

# Canada: Visas and eTAs

People entering Canada as artists or critical crew and management for live performances, such as music, theatre, and circus arts, do not require work permits. These professionals enter as “visitors” who are doing “work permit exempt” work.

**However, not everyone can just enter Canada.**

**Do you need a visa or an eTA?**

## US Citizens and US Permanent Residents

Citizens and permanent residents of the United States only need their passport and green card, if applicable, to enter Canada as a visitor. They can drive or fly. Nothing more is required for entry.

## Residents of Visa-Required Countries

People who are traveling on passports from “visa required” countries must apply in advance for their visitor visa. All applications are filed online, and applicants are required to do biometric fingerprinting. Generally, interviews are **not** required. Once a visa is approved, the applicant can designate a representative to deliver the passport to the Consulate to have the visa issued.

Processing time can be unpredictable, so it is best to have at least **6-8 weeks** to prepare and submit an application. Expedited processing for “commercial purpose” can get visa applications processed on tighter timelines, but you cannot pay for guaranteed premium processing.

Please note that Mexico recently became a visa-required country. Mexican citizens were able to travel to Canada with an eTA in the past but, in many cases, now require a full visa.

**To find out if you will require a visa**, visit the Government of Canada’s website:

<https://ircc.canada.ca/english/visit/visas.asp>

# Electronic Transit Authorization (eTA)

People who do not need visas, such as travelers from Australia, New Zealand, many European countries, some Caribbean countries, and some Asian and Mid-East countries, can drive into Canada with only their passports. However, to fly into Canada, they require an eTA.

This is a relatively simple online application. Once approved, an eTA is valid for 5 years or, if sooner, when the passport used in the eTA application expires. The eTA is tied to the passport, so if a passport is lost or replaced, a new eTA is required.

**To find out who needs an eTA**, visit the Government of Canada website's entry requirements by country or territory page by clicking [HERE](#).

**To apply online for an eTA**, visit the Government of Canada website and complete the application by clicking [HERE](#).

People from certain countries\* who would usually require a visa to go to Canada can **fly on an eTA** if they (1) have a current visa for the United States or (2) have had a Canadian visitor visa in the past 10 years.

If they are driving into Canada, they will require a full visa through the usual application process in advance of travel.

\*This applies to the following countries: Mexico, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Morocco, Panama, Philippines, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Seychelles, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, and Uruguay. (May change without notice.)

## WARNING!

The ETA application will ask if a person has ever been arrested. If they answer "yes," the application will go to secondary processing, even if they were not convicted and are not inadmissible (i.e., they do not need a waiver. Secondary processing can take weeks to resolve and is difficult to expedite.

It is best to have travelers apply for eTA as early as possible in case issues arise during processing.

## Inadmissibility Due to Past Convictions

Regardless of citizenship, the duration of the stay, or the purpose of travel, a person who is inadmissible to Canada due to past criminal convictions will require a Temporary Resident Permit to travel to Canada. This is in addition to obtaining a visa or work permit, if required.

### When is a person inadmissible?

A person is inadmissible if they have been convicted or have pending charges for an offense that would be considered a violation of the laws of Canada, such as the Criminal Code or Controlled Drugs and Substances Act.

**Convictions that trigger inadmissibility include** DUIs (including “wet reckless”), reckless driving, possession of drugs (including marijuana over 1 oz), theft crimes, assault crimes, disturbing the peace, etc. It does not matter if the conviction was a felony or misdemeanor.

**Convictions that should not trigger inadmissibility include** driving without insurance or license, speeding, and minor traffic violations.

## Going to Canada When Inadmissible

A person who is inadmissible must apply for a **Temporary Resident Permit (TRP) / waiver** to enter Canada for any purpose or any duration. An application must be filed with the Consulate, and applying in advance is preferred.

**Expedited processing** is available for travel that has “commercial purpose.” For example, this could be a critical member of a band, a theatre company, or an executive participating in meetings. Processing can be as fast as two weeks with good documentation. Applying at least three weeks before travel is preferred. Regular processing, such as visiting for personal travel, can take over six months.

CSBA officers have authority to issue TRP at the port of entry (at the border or airport), but this is risky and delays entry. People can get turned around at the border.

**If you have any concerns about traveling to Canada, contact Mundial Law for a consultation.**

### About Mundial Law

Mundial Law is a boutique law firm that works with entertainment professionals from around the world to solve their Canadian immigration challenges, including obtaining criminal inadmissibility waivers (temporary resident permits) and rehabilitation, work permits for film and television, entry visas for people from visa-required countries, and electronic transit authorizations (eTAs).

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