China: Appearance of the second-generation Resident Identity Card (RIC), including personal information represented on the card; procedure for testing cards for authenticity

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

**Description of Resident Identity Card**

The second-generation Resident Identity Card (RIC) measures 85.6 millimetres by 54 millimetres (Xinhua 28 Jan. 2004). The new card is covered with a "special coating" (China 18 Dec. 2003), described by one source as a "hard wearing" polyester plastic (Xinhua 28 Jan. 2004). The second-generation card is reportedly the same colour for both men and women, and the text on the card is written horizontally rather than vertically (*China Daily* 30 Mar. 2004; *People's Daily* 21 May 2004). The colour of the second-generation card was not identified in the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

According to Article 3 of the Law of the People's Republic of China on Resident Identity Cards, the following information is registered on the RIC:

- Name, sex, nationality, date of birth, address of permanent residence, citizen's identity number, the bearer's photograph, term of validity of the card and the issuing authority. (China 2003)

- An official at the Embassy of China in Ottawa noted, in correspondence with the Research Directorate, that the names of the cardholder's parents are not included on the card (China 19 May 2011).

Article 4 of the RIC law, which addresses the languages found on the card, states the following:

Standard Chinese characters and numerals and symbols conforming to national standards shall be used in filling out a resident identity card.

With respect to the items in the resident identity card to be registered in Chinese, the authority of autonomy in a national autonomous area may, in light of actual conditions of the area, decide to use at the same time the written language of the nationality enjoying regional autonomy or the written language that is commonly used locally. (China 2003)
The Chinese news agency Xinhua indicates that the back of the second-generation RIC includes the cardholder's name, sex, nationality, date of birth, residence, ID number and photograph (Xinhua 30 Mar. 2004; see also Xinhua 7 Mar. 2006). Sources state that the cardholder's photograph appears on the right-hand side of the card (ibid. 7 Mar. 2006; ibid. 30 Mar. 2004; Southcn.com 29 Mar. 2004; ibid. 20 Mar. 2004), while the ID number appears at the bottom (ibid. 29 Mar. 2004; Xinhua 30 Mar. 2004). In the upper left-hand corner of the front cover of the card is a design of China's national emblem (CRI 24 May 2007; Southcn.com 20 Mar. 2004). The front cover also has decorative patterns and an image of the Great Wall of China (Xinhua 7 Mar. 2006; ibid. 30 Mar. 2004; CRI 24 May 2007). This side of the card also identifies the card's validity period and the issuing authority (Xinhua 7 Mar. 2006). Two samples of RICs are attached to this Response.

According to *Shenzhen Daily*, the ID number comprises 18 digits:

- Digits 1 to 6 represent the county or district in which the cardholder is registered;
- Digits 7 to 14 represent the cardholder's birth date;
- Digits 15 to 17 are a sequence of numbers for persons who have the same birth date and are registered within the same county or district (odd numbers represent males and even numbers represent females); and
- The 18th digit is a number that is calculated using the previous 17 digits in a formula (25 May 2005).

Information on the formula used to determine the eighteenth digit could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

The second-generation RIC, referred to as a "smart card," has an embedded digital microchip (China 18 Dec. 2003; Xinhua 28 Jan. 2004). The microchip contains cardholder information, such as name, sex, birth date, address and household registration location (Strategies Télécoms & Multimédia Mar. 2005). Fingerprints were initially intended to be stored in the microchip; however, the inclusion of fingerprints has reportedly not occurred (ibid.).

The new ID card's embedded microchip can apparently only be read by "special" card readers (*Shenzhen Daily* 10 Feb. 2006). According to an article in the April 2006 issue of *CardTechnology*, information on the chip can be read in eight-tenths of a second (1 Apr. 2006).

According to a Public Security Bureau (PSB) official of Shenzhen, which was cited in a 10 February 2006 article of the city's *Shenzhen Daily*, only the PSB has the technology to write information in the embedded microchips that can be read by authorized machines. The Shenzhen official stated that the information found in the second-generation RIC "cannot be duplicated, as the process of decryption of its chip information could take as much as 10 million years" (*Shenzhen Daily* 10 Feb. 2006).

**Testing for authenticity**

Unlike the previous laminated paper ID card, the second-generation ID card is designed with a technology that is difficult to counterfeit (China 18 Dec. 2003; see also Xinhua 30 Mar. 2004; ibid. 28 Jan. 2004). According to a 10 February 2006 *Shenzhen Daily* article posted on the Chinese government's official website, second-generation ID cards can be verified for authenticity through the use of card readers. The article states that

[w]hen an ID card is put in the [card reader] machine, a small device similar to a notebook PC [personal computer], the information displayed on the card can be
seen on the machine's screen. If a fake card is used, no information is visible. *(Shenzhen Daily 10 Feb. 2006)*

The card readers have been installed in such places as banks, customs and airports (ibid.). The use of the readers is reportedly "strictly regulated" (ibid.); only 10 manufacturers in China have been authorized to produce them (ibid.; *CardTechnology* 1 Apr. 2006).

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**

*CardTechnology* [Chicago]. 1 April. 2006. Vol. 11, No. 4. "Chinese Examiners Use Smart Cards to Thwart Fake Test Takers." (Factiva)


Additional Sources Consulted

**Oral sources:** The Canadian Embassy in Beijing, and the Canadian Consulate General in Guangzhou did not provide additional information within the time constraints of this Response. Canada Border Service Agency (CBSA) did not have information for this Response.


**Attachments**


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.