



A Canadian research initiative with international links, the On the Move Partnership is investigating workers' extended travel and related absence from their places of permanent residence for the purpose of, and as part of, their employment. In Canada, many workers are 'on the move', travelling long distances to, from and within their work. A large but hard-to-document number of Canadians work in different municipalities, provinces or even countries from those in which they live, and several hundred thousand non-Canadians come to Canada as temporary foreign workers. They and their employers invest considerable time and other resources in employment-related mobility.

The On the Move Partnership includes more than 40 researchers from 17 disciplines and 22 universities across Canada and internationally, working with more than 30 community partners to design and carry out research, interpret results and disseminate findings. On the Move is a project of the SafetyNet Centre for Occupational Health & Safety Research at Memorial University funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), the Newfoundland and Labrador Research Development Corporation (RDC), the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI), and numerous universities and partners.

Multiple factors appear to be fuelling employment-related mobility in Canada: increasing trade, improvements in transportation and communications, an aging population, mismatches between work opportunities and local labour supplies, rural and remote resource development, an increase in precarious employment, as well as policy change and other developments. It is likely to be both a key mechanism for promoting innovation, leadership and prosperity in Canada into the future, and an ongoing source of serious challenges for employers, workers and their families and communities.

Existing research on employment-related mobility is limited and fragmented, but shows that it is likely affecting key domains of Canadian life. These domains include: labour recruitment, training requirements, absenteeism, turn-over, productivity and occupational health; infrastructure needs (e.g. housing, health, transportation); the effectiveness of policy and planning at municipal, provincial and federal levels; work-life balance, spousal and parent-child relations and community engagement; and regional economic and community development.

The On the Move Partnership will produce the first comprehensive study of the spectrum of employment-related mobility in Canada from extended daily travel to long distance travel and related absence from home. Using the Canadian census, we will explore how this spectrum has changed since 1981. We will also examine the policies that both drive employment-related mobility and influence its effects on employers, workers and their families and home and host communities. We will interview employers (large and small-scale), human resource managers, unions, local governments, employees and their households, and home and host communities (rural and urban) in multiple sectors and 7 Canadian provinces. We will also look at how changes in mobility patterns relate to larger-scale changes in the nature of work, competitiveness and prosperity.