



Immigration and
Refugee Board of Canada

Commission de l'immigration
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8 April 2008

LKA102742.E

Sri Lanka: The National Identity Card (NIC); its issuance, cost, validity period, security features and description of front and back of card
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

On 14 March 2008, an official at the Canadian High Commission in Colombo provided the following report on the Sri Lankan National Identity Card (NIC).

The Sri Lankan National Identity Card (NIC) was first introduced in 1972. This document is issued by the Department for the Registration of Persons located in Colombo.

Any Sri Lankan citizen who is at least 16 years of age and residing in Sri Lanka is required to apply for the NIC. Every applicant is required to produce his/her birth certificate and an attestation from the Grama Sevaka (a Village Headman, appointed by the government through the Ministry of Home Affairs. Their responsibility is to liaise between the Divisional Secretariat regarding requirements of the residents living in the area for which he/she is responsible. They are also the contact point for certifying a person's residency for purposes of Electoral Registrations, issuance of NICs, etc.).

Issuance:

The issuance of the NIC is centralised at the Department for the Registration of Persons in Colombo. However, applications are accepted at all Divisional Secretariats through the Grama Sevaka. In order to submit an application, the applicant needs to have been a resident in that particular Grama Sevaka division he/she is applying from for at least a period of 3 months and, ideally, be a voter registered in that area.

The only exception to this is when a student turns 16 and needs to sit for public examinations. He/she then has the option of submitting an application through the school.

Fees Payable:

There is a stamp fee payable at the time of making the application and the fee structure is as follows:

- Student: [Sri Lankan Rupees] Rs. 3/- (Stamp)
- [Over the age of] 17: Rs. 13/- (Stamp)
- Amendments of Replacement Cards: Rs. 15/- (Stamp)
- One day expedited service: Rs. 500/-

[1 Sri Lanka Rupee = 0.01 Canadian dollars (Canada 7 Apr. 2008)]

Validity:

No specific validity periods exist but cards issued between 1972 and 1974 are no longer valid.

Security features on the NIC:

The following items fluoresce under a UV light:

- Blue security fibres
- The Sri Lankan Crest (image of a lion and sword within a circle) on the front of the card, above the picture (fluoresces yellow)
- At the back centre of the card, the Sri Lankan Crest also appears in yellow

Description of the NIC:

Front of the Identity Card

(Note: the item numbers below correspond to the numbering on the sample NIC in the attached scanned image).

The NIC is printed on secure paper, with yellow background and repeated "lion and sword" pattern printed in yellow/orange.

1. At the top centre of the card the word "Sri Lanka" is printed in the Sinhala language.

2. The purple number on the right of the Sri Lankan emblem represents the Province from which the application was made. The numbers range from 1-9. The numbering convention is as follows:

1 Western Province

2 Central Province

3 Southern Province

4 Northern Province

5 Eastern Province

6 North Western Province

7 North Central Province

8 Province of Uva

9 Province of Sabaragamuwa

3. The Sri Lankan Emblem

4. Just below the Sri Lankan Emblem is the NIC number. It is a 10 digit number. Digits 1-9 are numerical and digit 10 is an alpha character.

The following numbering system is followed in order to assign this number:

- Digits 1 and 2: The year of birth
- Digits 3-5: The number of the day in the year on which the person's birth date falls.

A male would be assigned the number 1-366 and a female the number 501-866. This is a way of confirming if the person's listed birth date is accurate. A male's birth date would be represented by the exact number of days, a female's birth date would be represented by the exact number of days + 500.

Example: The first five digits of the NIC for a male born on 1 January 1997 would be 97001; however, a female born on that same date would be 97501.

- Digits 6-8 are the serial number from the Record book maintained at the Department [for the Registration of Persons].

- Digit 9 is a check digit.

- The letter V stands for voter and X for a non-voter. Example: a student who applies for a NIC at 16, at which age he/she does not have the right to vote, the number on his/her card will end with an X. Cards issued in 2007 (no exact date available) no longer make this distinction - everyone is issued numbers that end with the letter V.

5. The photograph is placed right under the NIC [number]. The photograph is mostly black and white and is enclosed in a box outlined in gold. Colour photographs were introduced in the fall of 2005.

6. A green line with a pattern is also a security feature of the card. When viewed vertically, the letters RPD (Registry of Persons Department) are repeated. It spans the width of the laminate, at the bottom of the photograph (horizontal) on the front of the card and on the right side (vertical) on the back of the card.

7. A Supervisor's initials (7a) is found on the bottom right hand corner of the card that indicates that the information on the card has been checked and dated (7b); the card is then signed by the Commissioner (7c).

8. Right at the bottom of the card, in an enclosed box are the details of the Act of Parliament that governs the issue of the NIC.

Reverse of the Identity Card

9. The following bio details are entered at the back of the card:

Name:	
Other Names:	Male/Female:
Date of birth:	Place of Birth:
Profession:	
Address at the time of Registration:	

10. District Number: Just below the bio details on the NIC towards the left centre of the card, is the District Number. This number indicates whether the card is one of original issue, amended or replaced. The numbering convention is as follows:

- First issue cards begin with the alpha characters NA, NB or NC;

- Amended cards (where the information on the NIC had been entered incorrectly in the first instance) begin with the alpha characters CA or CB;
- Replacement cards (in place of lost, damaged cards etc.,) the numbers begin with the alpha characters LA or LB.

NOTE: Alpha characters provided are the ones currently in use. We can expect to see ND, CC and LC series in the near future.

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 additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References

Canada. 4 April 2008. Bank of Canada. "Currency Converter." <<http://www.bank-banque-canada.ca/en/rates/converter.html>> [Accessed 7 Apr. 2008]

_____. 14 March 2008. Canadian High Commission in Colombo, Sri Lanka. "The Sri Lankan National Identity Card." Report sent by an official.

Additional Sources Consulted

Internet sites, including: British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), *The Daily News* [Colombo], European Country of Origin Information Network (ecoi.net), Factiva, Sri Lanka - Department of Registration of Persons, United Kingdom Home Office.

Attachment

Canada. 14 March 2008. Canadian High Commission in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Sample of a Sri Lankan National Identity Card (NIC) sent by an official.

The attached reproduction is a copy of an official work that is published by the Government of Canada. The reproduction has not been produced in affiliation with, or with the endorsement of the Government of Canada.