

Séance d'information d'IRCC au sujet des exigences de voyage pour les citoyens mexicains venant au Canada / Briefing session from IRCC on travel information for Mexican citizens coming to Canada

Questions and Answers

APPLICATION PROCESS / PROCESSING

1. What happens to eTA applications that are in progress (i.e. who has not been responded to and/or whose applicants have received a procedural fairness letter)? Is the eTA application cancelled?

If a visitor applied for an eTA before 11:30pmEST on February 29, 2024, they may re-apply, in accordance with the new rules, or apply for a visa.

2. We have received AGRICULTURAL permit application approvals filed online, but in the approval letter there is no eTA listed, and we have not been asked for a passport for the VISA either. What should be done in this case? How do I know if they have a valid eTA or if we have to apply for it ourselves?

Work Permit applications approved *after* February 29, 2024 will not contain an eTA number, because a visa will now automatically be issued instead. The client will be asked to submit their passport, so the visa counterfoil can be affixed for travel. This request will arrive via the client's MyCIC account, but will also be sent to STPS (per the process for provisional approval POE letters before the change). If a SAWP worker has not received the passport request letter, the Mexico Ministry of Labour (STPS) can provide this information to the mission SAWP contact. For non-SAWP workers, if a client is missing a passport request letter, please contact MexicoETA.AVE@international.gc.ca

3. What is the validity period for the new visas issued for new work permit applications made outside of Canada? Can Mexicans apply at port of entry in future contracts if that visa is still valid in future years?

Mexican nationals are now visa-required, according to the regulations. As such, they may no longer apply for a Work Permit at the port of entry, regardless of the travel document they hold (i.e., eTA or visa). Visas issued with Work Permits allow for multiple entries, and validity will match the validity of the Work Permit.

4. What about if we have not yet started the application for a Work Permit?

Mexican nationals must apply online for a Work Permit abroad. They may not apply for a Work Permit at the Port of Entry. Eligibility requirements have not changed. Biometrics are still required. If IRCC approves the Work Permit application, the client will be requested to submit their passport via the VAC, so that a visa can be affixed in the passport for travel. In limited circumstances, an application for a Work Permit may be made from within Canada. [Work permit: How to apply - Canada.ca](#)

5. With the anticipated volume of Mexican visa applications, what resources have been placed in the Centralized Network and at the Canadian Embassy in Mexico to help avoid backlogs?

We are prepared to serve new visa clients, with increased capacity from both a case processing perspective (domestic and overseas), and for biometric collection.

6. Will VFS be involved in sending passports by mail? The influx of requests for biometric appointments with this provider will be a big problem, we anticipate immense delays for making appointments.

Yes, the Visa Application Centre (VAC) will securely transfer client passports to the Embassy. Clients may submit their passport to the VAC at anytime during the VAC's opening hours, and an appointment is not required for clients to submit their passports. We are prepared to serve new visa clients, and have taken exceptional measures to ramp up biometric collection capacity. Over 700 biometric appointments per day are available in Mexico City. On March 11, 2024, a mobile biometric collection site opened in Guadalajara. On March 18, 2024, two more mobile collection sites will open in Merida and Monterrey. In the coming months, we will open 2 new VACs in Guadalajara and Monterrey to replace the temporary sites, and we are expanding our existing VAC in Mexico City. The VAC has priority bookings for workers.

7. Will the Mexican government help SAWP workers send passports? Will this affect the duration of the process?

We are currently working with the Mexico Ministry of Labour (STPS) to coordinate the submission of passports for SAWP workers to ensure clear instructions are shared on this procedural step. We expedite visa printing for all work permit applicants and will return the passports to the VAC the next day .

8. The current processing time indicated for Work Permit applications in Mexico is 4 weeks.

This is the processing time for all Work Permits processed by the Mexico embassy, which is well with the departmental processing commitment of 60 days. However, applications for SAWP, agricultural, and seafood processing are always prioritized. We continue to provide expedited processing for these application in an effort to minimize disruptions for workers scheduled to travel imminently.

