

[Home](#) → [Country of Origin Information](#) → Responses to Information Requests

Responses to Information Requests

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25 February 2020

CAN200080.E

Canada: Requirements and procedures to obtain an Electronic Travel Authorization (eTA); verification procedures for holders of an eTA (2016-February 2020)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

1. Purpose and Scope

The general information page for Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) regarding the eTA document states that it is "an entry requirement for visa-exempt foreign nationals travelling to Canada by air," including travellers transiting through Canadian airports (Canada 23 Jan. 2020a). An eTA is not required for individuals travelling to Canada by land or sea (Canada 29 Nov. 2019). According to sources, while the program was [introduced (*Outpost* 22 Dec. 2016) or "was supposed to take effect" (CBC 5 Jan. 2017)] in March 2016, the government implemented a grace period and began requiring that travellers obtain eTAs as of November 2016 (CBC 5 Jan. 2017; *Outpost* 22 Dec. 2016). Media sources describe the eTA program as a way to perform a security screening (CBC 14 Dec. 2016; CTV News 16 Dec. 2018).

1.1 Travellers Who Require an eTA

According to an IRCC web page, consulted in February 2020 and which had been last modified on 29 November 2019, holders of passports from the following countries require an eTA in order to travel to Canada:

- Andorra
- Australia
- Austria
- Bahamas
- Barbados
- Belgium
- British citizen
- British [n]ational ([o]verseas)
- British overseas citizen (re-admissible to the United Kingdom)
- British overseas territory citizen with citizenship through birth, descent, naturalization or registration in one of the British overseas territories of:
 - Anguilla
 - Bermuda
 - British Virgin Islands
 - Cayman Islands
 - Falkland Islands (Malvinas)
 - Gibraltar
 - Montserrat
 - Pitcairn Island
 - Saint Helena
 - Turks and Caicos Islands
- British [s]ubject with a right of abode in the United Kingdom
- Brunei Darussalam
- Bulgaria
- Chile
- Croatia
- Cyprus
- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- Estonia
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Greece
- Hong Kong Special Administrative Region [SAR] of the People's Republic of China, must have a passport issued by Hong Kong SAR.
- Hungary
- Iceland
- Ireland
- Israel, must have a national Israeli passport
- Italy
- Japan
- Republic of Korea
- Latvia
- Liechtenstein
- Lithuania
- Luxembourg

- Malta
- Mexico
- Monaco
- Netherlands
- New Zealand
- Norway
- Papua New Guinea
- Poland
- Portugal
- Romania (electronic passport holders only)
- Samoa
- San Marino
- Singapore
- Slovakia
- Slovenia
- Solomon Islands
- Spain
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- Taiwan, must have an ordinary passport issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Taiwan that includes the personal identification number
- United Arab Emirates
- United States, lawful permanent resident of
- Vatican City State, must have a passport or travel document issued by the Vatican. (Canada 29 Nov. 2019)

The IRCC further indicates that US citizens are exempt from the eTA requirement, but "must carry proper identification such as a valid U.S. passport" (Canada 23 Jan. 2020a). Canadians who are dual nationals [of other countries covered under the eTA program] must travel on their Canadian passports and cannot apply for an eTA (Canada 23 Jan. 2020a). A 2017 article by CBC explains the following:

[S]ome dual citizens (holding citizenship in Canada and another country) have run into problems when using their other passport to travel. If they use a foreign passport and try to get on a plane to Canada, the system says they need to get an eTA – but they can't because they are Canada citizens. So dual citizens must now use their Canadian passports ... (CBC 5 Jan. 2017)

2. Application Process

According to the IRCC web page about the eTA, the eTA application must be completed online using the Government of Canada website (Canada 23 Jan. 2020a). The eTA application may only be completed for one traveller at a time (Canada 23 Jan. 2020a); this means that, for example, a family of three will need to submit three separate eTA application forms (Canada 23 Jan. 2020b). Parents, guardians, and representatives may also apply for an eTA on behalf of someone else, including on behalf of a minor (Canada 2017, 2).

3. Fees

The IRCC web page on how to apply for the eTA states that the fee is C\$7 [per individual application] and may be paid [online] using the following methods:

- Visa®, Mastercard®, American Express®,
- a pre-paid Visa®, Mastercard® or American Express®,
- Visa Debit, or Debit Mastercard,
- UnionPay®
- JCB Card®, or
- Interac®. (Canada 23 Jan. 2020b)

According to the same source, the C\$7 fee is non-refundable (Canada 23 Jan. 2020b).

Applicants receive a receipt that must be printed immediately if applicants wish to keep it, as a copy of the receipt is not sent [by email] (Canada 23 Jan. 2020b).

4. Issuance and Delivery Procedures

According to the IRCC's web page, the eTA is linked to the applicant's passport number and is valid for "up to five years or until the passport expires, whichever comes first"; if an individual replaces their passport, they must also acquire a new eTA (Canada 23 Jan. 2020a). The IRCC website also cautions applicants that they must enter the correct passport number on the form (Canada 23 Jan. 2020a). IRCC also provides a help guide on applying for an eTA, which includes instructions on how to locate and correctly enter a passport number (Canada 2017).

The IRCC website states that "[m]ost applicants get their eTA approval (via an email) within minutes" but advises that "some requests can take several days to process" if the applicant is asked to provide supporting documentation (Canada 23 Jan. 2020a). The approval email includes the eTA number (Canada 23 Jan. 2020c).

A web page on how to apply for the eTA, also managed by IRCC, states that in the event that further supporting documents must be submitted, the applicant will receive emailed instructions within 72 hours [of submitting the application] (Canada 23 Jan. 2020b). Communication regarding the eTA takes place by email only and applicants are advised to check their junk mail folders (Canada 23 Jan. 2020b).

After applying, applicants can check their application status using an online tool, or, if they no longer have the original eTA email, they may submit a request to IRCC using a web form (Canada 30 Jan. 2020).

5. Verification Procedures

According to the IRCC's online information, the eTA is "electronically linked to a traveller's passport" [they same one they used to apply for the eTA], and the traveller must present the passport when checking in to their flight (Canada 23 Jan. 2020a). According to IRCC, there is no need to print out any additional documentation (Canada 23 Jan. 2020c). Airline staff will confirm the presence of a valid eTA by scanning the passport (Canada 23 Jan. 2020a). The website of KLM, a Dutch airline based in Amsterdam (KLM n.d.a), states that passengers who are "[r]esidents of countries under [Canada's] Visa Waiver Program" will not be allowed to check in for or board their flight to Canada without a valid eTA (KLM n.d.b). A travel advisory on the Air Canada website states that visa-exempt foreign nationals must have their eTA before boarding their flight (Air Canada 14 Nov. 2016). The website for Air Transat, an airline based in Montreal (Air Transat n.d.a), states that "for travellers without a valid Canadian passport, Permanent Resident Card (PRC) or visa," the "document will be required at check-in, along with a valid passport" (Air Transat n.d.b). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

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Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: Air Canada; Sunwing; WestJet.

Internet sites, including: Canada – Canada Border Services Agency.

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