

Work permit exemption guidelines specific to business visitors during the COVID-19 pandemic

The following are guidelines for how to apply if you are work permit exempt as a business visitor (after sale services in essential industries) within a COVID-19 context.

Who are they?

- Business visitors are foreign nationals who enter the country to engage in business activities that are international in scope without entering the Canadian labour market.
- Examples of activities undertaken by business visitors include attendance of meetings/conferences, procurement of Canadian goods/services, sales of foreign goods/services and performing after-sales services as a result of cross-border contractual obligations (repairing machinery, installation of computer software etc.).

Please note that all foreign nationals outside of Canada **must** submit their temporary residence applications online at this time. Only if you **can't** apply online because of a disability or because there is a [problem with the online application](#), may you apply on paper.

Office closures or service changes due to COVID-19 may affect how you complete some steps in the application process. See the following links to find out how COVID-19 has affected:

- [biometrics](#)
- [IRCC offices and VACs](#)

What are the requirements for entry under the travel restrictions?

- Business visitors are work permit exempt. However, if you are travelling from any country other than the United States, only select work permit exempt categories are exempt from the travel restrictions. Consult the Public Health Agency Canada (PHAC) [website](#) for the latest updates on travel restrictions.

National Interest Exemption Letter (NIEL)

- Business visitors, who are travelling from any country other than the United States, require a [National Interest Exemption Letter](#) (NIEL), issued by either Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), Global Affairs Canada (GAC) or Public Safety (PS) to enter Canada.
 - **This exemption is only granted on an exceptional basis where the purpose of travel is in Canada's national interest and the work performed is for an essential service.**
 - The onus is on the applicant to demonstrate the essential and exceptional nature of the proposed travel and that the services you will provide are deemed essential by [Public Safety](#) or Provincial/Territorial governments. If you believe your travel meets the threshold required for this exemption, you may contact your nearest [visa office](#). They will provide further instructions.

Group exemption determined by the Chief of Public Health Officer (CPHO)

- The CPHO has determined that the following class of persons will provide an essential service while in Canada and are exempt from the Prohibition of Entry into Canada from any Country other than the United States:
 - Technicians or specialists specified by a government, manufacturer, or company, as required to inspect, maintain or repair equipment (**does not include installation**) necessary to support critical infrastructure (Energy and Utilities, Information and Communication Technologies, Finance, Health, Food, Water, Transportation, Safety, Government and Manufacturing).
 - Therefore, if you are seeking to work under this group exemption and you are inspecting, repairing or maintaining equipment as part of an existing warranty or sales agreement, you are a [business visitor](#). You **do not** have to obtain a letter from the CPHO or a NIEL to enter Canada. If you are repairing or maintaining equipment **outside of a warranty**, then you [need a work permit](#).

What do I need to enter?

- Depending on your citizenship, you will need a Temporary Resident Visa (TRV) or an Electronic Travel Authorization (eTA). Find out if you need a [TRV](#) or an [eTA](#). See the following links to apply online:
 - [Visitor visa: How to apply online](#)
 - [Apply online for an eTA](#)
- If applying for a TRV:
 - Enter the following information on the application form about the **purpose of travel** to ensure your application is among those prioritized for essential travel:
 - For question **1 a) purpose of travel**, choose “other” from the drop-down menu.
 - For question **1 b) description field**, write “COVID-19” exactly like this (you must use capital letters).
 - Submit evidence of how you are eligible to travel at this time, this would include evidence that you are work permit exempt and coming to do essential work in Canada.
- If applying for an eTA: use IRCC’s [Webform](#) to explain how you meet the eligibility requirements to travel at this time:
 - From the drop-down menu, under Type of application/enquiry, select “Electronic Travel Authorization” and then “Case Specific Enquiries.”
 - In the text box, tell us you’ve applied for an eTA and explain how you’re eligible to travel at this time.
 - Answer “yes” to the question **Would you like to include a document with your submission?** and then upload evidence supporting your eligibility to travel at this time, this would include evidence that you are work permit exempt and coming to do essential work in Canada.

After you apply:

- You may need to give biometrics. See information above for details.
- If you applied for a TRV: You will get **one** of the following sent to your IRCC Secure Account:
 - an email confirming if your application is approved or refused
 - a letter asking for more information, so IRCC can make a decision
- If you applied for an eTA: You will get **one** of the following:
 - If automatically approved, you'll get an approval email with the details of your eTA.
 - If not automatically approved, you'll get an email with next steps.

Prepare to travel:

- Ensure you have a plan to [quarantine](#) for 14 days as soon as you arrive in Canada, unless you are exempt under section 6 of the [Minimizing the Risk of Exposure to COVID-19 in Canada Order \(Mandatory Isolation\)](#).
- Confirm with your employer that your job offer remains valid before travelling to Canada.
- Ensure you have all supporting documents necessary to demonstrate how you meet the [exemptions to the travel restrictions as a temporary foreign worker](#).
- If travelling to Canada from a country other than the United States, you need to show airline staff that you meet one of the categories exempt from the travel restrictions. To do this, show the following documents to airline personnel when you are boarding your flight:
 - Passport or travel document
 - National Interest Exemption letter; **or**
 - Proof that you're exempt from travel restrictions if you are included in the group exemption determined by the CPHO.