

# Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

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## Responses to Information Requests

Responses to Information Requests (RIR) respond to focused Requests for Information that are submitted to the Research Directorate in the course of the refugee protection determination process. The database contains a seven-year archive of English and French RIRs. Earlier RIRs may be found on the UNHCR's [Refworld](#) website.

30 September 2013

### CHN104578.E

China: Whether the 15-digit identity number appearing on a Resident Identity Card (RIC) or a newly assigned 18-digit number would appear on official documents, if the Chinese citizen obtaining the official documents continued to be in possession of a 15-digit RIC (2010-September 2013)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

In a telephone interview with the Research Directorate, an official at the Chinese consulate in Toronto stated that citizens have been required to use the 18-digit second generation RIC since 1 January 2013 (China 10 Sept. 2013). The official indicated that, prior to 2013, it is possible that 15-digit identity numbers were used on official documents (*ibid.*). He noted, however, that there is likely to have been some variation in practices in different parts of the country (*ibid.*).

In correspondence with the Research Directorate, an official at the Embassy of Canada in Beijing provided the following information:

There is no clear cut answer as to the number of digits in the RIC number. In theory, newly issued official documents should all have the converted 18-digit number. In practice, however, many older documents will have the 15-digit number, and as these documents are often used as supporting evidence for new documents, it is unclear whether the new document will convert the 15-digit number to the 18-digit number. Citizens are not encouraged to trade in their old documents for a new one with the 18-digit number. There are many accounts online of some people having the 15-digit version on certain documents, but the 18-digit number on others. The conversion from the 15-digit to 18-digit RIC document is actually simple one, whereby the birthdate data is change[d] from YYMMDD format to YYYYMMDD, with an extra check digit added at the end. Since the conversion is straightforward, with the actual data contained in the number staying the same, citizens are able to convert the number themselves as situations dictate. This can be an occasional hassle for citizens, as there does not seem to be any consistent overall policy regarding completely switching to the 18-digit system. (Canada 17 Sept. 2013)

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.

### References

Canada. 17 September 2013. Embassy of Canada in Beijing. Correspondence sent to the Research Directorate by an official.

China. 10 September 2013. Consulate of China in Toronto. Telephone interview with an official.

### Additional Sources Consulted

**Internet sites, including:** *The Atlantic*; *Caixin Online*; *China Daily*; China.org.cn; eoi.net; Keesing Reference Systems; *South China Morning Post*; United Nations – Refworld; Xinhua News Agency.

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