9. Can we anticipate that processing time for WP applications online for a decision or faster?

Mexico Work Permit applications receive priority processing. SAWP applications are generally processed within 14 calendar days, while seafood and other priority occupations are processed within 30 calendar days; however, the mission has dedicated additional resources to these applications to facilitate the transitional pressures associated with biometrics collection, visa printing, and application processing.

10. What is the delay between the submission of the permit application and the delivery of the visa to the worker for a worker who already has a plane ticket for March 27?

In order for a Work Permit application to be considered complete and ready for processing by IRCC, the applicant must enroll their biometrics. We ask that clients do so urgently, and we have expanded capacity for this step. Work Permit applications are processed on a priority basis, taking into account to the extent possible those clients with imminent travel. The VAC also has designated biometric appointment slots for SAWP workers who require biometrics. Once a client submits their passport, IRCC aims to affix the visa counterfoil and return the passport to the VAC the day after receipt.

11. Any chance it could be expedited for seasonal workers (e.g., Landscapers, fencers, roofers, brick-layers etc.)?

Work Permit applications are processed as a priority, and we have added additional capacity to expedite applications during this period of transition. We ask that clients enroll their biometrics as quickly as possible, so that the application is complete and a final decision can be rendered. Biometric collection capacity has been expanded to meet increased demand.

12. What is the deadline to apply for a work permit with the addition of the new visa requirement?

Eligibility requirements for Work Permit applicants have not changed. Following this change on February 29, 2024, Work Permit clients can still fill out the same online application. Biometrics are still required. For applications that are approved, IRCC will automatically issue a visa; no separate application is required. IRCC will ask the client to submit their passport so that a visa counterfoil can be affixed and they can travel to Canada.

CLIENT SCENARIOS

13. Some of our workers, on vacation in Mexico, with a valid work permit, have had their eTAs cancelled. So they're stuck in Mexico, with a valid work permit, without an eTA, is that in line with the announcements?

Workers with valid Work Permits and eTAs which were issued prior to February 29, 2024 are exempt from cancellation under the regulatory change. Their eTA remains valid for entry to Canada by air. If a valid Work Permit holder believes their eTA has been cancelled in error, please see CANCELLATION section.

14. If a worker is in Canada and travels home for vacation, can they return to Canada on their existing WP and eTA?

Yes eTAs issued to valid Work Permit holders remain valid. They can be used to fly to/from Canada until they expire.

15. If a worker applied for a work permit at a port of entry, would he been given an eTA?

An eTA is a travel document used to travel to a Canadian Port of Entry. Before this change, Mexican nationals could fly to Canada on an eTA, and apply for a Work Permit at the Port of Entry. This is no longer permitted. Mexican nationals must apply for a Work Permit abroad. In certain limited situations, a Work Permit application may be made from within Canada. [Work permit: How to apply - Canada.ca](#)

16. What about those who already have a pre-approval letter stemming from an application approved before February 29? Does this letter remain valid or do they still have to do the process of printing the VISA in the passport?

If the client received their letter of approval before February 29, it contains an eTA number, and both remain valid. If their application was approved *after* February 29, they will be contacted so IRCC can automatically place a visa in their passport.

17. Airline will not accept letter from embassy with valid work permit - what can be done about this?

More information is needed regarding reference to "letter from embassy." All eTAs held by valid Work Permit holders were preserved, when this change was made on February 29, 2024. eTAs were also preserved for clients holding a Work Permit letter of provisional approval (or 'POE letter'). If a valid Work Permit holder (or client holding a letter of approval before the change was made) believes their eTA has been cancelled in error, please see CANCELLATION section.

18. If a TFW from Mexico is in the process of applying for a new work permit and their visa expires while waiting, will they be able to apply for the ETA to stay in Canada while they wait for the new permit? or can they apply for a visitor record, considering they are still in status?

