



CORPORATE IMMIGRATION  
LAW FIRM

A Multidiscipline Practice

## Travel To The United States - Passports Required

The days of making a verbal declaration stating one's citizenship prior to entry to the United States are now numbered. The clock is quickly ticking towards December 31, 2007 when Canadian birth certificates, Canadian citizenships certificates, Canadian drivers licenses and other identification will no longer be acceptable and only a Canadian passport or other valid passport with an appropriate United States visa will be accepted for travel to, from or through the United States, whether by sea, air or land.

If you have employees that travel to, from or through the United States on business, they should apply now for a Canadian or American passport in order to avoid being caught without appropriate travel documentation. Planning now will avoid disruption in business activities in the future and at a minimum will avoid long line-ups at passport offices.

The United States of America, Department of State and Homeland Security announced its new Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative which will require all American citizens, Canadian citizens, Mexican citizens and citizens of the British Overseas Territory of Bermuda to have a passport or other accepted secure document to enter the United States. There was a further announcement that an American Passport Card would be available to American citizens at half the cost of a passport. This Travel Initiative will be implemented in three phases.

- After December 31, 2005, **all Canadian citizens and American citizens transiting in the United States** on route to or from the Caribbean, Bermuda, Central or South American will require passports. Canadians flying directly to many of the British Commonwealth countries in the Caribbean, which do not require passports from Canadian citizens, will now need a passport if they transit through the United States.
- After December 31, 2006 - Travelling by air or sea to, from or through the United States After December 31, 2006, **everyone including Canadians and Americans travelling by air or sea to, from or through the United States** will require passports. This could be very significant for those Canadian citizens that hold dual citizenship and can travel abroad using a passport other than a Canadian passport and rely on their Canadian birth certificate or Canadian Citizenship card to transit through

the United States without a visa in their other passport.

- After December 31, 2007- Travelling by air, sea or land to, from or through the United States After December 31, 2007, **everyone including Canadians and Americans travelling by air, sea or land to, from or through the United States** will require a passport. This initiative has the most significant implication since even those persons travelling on a one-day business trip driving across the border to the United States or Canada will be required to be in possession of a passport. Permanent residents of Canada will continue to be required to be in possession of a valid passport, valid permanent resident cards and the applicable visas to enter the United States.

## Application Forms

Canadians should apply now for a Canadian passport. Canadians that do not act now to secure a Canadian passport can expect that the Passport Canada Offices will be overwhelmed with applications prior to December 31, 2007. An application for a Canadian passport can be obtained by downloading the online form at [www.pptc.gc.ca/online\\_forms/index\\_e.asp](http://www.pptc.gc.ca/online_forms/index_e.asp). Passport applications are also available at any regional Passport Canada office and outside of Canada from any Canadian mission or [www.voyage.gc.ca](http://www.voyage.gc.ca) or by telephone at (613) 996-8885 (collect call via Canada Direct).

## Where to Apply

Applications can be made in person at any of the 31 Regional Passport Canada Offices across Canada or by courier to Passport Canada at le 70 Crémazie Street, Gatineau, Quebec J8Y 3P2 or by mail to Passport Canada, Foreign Affairs Canada, Gatineau, Canada K1A 0G3. Canadians residing outside of Canada and outside of the United States can apply in person at the nearest passport issuing office (Canadian Embassy, High Commission or Consulate) in the country in which they are residing or visiting. Residents in Bermuda, St. Pierre and Miquelon can apply by courier.

## Processing Times

Applications made in person at a regional passport Canada office take ten working days, not including the day the application is submitted. Applications sent in by mail take 20 working days, not including mailing time. An application submitted outside of Canada and in the United States at a Passport Issuing Office will have various processing times depending on the country and time of year.

Urgent services are available for emergency or compassionate reasons on a case-by-case basis and are only available for those applicants who can apply in person at a regional Passport Canada Office and who can provide proof to justify the urgency. Urgent processing is next working day and a fee of \$70.00 in addition to the normal passport fee is required. Express Services are also available for emergency or compassionate reasons and generally take two to nine working days after receiving the application and require an additional \$30.00 fee.

## Validity of Passport

Adult passports and children's passports from ages three to fifteen years, are only valid for five years. Children under the age of three can only be issued a maximum three-year passport. Children now require their own passport and can no longer be listed on their parents' passports. Canadian passports cannot be extended.

## Required Documents

Proof of Canadian citizenship must be submitted in the form of an original birth certificate or original citizenship certificate. A valid or expired Canadian passport is not proof of Canadian citizenship. Persons born in Quebec who were issued birth certificates or baptismal certificates prior to January 1, 1994 must first apply for a new birth certificate. Baptismal and birth certificates issued by Quebec religious, municipal and judicial authorities prior to January 1, 1994 are no longer accepted. Passport Canada only accepts birth certificates that are recognized by provincial and territorial governments.

To discuss how these new requirements could impact you or your business travel, please contact either:

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