

COVID-19: HOW COVID-19 IS AFFECTING IMMIGRATION IN CANADA (August 17, 2020)

In an effort to help you understand the changes in immigration due to COVID-19, we have prepared the following information.

This information is solely for informational purposes. Given all of the rapid changes happening in response to COVID-19, we will seek to update our resources on a regular basis and urge you to consult with us if you have any specific legal questions about a client's situation.

Travel Ban	Citizenship Applications, Permanent Residence Applications, Temporary Residence Applications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All passengers with COVID-19 symptoms are prohibited from boarding flights to Canada. (COVID-19 symptoms such as fever and cough or fever and respiratory difficulties.) If travelling by air, passengers are required to pass a health check conducted by airlines before being permitted to board a flight. Anyone with symptoms of COVID-19 will not be allowed to enter Canada by air. • Temporary foreign workers, some international students and approved permanent residents who have not yet landed are now able to enter Canada. • Border crossings are still possible for those entering from the US for essential travel. • When coming to Canada from outside the US the traveller must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prove they are exempt from restrictions and that they are traveling for essential purpose. - Apply for travel exemption authorization by emailing IRCC at IRCC.Covid-TravelExemptions-Exemptionsdevoyage-COVID.ircc@cic.gc.ca with : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Full name - Date of birth - Unique Client Identifier - Passport number - Detailed reason for travel - Proof of relationship with immediate family member - Proof of immigration status - Proof of temporary resident or ETA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All citizenship tests and ceremonies have been cancelled until further notice. • No global expedited processing for applications currently in queue, in fact with some Visa offices worldwide remain functional and others are closed. • IRCC has granted 90-day extensions. Due to COVID-19 service disruptions at Service Canada locations, Visa Application Centres and Application Support Centers, biometrics collection deadlines have been automatically extended from 30 days to 90 days from the date on your letter. • All temporary residents in Canada unable to depart from Canada must apply for an extension if their status will soon expire. They must meet all the requirements and pay the associated fees. • Temporary residents who have already applied for an extension will benefit from implied status and be able to remain in Canada until a decision on their application for extension has been rendered. • If a temporary resident's status has expired, they must apply for restoration and pay all associated fees for restoration. • All temporary foreign workers are exempt from travel restrictions and can travel to Canada by air or land if they're coming for an essential purpose. • Permanent residence applicants who received their confirmation of permanent residence and their permanent resident visa but are unable to travel to Canada while their documentation is still valid must inform IRCC via a web form submission. If the documentation has expired, they must also inform IRCC via web form submission. Immigration officers will re-open their application and review within 90 days.

Refugee Hearings, Refugee Claimants on COVID-19 Frontlines & Sponsorship

REFUGEE HEARINGS

- All in person hearings have been postponed until further notice except detention reviews and some admissibility hearings involving detained persons.
- Once hearings resume, advance notice will be given to claimants. Resumption notice of 30 days will be given.
- All offices are closed. Claimants must mail, fax, email or epost all documents that must be submitted to the IRB

REFUGEE CLAIMANTS ON COVID FRONTLINES

- A pathway to permanent residency for asylum seekers working on COVID-19 frontlines has been created.
- This is for health care workers who are providing direct care to patients in health care institutions.
- To qualify claimants must have sought asylum before March 13, 2020.
- Claimants must have received a work permit after having made the asylum claim.
- Claimants must have worked in health care no less than 120 hours between March 13 - August 14, 2020.
- Claimants must have 6 months experience in their designated occupation before receiving PR by August 2021.

SPONSORSHIPS

- Due to ongoing efforts in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) will defer accepting new applications under the Parents and Grandparents Sponsorship Program (PPGP) of 2020.
- The temporary postponement of the launch of the 2020 call for applications should not have an impact on the arrival of parents and grandparents into Canada. The processing of applications already received continues.
- Most permanent residence applications are still accepted however the ability to review and process them is affected by COVID-19. It is currently impossible to estimate the processing times for requests.

International Students & Tourist Visas

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

- International students who were already enrolled for studies in Canada or had been accepted and made arrangements to come to Canada to study before the travel restrictions were put in place may still attempt to enter Canada.
- International Students must identify themselves and their circumstances to airlines upon boarding and present a valid study permit and a letter of introduction from IRCC dated on or prior to March 18, 2020. There were reports of those exempts being turned away by airlines.
- International students in Canada are now able to work more than 20 hours per week while classes are in session if they are working in an essential service or function such as health care, the supply of food or other critical goods.
- Students starting in the Fall of 2020 will not see time deducted in the length of their post-graduation work permit for studies completed while outside Canada between fall 2020 and December 31, 2020.
- International students can still work if there has been interruption in their studies due to COVID-19. (Interruptions that forced them to go part time or even stop their studies altogether.)

TOURIST VISAS

- All those with valid visiting visas and super visas will not be permitted to enter Canada at this time. Their travel is considered to be leisure travel and is not considered essential.
- A person with a visitor visa would only be able to enter Canada through the US/Canada border if they fall into the category of those who are exempt from the Travel Ban.