Your status in Canada is not tied to the validity of the visa; in this case, status corresponds to the expiry date of the Work Permit. If the client has already applied for a new Work Permit inside Canada, then they benefit from "maintained status" and can remain in Canada until a decision is made on their application. [Temporary residents: Maintained status during processing \(previously called implied status\) - Canada.ca](#)

19. On the Fact Sheet -- second box: "you have your work permit application approved..." -- does this apply to a worker named on a positive LMIA, has a job contract/offer -- can they travel with an eTA to get their work permit at the POE, via air? Or must they apply for a work permit online?

When the change was made on February 29, 2024, the validity of eTAs issued to clients with a valid Work Permit (including those whose application had been approved) were preserved, even if they had not yet travelled to Canada to get their permit printed. These clients would have received an approval letter/letter of port of entry introduction. This letter contains the client's eTA number. Unless the applicant has received this letter indicating the approval of the Work Permit application, and providing the eTA number, there is no other circumstance in which clients can travel to Canada on an eTA, to the POE to have their Work Permit printed. An LMIA or

a job offer is insufficient on its own. As of March 1, 2024, all Mexican nationals must apply and be approved for a Work Permit abroad, and have a counterfoil issued, prior to travelling to Canada. (In limited circumstances, individuals can apply for a Work Permit from within Canada. [Work permit: How to apply - Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugee-citizenship/services/work-permit/how-to-apply.html))

20. Can we have an answer regarding inland renewal of WP ? Does the renewed WP also include an eTA, or do they need to apply for a visa, too?

A worker can apply for the renewal of a Work Permit if they are in Canada, and the Work Permit is still valid. For Mexican nationals renewing a Work Permit inland, if the application is approved and the applicant is eligible for an eTA on the basis of holding a U.S. nonimmigrant visa or a Canadian visa within the last 10 years, an eTA may automatically be issued, per section 12.04(5) of the regulations. For clients who do not qualify for an eTA, a separate application for a visa must be made from within Canada.

21. What is the deadline to apply for a work permit with the addition of the new visa requirement? How many more days do TFWs have to wait to get their visas?

Eligibility requirements for Work Permit applicants have not changed for Mexican nationals. For new applicants, they submit the same online application, and biometrics are still required. For approved applications, IRCC will automatically approve a visa, and request that the passport be sent to the Embassy via a VAC, so that the visa counterfoil can be affixed and the client can travel to Canada. The client does not need to make (or pay for) a separate application for a visa.

Generally, work permits are processed within the departmental service standard (60 days). However, applications for SAWP, agricultural, and seafood processing are always prioritized (within 14 days for SAWP workers and within 30 days for other LSP applicants). We continue to provide expedited processing for these applications in an effort to minimize disruptions for workers scheduled to travel imminently.

22. For a worker who has to go on vacation to MEX (in his country), who has a valid work permit, his eTA application was refused on March 7, is this normal? The worker wanted to be sure that he had a valid eTA before leaving, so his request was remade. Why would his application have been refused if he has a valid licence? How do I know if I can return from Mexico with my valid permit?

A Mexican national who was holding a valid Work Permit before the change was made on February 29, 2024, would still hold a valid eTA. The validity of the eTA was preserved, and can be used to fly to/from Canada until it expires. If a valid Work Permit holder believes their eTA has been cancelled in error, please see CANCELLATION section.

23. Will this have an impact on Mexican nationals under the TFWP who need to stay in Ontario for an injury or illness (i.e. medical overstay) and have an expired work permit?

There is no change in procedure for these situations. The temporary foreign worker wishing to extend their stay in Canada beyond the validity of their Work Permit would have to apply to extend and change the conditions of their temporary resident status. As they are unable to work and in certain circumstances ineligible to continue working, they would apply to extend their stay as a visitor, before the expiry of their current status. Temporary foreign workers are protected by Canadian labour laws. [Work permit: when you start working - Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugee-citizenship/services/visas-study-permits/work-permit/when-you-start-working.html)

24. Would like clarity on the process when any current eTAs expire for workers coming to Ontario through the TFWP.

When the change was made on February 29, 2024, eTAs issued to valid Work Permit holders were preserved. These can still be used to fly to/from Canada until they expire. Now, Mexican nationals applying for Work Permits will receive a visa alongside their permit, if approved.

