

# Mobility: immigration alert

April 2018

## Canada

### Expansion of Canadian biometrics program

#### Key points:

- ▶ Most foreign nationals between the ages of 14 and 79 seeking temporary or permanent residence to Canada will now be required to provide fingerprints and a photo (biometrics).
- ▶ There are a number of exceptions identified including US citizens applying for temporary residence, visa-exempt visitors with a valid Electronic Travel Authorization (eTA) and US visa holders transiting through Canada.
- ▶ Temporary residents (visitors, workers, students) will need to provide biometrics once every 10 years.
- ▶ Permanent residence applicants will be required to provide updated biometrics and pay the fee.

#### Executive summary

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) announced a significant expansion of their biometric collection requirements for foreign national travelers to Canada to facilitate identity verification. Fingerprints will be stored by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police on the National Repository and checked against immigration and criminal records. Biometrics-based information will be shared with the US, Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom.

The biometric data, consisting of fingerprints and a photograph, can be provided at biometric collection facilities and at designated ports of entry. Foreign nationals must pay a collection fee of CAD85 when

providing their biometric data, which will be valid for ten years.

#### Background

In 2013, IRCC implemented the Temporary Resident Biometrics Project (TRBP). This program currently requires foreign nationals from 29 visa-requiring countries between the ages of 14 and 79 to provide their biometrics when applying for temporary entry to Canada. The TRBP was designed to protect Canadians by enhancing identification of travelers to Canada. The expansion of biometrics to all foreign nationals is expected to further this benefit.

#### Expanded biometric requirements for a greater number of applications

Starting on 31 July 2018, biometrics requirements will be expanded to Europe, the Middle East and Africa. Applicants from Asia, Asia Pacific and the Americas will be subject to biometrics starting on 31 December 2018. Biometrics will also be required for a wider range of applications, including permanent residence, permanent resident card renewals and extension applications submitted inside Canada.

Foreign nationals who require a visa to enter Canada will provide their biometrics as part of the visa application process. Travelers who do not need a visa to enter Canada may be eligible to provide their biometrics at a port of entry when entering Canada. Details as to



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biometric collection at ports of entry and visa application centres abroad will be forthcoming.

Once completed, biometric fingerprint verification will be automatically collected at a primary inspection kiosk at eight major Canadian airports and for other ports, discretionary fingerprint verification will be conducted by border officers upon referral to secondary inspection.

All applicants will be required to pay the CAD85 biometric collection fee when providing their biometrics. Families applying together will pay a maximum biometric fee of CAD170. The biometrics fee will not be refunded if an application is not successful.

#### **New 10-year validity period for biometric data**

Biometrics will be valid for 10 years for temporary residents. This is a change from the current biometrics requirement under the TRBP, which requires new biometrics to be provided with each visa application made outside Canada. Individuals who have already provided their biometrics through the TRBP will not need to provide them again and their data will also have 10-year validity.

#### **Key considerations**

Applicants for temporary entry to Canada will need to ensure sufficient time to complete biometrics either as part of an online application or upon arrival at a designated port of entry. Program implementation details should be monitored and travel instructions updated to ensure that travelers understand new requirements.

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