



Citizenship and
Immigration Canada

Citoyenneté et
Immigration Canada

Business Visitors from Russia to Canada

Applying for a Temporary Resident Visa



Canada 
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Background

Canada maintains a policy of close engagement with Russia at all levels. Political, economic and cultural relations between our two countries are increasingly diversified and productive. Our partnership with Russia has particular importance given our shared interests in the Arctic and northern environment and our complementary strengths in the natural resources industries.

Increasing business travel from Russia to Canada over the last few years stems from a flourishing business and trade relationship. Trade with Russia is on the rise and reached nearly \$1 billion in 2006. Russia has proven to be an attractive country for investment, and between 2002 and 2006, foreign direct investment to Russia rose 69%, more than any other major economy.

Nearly 25,000 Russians have immigrated to Canada as permanent residents since 2000. The number of Russian students opting to study in Canada has nearly doubled in the last five years. The volume of visitor applications has risen steadily over this time period, and reached over 20,000 applications in 2007.

TEMPORARY RESIDENT VISAS

All Russian nationals wishing to visit Canada for a temporary period must apply for a temporary resident visa (TRV). A TRV is issued to a private visitor (visiting family or friends), a business person, a tourist, a short-term student (in a course of study for six months or less, including summer camps), or a person transiting through Canada.

The purpose of the travel to Canada should be clearly indicated on the visa application.





Business people wishing to visit Canada require a TRV and should not be confused with people applying to come to Canada to work temporarily. An example of a business visitor is someone who is coming to Canada to meet with representatives of companies doing business in Russia. Visitors may be in Canada for business meetings or site visits (to observe only). A person invited to Canada by a Canadian company for training in product use, sales or other functions related to a business transaction would also be included in this category. A person in Canada on a TRV is not permitted to work.

People seeking to come to Canada for training offered by a Canadian firm should apply as business visitors. When applying for a visa for training purposes, it is recommended that the application clearly show when the employee was hired, the position he or she currently holds, when the employee will return to Russia, and what the training in Canada will accomplish.

People wishing to come to Canada to work temporarily must apply for and obtain a work permit prior to their arrival in Canada. The temporary foreign worker application process is considerably different from the TRV process. People wishing to come to Canada to study for more than six months require a study permit. Further information on study permits and work permits is available at www.cic.gc.ca and www.canadianembassy.ru.



Where to Go

COURIER COMPANIES

To submit an application or make a payment, applicants may contact Pony Express at www.ponyexpress.ru. In addition, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) serves clients from Russia, Kazakhstan, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Information on the services provided by the IOM and on IOM mission locations can be found at www.iom.int, www.iomrussia.ru, and www.iomkz.kz.

This service is available for a fee, which covers the delivery of the application form, the passport and supporting documents. It also covers the return of the passport and visa, or the delivery of a letter inviting the applicant to attend an interview in Moscow or provide additional information.


Business travellers who apply through Pony Express or the IOM for a TRV may submit an application with a complete copy of the applicant's passport (all pages) in place of the original. The original passport, however, must be sent to the embassy through Pony Express or the IOM at the end of the processing period so that the application can be finalized. Pony Express and the IOM reserve the right to charge for this extra service.

IN-PERSON APPLICATIONS, AGENTS AND COURIERS

The Canadian Embassy in Moscow does not accept payment in cash for any temporary resident or permanent resident application. If an applicant or his or her agent wishes to submit the application in person, the processing fees must be paid by certified cheque or money order in Canadian funds made out to the Receiver General for Canada, or at a Pony Express or an IOM office.

Applying for a Temporary Resident Visa





Applicants who want a representative to collect their passports on their behalf should submit to the courier service or agent a signed original letter authorizing them to do so. Notarization is not required. The original authorization should then be submitted by the representative to the embassy's visa section.

BASIC DOCUMENT REQUIREMENTS FOR BUSINESS VISITORS

1. A passport or travel document, including at least one blank page, and valid for at least one month beyond the date of intended departure from Canada.
2. Four photographs that meet the specifications outlined in the application kit.
3. The application processing fee, payable at any branch of Pony Express or the IOM; or a certified cheque or money order issued by a Canadian bank to the Receiver General for Canada. Certified cheques, money orders or bank drafts must be presented for payment within six months of the issue date. Older certified instruments will be returned to the client. Cash is not accepted at the embassy.
4. Two application forms per person, completed in English or French.
5. Two Family Information forms per person, completed in English or French.
6. One original letter of invitation from the host in Canada. This document must include the names of the Canadian companies that will be hosting the visit. It must include a contact person, an office address and a telephone number and indicate the purpose of the trip. Invitation letters should not be sent directly to the embassy.

