



GMS Flash Alert

Immigration Edition

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Canada – Biometrics Expansion Project

Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada (“IRCC”) has expanded the biometrics collection and verification requirement.¹ This will form an integral part of immigration screening and border security management to help ensure the safety and security of Canadians, while helping maintain the integrity of Canada’s immigration system. There will be increased information sharing between Canada and the United States, as well as with other countries going forward.

This new requirement is effective for nationals from countries in **Europe, Middle East, and Africa on July 31, 2018** and for nationals from countries in **Asia, Asia-Pacific, and the Americas on December 31, 2018**.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Global mobility professionals, immigration counsel, and traveling employees should be aware that unless specifically exempted, **all foreign nationals are required to give their biometric data** (fingerprints and photograph) when **applying for a visitor visa, work permit, study permit, permanent residence**, or refugee or asylum status. Biometric data will generally be valid for ten years.

Employers should account for this additional logistical step when planning the mobilization of key resources. There may be reduced flexibility for last-minute travels for urgent business.

Further Details

Exemptions to the new biometrics requirement include:

- U.S. citizens;
- visa-exempt nationals holding valid eTA and entering as visitors;
- children under the age of 14;

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- persons over the age of 79; and
- U.S. visa holders transiting through Canada.

Applicants for visa, work permit, study permit, or permanent residence in Canada are exempt until the in-Canada service is established in 2019.

- **Port-of-Entry Applications:** Visa-exempt nationals making work permit applications upon entry to Canada will be required to provide biometrics at the same time. The majority of Canadian [ports of entry](#) are equipped with this service, although not all. As such, applicants will need to be mindful when making travel plans to enter through an eligible port of entry.
- **Visa Office Applications:** After submitting their applications online, applicants will need to attend in person at a local [Visa Application Center](#) ("VAC") to provide their biometrics,. They may have to travel to a different city or country for the nearest VAC. Further, some VACs offer walk-in services, while others require an appointment. As such, there is considerably more planning required as well as increased costs.

In addition, there will likely be delays in the application processing times, particularly for applications under the Global Skills Strategy and Global Talent Stream where the processing times are expected to be two weeks. The biometrics request is issued only after an application is submitted online; biometrics cannot be submitted up-front currently. As such, IRCC will not be held to its two-week processing commitment when applicants experience delays in submitting their biometric data.

- **Additional Fees and Expenses:** Individual applicants will incur a processing fee of C\$85 and a family applying together will incur a total processing fee of C\$170. Additional expenses will be incurred when the applicant has to travel to the nearest VAC.

KPMG NOTE

Your usual immigration counsel or the professionals at KPMG Law LLP can help with identifying applicants who are required to provide biometrics at a VAC and guide them through the planning process while preparing their application. This could reduce the lead time and help avoid extensive delays in the processing times. For port of entry applicants, they should be advised by their immigration counsel on the appropriate travel plans in advance.

Please note that KPMG Law has direct communication channels with various ports of entry and has obtained the most up-to-date directives released by IRCC.

KPMG Law will continue to monitor closely the development of this new initiative and provide GMS *Flash Alert* readers with insights and strategies.

FOOTNOTE:

- 1 For additional information, see the [IRCC site](#).

Contact us

For additional information or assistance, please contact your local GMS or People Services professional* or the following professional with the KPMG International member firm in Canada:



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