loss of contracts due to border issues.

“It’s clear from the increased participation in the survey that the issues at the border have left manufacturers with high risk for current contracts and potentially irreversible damage to customer relationships,” said Jeanine Lassaline-Berglund, president, CMM.

The financial impact varies among respondents. Although some participants were reluctant to share financial information due to issues with confidentiality, the majority noted there were undeniable losses from 2021 because of the interruption of COVID-19-related protocols. Of those who commented, 64.9% stated a combined actual financial impact of \$100,000 to \$10,000,000 for 2020; and 65.4% revealed an estimated financial impact of \$100,000 to more than \$5,000,000 for 2021.

Although most of the border crossing happens at the Ambassador Bridge and Windsor Tunnel (more than 80%), other crossings in the survey results include Sarnia Bluewater Bridge, Fort Erie Peace Bridge, Lester B Pearson International Airport, Niagara Rainbow Bridge and Cornwall Seaway International Bridge.

“The current restrictions governing travel across the Canadian/U.S. border do not fully acknowledge or consider the growing concerns among manufacturers,” said Sophia De Luca, Operations Manager, Niagara Industrial Association. “These survey results provide further evidence to suggest that such restrictions need to adopt more specific guidelines that recognize circumstances for safe, and timely travel of manufacturers, technicians, or specified service workers across the border for maintenance of ongoing industrial projects.”

The Associations recommend government officials provide a clearer definition of "essential workers" to help Canada Border Services Agency personnel better understand the guidelines; provide more detail on documentation requirements and implement rapid testing at ports of entry to reduce quarantine periods for individuals travelling across the border to perform essential services.

“The information obtained in this survey sends a clear message to government officials that we need to move forward with some decisive action and find an immediate solution to these issues,” said Robert Cattle, executive director, CTMA. “The announcement made on June 21 that vaccinated Canadians can now return to Canada without quarantine is just a first step and we must continue to apply pressure to put in place measures for safe travel for both U.S and Canadian citizens between our two countries.”

The detailed report can be found here.

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About Canadian Tooling & Machining Association (CTMA)

The CTMA is a not-for-profit association that represents, supports and promotes the interests of the Canadian tooling and precision metalworking industries. It was established in 1963, by uniting various trade associations into one strong organization that represented the “Tooling Industry” in Canada. It’s head office is located in Cambridge, Ontario. Visit www.ctma.com.

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About Automate Canada

Automate Canada is a not-for-profit industry driven association focusing on the industrial automation and advanced manufacturing technology sectors of Canada. It is based in Windsor, Ontario. Visit www.automatecanada.ca.

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About Canadian Association of Moldmakers (CAMM):

CAMM is a not-for-profit industry driven association focusing on the Canadian mold making sector. It is based in Windsor, Ontario. Visit www.camm.ca.

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About Niagara Industrial Association (NIA)

The NIA is the only Niagara-based organization that focuses solely on advancing the interests of Niagara's industrial sector to ensure Niagara is a competitive place to do business. Visit www.niagaraindustry.com.

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