

# Travel advisory

Do you have clients applying for a Canadian visitor visa, a study or work permit, or for permanent residence? They will need to give their biometrics.



Did you know that biometrics (fingerprints and digital photo) are one of the most reliable ways to identify people and are used by more than 70 countries for immigration screening? For over 20 years, biometrics have played a role in supporting immigration decision-making in Canada. Not only do biometrics help visa and border services officers make sure people are who they say they are, but they also help facilitate entry into Canada.

## What you and your clients need to know about Canada's new biometrics requirement

As of **December 31, 2018**, nationals from countries in **Asia, Asia Pacific and the Americas** need to give their fingerprints and photo (biometrics) when applying for a **Canadian visitor visa, study or work permit, or for permanent residence**. This same requirement has applied to nationals from countries in Europe, the Middle East and Africa since July 31, 2018, and to temporary resident applicants from [29 countries and 1 territory](#) under the Temporary Resident Biometrics Project since 2013.

## Are there any exemptions to the biometrics collection requirement?

Yes, there are exemptions, including applicants under 14 or over 79 years of age; U.S. nationals coming to visit, study or work temporarily in Canada; as well as lawful permanent residents of the U.S. coming to visit only.

## What does this change mean for clients?

Biometrics adds a **new step** in the application process. Once clients give their biometrics, we'll use them to assess their application.

Clients need to **plan ahead** and make sure they have enough time to give their biometrics **before** travelling to Canada. They can do this at a:

- **Visa Application Centre (VAC)** – 152 worldwide, including more than 100 in Asia, Asia Pacific and the Americas. Note: applicants must make an appointment to give their biometrics at a VAC in Asia, Asia Pacific and the Americas.



- **Application Support Center (ASC)** and **VAC** in the U.S. – there are 135 ASCs and 2 VACs (Los Angeles and New York City), for applicants who are already legally in the U.S. or a U.S. territory. Note: soon, ASCs will not accept walk-ins for biometrics. Clients should check [Canada.ca/biometrics](https://Canada.ca/biometrics) for updates before going to an ASC to give their biometrics. They may need to make an appointment.

Keep in mind that:

- Clients will need to go in person to give their fingerprints and photo at the closest VAC, or, if already legally in the U.S., to an ASC or a VAC.
- It is best for clients who need to give their biometrics to **apply online** for their visitor visa, or study or work permit.
  - They won't have to worry about lineups and business hours at a VAC or an ASC.
  - The applicant can hold on to their passport until we ask for it.
  - Online applications may be processed more quickly.
  - If they pay the biometrics fee when they submit their online application, they will receive a letter within 24 hours confirming they need to give their biometrics and where they can go to do this. With this letter, they can make an appointment, if needed, to give their biometrics and avoid any lineups.
- Applicants only need to give their biometrics **once every 10 years** when applying for a visitor visa, or a study or work permit, which will facilitate those who make repeat visits to Canada. If clients have **already provided their biometrics** in support of a past Canadian visa or permit application, for example under the Temporary Resident Biometrics Project, and their biometrics are still valid, they do not need to give them again for any future temporary resident application until their biometrics expire. Biometrics are valid for 10 years for visa and permit applicants.
- If clients already have a **valid Canadian visa, or a study or work permit**, but have not given their biometrics, they **do not need to do this until the next time** they apply for a study or work permit, visitor visa, permanent residence, or extend or renew their permit.

**For more information, including where to go to give biometrics, visit**  
[Canada.ca/biometrics](https://Canada.ca/biometrics).