When change was made, all eTA held by Mexican nationals, who did not hold valid Work or Study Permits, were cancelled.

25. Can workers who applied for a Work Permit Extension and used to do flag poling still do it?

Work Permits can only be renewed if they are still valid. Once a Work Permit expires, an extension is no longer possible; the client must apply for a new Work Permit. Mexican nationals must apply for new Work Permits abroad; not at the Port of Entry. In limited circumstances, individuals can apply for a Work Permit from within Canada. The change in Mexico's visa status has closed access to the Port of Entry for new Work Permit applications; therefore, 'flagpoling' is not permitted. New Work Permit applications (submitted abroad), if approved, will require the client's passport so that a physical visa counterfoil can be affixed.

26. Can you confirm why past TFWs returning back for the season with their WP in process before Feb. 29th cannot be processed at POE? They are not on travel visa but are on the LMIA with confirmed employment contracts. Can we do something about this asap?

Per the regulations, Mexican nationals are now visa-required, and therefore can no longer apply for a Work Permit at the Port of Entry, regardless of the travel document they hold (i.e., eTA, visa).

FAMILY MEMBERS

27. For minor children accompanying parents who were issued a work permit, they would have been admitted as a visitor under section 30(2) and not issued a study permit. Therefore, they appear to be omitted from the exemptions and need a visa, while their parents who are in Canada on work permits do not and can continue to travel on their eTA. Was this intentional or an oversight, and will it be fixed? It is confusing and a hardship to a family if they are not treated the same.

As part of this change, all eTAs issued to visitors were cancelled at 11:30pmEST on February 29, 2024. However, clients whose eTAs were cancelled are not required to leave Canada. Their visitor status in Canada does not expire with the cancellation of the eTA. Minor children of Mexican nationals holding a valid Work Permit or Study Permit can remain in Canada with their parents so long as they are authorized to remain. Should they leave and wish to return, they may submit an application for an eTA under the new rules, or a visa, which may be submitted from inside Canada, as the dependant of a Mexican Work Permit or Study Permit holder.

28. What is the process for family members who are accompanying TFWs?

For family members accompanying TFWs who wish to apply for a Study (or Work) Permit, the standard eligibility requirements apply. For approved applications, clients will be asked to submit their passport (via the VAC) so a visa counterfoil can be affixed. For family members accompanying TFWs as visitors, they can either apply for an eTA under the new rules, or a visa. Individual family applications are grouped in the system.

CANCELLATION

29. When this change was made on February 29, 2024, all valid eTAs issued to valid Work and Study Permit holders were preserved. If a valid Work or Study Permit holder needs assistance because they believe their eTA has been cancelled please:

- send a web form request
- complete all required fields
- include the code "EMVR2024" in the text box

Enquiries are normally addressed in 24 hours.

For Mexican nationals who had a valid eTA before this change, and did not also hold a valid Work or Study Permit, the eTA was cancelled, and the client was notified.

Note: If individuals obtained eTAs before February 29, 2024, with the intention of submitted a new Work Permit application at the Port of Entry on arrival, these eTAs have been cancelled, because these individuals were not valid Work Permit holders.

eTA and VISA QUALIFICATION / POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

30. For the benefit of people who are less familiar with immigration, is it possible to explain the difference between a short-term visitor who will be able to apply for an eTA, and a worker who comes for less than 6 months who will have to apply for a work permit online/visa?

