

Security Screening

Key Messages

- The government is committed to rebuilding Canadians' trust in the immigration system. All persons seeking to come to Canada, whether temporarily or permanently, must meet eligibility and admissibility requirements.
- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) is continuously improving its immigration security screening program to ensure that our immigration and asylum systems are resilient and responsive to new and developing world events and pressures.
- Every applicant is assessed by a trained immigration officer. Officers must be satisfied that applicants are not inadmissible to Canada under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA).
- In collaboration with our Public Safety partners, IRCC reviews each applicant to ensure that they do not pose a threat to the health, safety, or security of Canadians.

Security Screening Overview

- IRCC has integrity measures in place that aim to ensure that anyone who wants to come to Canada does not pose a danger to the security of Canada or Canadians, including by engaging in terrorism, violence, criminal activities, espionage or other similar activities.
- All foreign nationals are assessed before coming into Canada to determine their eligibility and admissibility. All applicants are subject to the legislated requirements in IRPA during this process. This ensures that those who are allowed to come to Canada do not pose a threat to the health, safety or security of Canadians.
- IRCC officers assess permanent and temporary resident applications against departmental databases and risk indicators and work closely with Public Safety partners—Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)—to ensure applicants are not inadmissible on grounds of security, human or international rights violations, or organized criminality.
- Some foreign nationals may require further, in-depth review by CBSA and CSIS (comprehensive security screening). A comprehensive security screening assessment aims to confirm that anyone who wants to come to Canada is not inadmissible under sections 34 (security), 35 (human or international rights violations), and 37 (organized criminality) of IRPA.
- Comprehensive security screening timelines may vary, which could affect IRCC's ability to meet admissions or processing level targets within a given period. Factors such as application complexity and the completeness of information provided can contribute to longer processing times.

Biometrics

- Biometric information (fingerprints) helps to build confidence in Canada's immigration programs and protect the North American perimeter by serving as the foundation of identity management.
- Fingerprints are screened against domestic and international databases as one element of Canada's standard security screening approach which uses biometrics (fingerprints) along with biographic information (factual details about their life) to ensure that risks to national security and public safety are identified and mitigated.
- When an applicant provides their biometrics, IRCC may receive derogatory information from Migration Five partners (Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States). This information contributes to the assessment of the applicant's admissibility to Canada.

Info Sharing

- As part of Canada's Border Plan, we are enhancing vetting with the United States of all electronic travel authorization (eTA) applicants to screen for high-risk individuals.
- On January 17, regulatory changes came into force to implement amendments to the Agreement between the Government of Canada and the Government of the United States of America for the Sharing of Visa and Immigration Information. These changes enable the automated exchange of biographical and biometric information on permanent residents (PRs) of both Canada and the United States. Once the required systems are in place, information will only be exchanged in response to a request as part of either country's immigration screening process, such as when a client is applying for a visa.
- As part of Bill C-12, the Government of Canada introduced legislation to improve how client information is shared within IRCC and with federal, provincial and territorial government partners. The new legislation would facilitate the sharing of immigration, citizenship and passport information with our domestic partners to help improve the integrity of government programs and provide better client service.
- Bill C-12 will not affect the Security Screening Program. Information shared with CSIS and CBSA under this program is governed by a Memorandum of Understanding and authorized through distinct provisions in IRPA and the CSIS Act.

Criminal Offences

- In addition to the standard security screening program, most PR applicants are required to provide a police certificate or criminal record check (foreign) to assess if there are any potential inadmissibility concerns. In certain cases, temporary resident applicants may also be asked to provide this documentation.
- Alleged criminal offences committed on Canadian soil are a matter for law enforcement. Allegations of criminal activity, such as coercion or intimidation, should be referred to the RCMP, or local police forces, for investigation.

- If a PR or a foreign national is found to be inadmissible on criminal grounds, they may be issued a deportation order by CBSA, have their visa or eTA cancelled, and be removed from Canada.
- Criminality can also apply to a conviction or commission of an offence outside of Canada equivalent to an offence punishable by indictment in Canada.
- The Minister of Public Safety is responsible for policy concerning inadmissibility on grounds of security, human or international rights violation, cross-border criminality and organized criminality, as well as for immigration enforcement, including removing foreign nationals. Further questions on these matters should be referred to the Minister of Public Safety or CBSA.

Process for Removing Foreign Nationals and Permanent Residents Found to be Inadmissible

- CBSA is the enforcement arm of Canada's immigration programs and is responsible for immigration removals. IRCC supports CBSA with removals by conducting interviews and verifications and writing inadmissibility reports.
- A foreign national loses temporary resident status when an IRCC or CBSA officer or the Immigration and Refugee Board has determined they did not comply with IRPA. The eTA or visa held by the individual may also be cancelled.
- A PR may lose their status through a formal and rigorous process that includes an admissibility hearing and access to an appeal mechanism. If the PR is deemed inadmissible, they must leave Canada immediately when a removal order comes into force.
- A PR cannot lose status automatically without due process as they have a right to have a hearing, appeal most decisions, and remain a PR until a final decision is made.
- Most removal and inadmissibility reports are led by CBSA. There are various reasons, including appeals and legal proceedings, that may prevent CBSA from enforcing a removal order.

Screening For Research Security Concerns

- The Government of Canada recognizes that open and collaborative academic research is indispensable to pushing the boundaries of science and technology, and addressing complex economic and societal challenges.
- Canadian-led research can be an attractive target for those seeking to steal, use and adapt this research for their own priorities and gains, for example advancements to strategic, military or intelligence capabilities of other countries that are contrary to Canada's interests.
- Engaging in such activities could present a danger to the security of Canada, and/or be considered engaging in espionage.

- IRCC's role in mitigating security threats to Canada-led research primarily involves assessing study and work permit applications from foreign national scholars and students who are seeking to travel to Canada to participate in research at Canadian institutions. If, when reviewing such an application, an officer has concerns relating to the applicant's admissibility, then they may refer the applicant to CBSA and CSIS for comprehensive security screening.