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GMS Flash Alert

Immigration

2024-045 | February 29, 2024

Canada – Updates to Visa Requirements for Mexican Nationals

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada has announced a change to visa requirements for Mexican nationals.[1]

Effective 11:30 PM EST on February 29, 2024, Mexican nationals will no longer be able to benefit from visa-free travel to Canada. All Mexican nationals will now require a temporary resident visa ("visa"), unless they meet the eligibility criteria for an Electronic Travel Authorization (eTA). (For prior coverage, see *GMS Flash Alert* 2024-117, June 8, 2023.) Specifically, only individuals that have held a Canadian visa in the last 10 years, or hold a valid US non-immigrant visa, and are travelling to Canada by air will qualify for an eTA.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Under the new measures, only select Mexican nationals will be able to travel to Canada with an eTA. This includes eTA -eligible individuals such as business visitors, tourists, and those who already hold a valid Canadian work permit or study permit.

Mexican nationals who have a valid eTA will no longer be able to apply for work permits directly at the port of entry. Instead, they will have to submit their applications online at overseas visa offices.

This announcement aligns Mexico with other visa-requiring countries that maintain eTA eligibility for certain specific individuals, with Mexico now being the 15th country to be included. (For prior coverage, see *GMS Flash Alert* 2024-117, June 8, 2023.)

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Background

Since 2016, Mexican nationals have been eligible for visa free travel to Canada, with this allowing Mexican tourists, students, and workers to travel to Canada without the need for a visa. Previously, as visa-exempt nationals, Mexican workers were eligible to apply for work permits directly at the port of entry with a valid eTA and avoid the processing times associated with overseas visa applications.

More Details

Any eTAs issued to a Mexican passport prior to 11:30 p.m. Eastern time on February 29, 2024, will be invalidated. The only exceptions will be for previously approved eTAs for Mexican nationals that already have a valid Canadian work or study permit. Any travellers that previously relied upon an eTA for visa free travel will need to review the new eligibility criteria to see if they qualify for a new eTA or need to apply for a visa.

eTA Eligibility

To qualify for visa-free air travel, Mexican nationals must have either held a Canadian temporary resident visa in the last 10 years or currently hold a valid US non-immigrant visa.

These individuals will need to obtain an eTA online prior to flying to or transiting through a Canadian airport. Costing CAD 7, eTAs are typically valid for up to five years or until the foreign national's passport expires (whichever is sooner) and typically allow for stays of up to 180 days at a time.

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Additional Considerations
Mexican nationals who already hold a valid Canadian visa can continue to use it to travel to Canada. Those who are not eligible for an eTA, or who are travelling to Canada by means other than air (for example, by car, bus, train, or boat – including cruise ship), will now need a visitor visa.

Individuals who have questions or concerns about the new measures are encouraged to contact their usual immigration counsel or KPMG Law LLP (see the Contact section) for further guidance.

FOOTNOTE:

1 Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, Newsroom, "Updated travel information for Mexican citizens coming to Canada."

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Contact us

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

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