An eTA and a Temporary Resident Visa are both travel documents obtained by foreign nationals who seek to visit Canada for short periods (normally up to 6 months), to visit friends and family, conduct a business visit, or for tourism. Due to the partial visa requirement in place, some

Mexican nationals seeking to travel to Canada for the above reasons may apply for an eTA instead of a visa, if they meet certain requirements. Clients should refer to the website to determine whether, if eligible for an eTA, this is the preferred document for their needs: [Changes to electronic travel authorization \(eTA\) and visitor visa requirements for Mexican citizens - Canada.ca](#)

Holders of eTAs and Temporary Resident Visas are not authorized to work or study (unless it is of short duration/does not otherwise meet the definition for a Study Permit). [Study permits: Who needs a study permit - Canada.ca](#)

Work Permits are required for activities that meet the corresponding definition of work: [What is considered work? \(canada.ca\)](#). For Mexican nationals whose Work Permit applications are approved, IRCC will request the client's passport, so that a visa counterfoil can be affixed, permitting the client to travel to Canada.

31. The immigration regulations currently provide that Mexican nationals are exempt from the requirement to have a temporary resident visa and therefore can apply for a work permit upon arrival in Canada (provisions 190 and 198 + Annex 1.1). Will the regulations be amended to remove Mexico from Schedule 1.1? Or will Mexican nationals with valid eTAs still be able to apply directly upon arrival?

Yes, this schedule has been amended, and will be published online in the Canada Gazette on March 13, 2024. Mexican nationals are no longer eligible to apply for a Work Permit at the port of entry, regardless of the travel document they carry (i.e., eTA, visa, previous work permit).

32. We understand the new rules, but why did they implement them so quickly without prior notice? This has a huge impact on the fisheries sector, which was waiting for its workers in the coming weeks. Processing times are unrealistic.

We regret any inconvenience this change has caused, and remain available to support clients through this transition via various means, including expedited processing, and increased capacity for biometric collection.

The Government reserves the right to make changes to Canada's visa policy at any time, in an effort to balance mobility with the protection of Canada's immigration program and public resources. The significant worker population in Mexico was taken into account as part of deliberations, and supported the exceptional decision to preserve eTAs issued to valid Work Permit holders.

33. We understand that this reform was to avoid asylum seekers, according to what has been announced. Why did you include TFWs who have all their authorizations and were travelling by eTA for the 2024 season. This is going to affect the season of several businesses and the economy of several regions.

The *eligibility* requirements for workers have not changed. The same online application is required. Biometrics are still required. There is one *procedural* change: for approved Work Permit applications, IRCC will request the client's passport, so that a visa can be automatically affixed and the client is permitted to travel to Canada. Clients do not need to make a separate application for a visa.

34. The timing for any "spring" industry is terrible. Did IRCC consider to exempt the future workers who have an online job offer or a LMIA for POE applications. This could have been possible with the eTA applications.

In an effort to minimize disruption, Canada exceptionally preserved the validity of eTAs issued to valid Work and Study Permit holders. This includes eTAs issued to clients in Mexico who had received their approval letters, but not yet travelled to the Port of Entry to get their permit printed. For pending Work Permit applications, additional processing and biometric collection capacity has been established to support clients through this transition as quickly as possible. New Work Permit applications receive priority processing.

35. To what extent were seasonal volumes and time of year taken into consideration with the come into effect date? How?

Many factors are considered when Canada makes changes to visa requirements. Impacts on mobility, including worker mobility, were considered. In an effort to minimize disruption, Canada exceptionally preserved the validity of eTAs issued to valid Work and Study Permit holders. This includes eTAs issued to clients in Mexico who had received their approval letters, but not yet travelled to the Port of Entry to get their permit printed. For pending Work Permit applications, additional processing and biometric collection capacity has been established to support clients through this transition as quickly as possible. New Work Permit applications receive priority processing.

ENGAGEMENT

36. What information (if any) is the federal government sending out to agri-food TFW employers to ensure they are aware that they are not impacted? I understand there was a news release issued. Is there any other targeted communications planned?

The March 8, 2024 session has been recorded, and this document distributed to partners, in addition to this FAQ. A Fact Sheet was also produced and will be translated into Spanish (already available in French and English). The IRCC website contains a wealth of information, and is being updated daily, to better serve clients, based on the feedback we are receiving.

Further sessions to discuss requirements can be scheduled.