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7. A letter from the applicant's employer, indicating the applicant's position, length of time with the company, salary, and the purpose of the visit to Canada.
8. A signed "Authority to Release Information to a Designated Individual" form, if you wish a third person to receive information on your file on your behalf.

The documents listed above must be submitted with all business visitor applications. Applicants are welcome to add copies of any documents that may be useful, such as travel documents showing previous travel abroad and business documents indicating an ongoing business relationship with the inviter. Please note that **original documents should not be sent for temporary resident applications (including student and work permits). If the applicant chooses to submit an original document, IT WILL NOT BE RETURNED once the application is finalized.**

Additional documents may be requested by the visa office in some cases to ensure that the applicant meets the requirements for visa issuance. Failure to provide the documents requested may lead to refusal of the application.

Every decision is made on a case-by-case basis, and is based on the individual merits of the applicant. While the invitation letter from a Canadian company is an important consideration in the application process, the visa officer will assess the applicant, not the inviter. It is the visa officer's responsibility to protect the integrity of the immigration process and to apply the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act and Regulations* fairly and transparently. If the visa officer is not satisfied that the intended trip to Canada is legitimate, the application will be refused.

Requirements and procedures are subject to change. Applicants should consult the embassy's website at www.canadianembassy.ru before submitting a visa application.





PROCESSING TIMES

Moscow processed a total of 16,061 temporary resident applications in 2006. The approval rate was 92%. Eighty-four percent of these applications were processed within 15 working days.

Some cases will require additional security screening or applicants may require an interview, which would extend the processing time.

FRAUD

One of the challenges in processing TRV applications is the submission of poor-quality or fraudulent documents. Visa officers frequently conduct investigations overseas to verify suspect documents, confirm relationships and assess the application information. Suspected fraud will be investigated and may increase processing times. There is no tolerance for fraud. Applicants who have submitted fraudulent information or documents may be barred from applying for a TRV worldwide for a two-year period.

MISCONCEPTIONS

1. "I must go to the Canadian Embassy in Moscow to apply to visit Canada."

Applicants can submit all the required documents through Pony Express or the IOM, at locations throughout the country. The applicant would only have to go to the embassy in Moscow if an interview were deemed necessary.

2. "You can't apply for a multiple-entry visa in Russia."

This is not the case. If it can be established that there is an ongoing business relationship in Canada that would require several visits, the applicant may wish to apply for a multiple-entry visa. This would eliminate the need for the applicant to apply for several single-entry visas.

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3. “The visa officer requests so much information from applicants, even when a Canadian company has extended an invitation. Not only does it seem that the invitation from the Canadian is not accepted as sufficient proof of the intentions of the applicant, but it seems like the inviter himself is under assessment by the visa officer.”

The visa officer has the responsibility of fully assessing the applicant, and this assessment can only be made with a fully completed application form and the required supporting documents, including details about the inviter.

A negative assessment of an applicant in no way reflects on the inviter. The visa officer may have information of which the host company is not aware. Canadian companies cannot be held responsible for applicants found to be non-genuine visitors after their arrival in Canada.

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4. “My business partner from Russia was refused a visa to Canada. How can I obtain the reasons for the refusal from the visa office?”

Please note that because of restrictions under the *Privacy Act*, it is normally not possible to divulge information concerning a visa application to third parties. It is also important to recognize that individual visa applicants may be reluctant to divulge the true reason for a visa refusal to the Canadian inviter or to their employer.

You should be aware that visa officers notify refused applicants in writing of the reasons for the visa refusal.

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Final Suggestions

To avoid frustration and disappointment, the visa application should not be submitted at the last minute. Allow the visa office enough time to process the application and return the passport. Although every effort is made to process applications within 15 working days, some cases will require additional screening.

Make sure that the application is complete and that sufficient information is included to clearly explain the reason for travel. In addition, information should be included that indicates the degree of establishment of the applicant in Russia, which could lead a visa officer to conclude that the applicant will return to Russia after a visit to Canada.

Be assured that visa officers recognize the importance of Russia for Canadian investors and business people. They are committed to assisting Canadian businesses in meeting business development goals through the facilitation of visitors from Russia, while maintaining the integrity of Canada's immigration process.

