

# Dual Citizenship

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



[WWW.TRAVEL.GC.CA](http://WWW.TRAVEL.GC.CA)

[WWW.CIC.GC.CA](http://WWW.CIC.GC.CA)



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For more information or to learn how to obtain additional free copies of this booklet, see page 10. This publication is available in alternative formats upon request.

*Ce document est aussi disponible en français sous le titre La double citoyenneté – ce que vous devez savoir.*

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Consult the websites of Citizenship and Immigration Canada ([www.cic.gc.ca](http://www.cic.gc.ca)) and Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada's Consular Services ([www.travel.gc.ca](http://www.travel.gc.ca)) for the most up-to-date information. Readers are also encouraged to supplement this information with independent research and professional advice.

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## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Canadian law permits dual or multiple citizenships: you can be a citizen of another country and still be recognized as Canadian. There are both advantages and disadvantages to dual citizenship (or dual nationality), and you may not be fully aware of the privileges, obligations, and potential problems that come with it. The Government of Canada has developed this booklet to provide you with important information on dual citizenship.

### WHAT IS DUAL CITIZENSHIP?

You are a dual citizen if you are recognized by more than one country as a citizen. In some cases, you may not be aware that you are a citizen of another country. Dual, or multiple, citizenship may occur by choice or default and result from:

- an application for foreign citizenship
- your place of birth
- family connections, including place of birth of one of your parents or even grandparents
- marriage to a foreign national
- extended residency in a foreign country

## Are you a Canadian citizen?

In general, if you were born in Canada, you are a Canadian citizen. If you were born in Canada after February 14, 1977, and at the time of your birth, your parents were not Canadian citizens or permanent residents, and at least one parent had diplomatic status in Canada, you are not a citizen. If you were born in Canada before February 15, 1977 to a parent who was a foreign diplomat in Canada, contact CIC for more information on eligibility.

If you were born in another country:

- In general, you are a Canadian citizen if you became a citizen through the naturalization process in Canada (i.e., you were a permanent resident — a landed immigrant — before you became a citizen).
- In general, you are a Canadian citizen if you were born outside Canada and one of your parents was a Canadian citizen at the time of your birth and that parent was either born in Canada or naturalized in Canada ('naturalized' means that the parent was a permanent resident — a landed immigrant — before becoming a citizen). You are the first generation born outside Canada.

- You may be a Canadian citizen if you were born outside Canada between January 1, 1947, and April 16, 2009, inclusively to a Canadian parent who was also born outside Canada to a Canadian parent (you are the second or subsequent generation born outside Canada). If you think this may apply to you and you need more information, please contact CIC.
- If you were a British subject residing in Canada when the *Canadian Citizenship Act* came into force on January 1, 1947, or you were born outside Canada to a British subject parent who might have become a citizen on that date, contact CIC to find out how to confirm whether or not you are a citizen.

If you are uncertain about whether you are a Canadian citizen, we encourage you to use CIC's online self-assessment tool before applying for the Certificate of Canadian Citizenship. To use the online tool, visit the CIC website at [www.cic.gc.ca](http://www.cic.gc.ca), and proceed to the "Apply for Citizenship" section.

## HOW CAN YOU FIND OUT IF YOU HAVE DUAL CITIZENSHIP?

If you want to know if you are a citizen of another country, or eligible to become one, you should contact officials of the country in question or that country's embassy or consulate in Canada. You will need to provide key information, such as your place and date of birth, your parents' citizenship, immigration details, and possibly further information about your parents, grandparents, and spouse.

A list of foreign government offices in Canada can be found at [www.international.gc.ca/protocol-protocole/index.aspx](http://www.international.gc.ca/protocol-protocole/index.aspx) or by contacting the Enquiries Service of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada at **1-800-267-8376** or **613-944-4000**.

*Born in South Korea, Paul was adopted as an infant by Canadian parents. Years later, when the family decided to revisit Paul's birth country, they were shocked to learn that he was still considered a Korean citizen and that he was subject to military service. Little did they know that Korea did not recognize dual citizenship or that Paul had to renounce his Korean citizenship by the age of 18 to be exempted from military duty.*

## WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES?

Many Canadians remain or become citizens of another country because of practical advantages, including:

- employment opportunities
- entitlement to social programs, such as education, health care, and pensions
- property ownership
- unrestricted residency
- a sense of belonging through personal ties to more than one country

### Your Canadian passport

Always use your Canadian passport if possible, especially when entering the country of your second citizenship. Note that you cannot use a Certificate of Canadian Citizenship instead of a Canadian passport to travel abroad. **A**

**Certificate of Canadian Citizenship is not a travel document.** A

Canadian passport is the only reliable and universally accepted travel and identification document available to Canadians for the purpose of international travel. Canadian citizens returning to Canada who present other documents, such as a Certificate of

Canadian Citizenship, birth certificate, provincial driver's licence or foreign passport, instead of a Canadian passport, may face delays or be denied boarding by transport companies.

Using your Canadian passport may provide the basis under which Canada can provide you with consular assistance if you run into problems. You should also obtain a visa, if that is required for entry by Canadian citizens, and always present yourself as a Canadian when dealing with local authorities.

## WHAT ARE THE DISADVANTAGES?

You should be aware of the possible drawbacks of dual, or multiple, citizenship:

- **Your Canadian citizenship may not be recognized** in the country of your other citizenship. That country's authorities will regard you as one of their citizens, especially if you travel under their passport. If you are in trouble and need assistance in the country of your other citizenship, the local officials in that country may not welcome "outside interference" and deny your right to consular assistance from Canada. There could also be problems in a third country if there is confusion about your citizenship.
- **You could be subject to a country's laws** that would not apply to a foreign traveller but that affect you as a citizen of that country.

*Morgane did not know that, because her marriage to Azad was registered with Iranian authorities, she was automatically deemed an Iranian citizen. To complicate matters, Azad had become a Canadian citizen after entering Canada as a refugee, and his dual nationality was not recognized in Iran. He had to enter and exit his native country using an Iranian passport. When the couple arrived in Iran for a visit, they were separated and their passports were seized. Azad was detained and interrogated, and the two were prohibited from leaving the country for a year.*

- **You may be legally required to register for military service** and to respond to call-up orders in the country of your other nationality. This obligation may be enforced even if you are just visiting that country and permanently reside in Canada. Some countries do not accept ignorance as an excuse for failure to comply. The consequences could be imprisonment or immediate induction into military service the next time you arrive in the country or attempt to leave. Even dual citizens who have passed the age for military service may be considered defaulters for failing to report at the required time.
- **You could have tax obligations** not only in Canada but also in the country of your second citizenship. Taxation arrangements between countries are complex, and you should discuss these obligations with your financial and/or legal advisers.
- **You might be subject to increased scrutiny by immigration and security officials** if you travel with more than one passport. You could be questioned about missing entry or exit stamps, as well as your reason for having two travel documents. In some countries, possession of a second passport could result in its confiscation or a fine. You may even be prevented from leaving the country.

*Lucia lived in Canada for more than 30 years before returning to Uruguay. As a dual citizen, it never occurred to her that she was liable to pay taxes in Uruguay for income earned in Canada and that she was considered a tax evader in the land of her birth.*



- **A marriage performed in Canada may not be considered legal in another country** (even though Canada acknowledges the legality of foreign marriages), and divorce and child custody documents issued by Canadian courts may not be recognized abroad.
- **You could be held liable for reimbursing educational costs**, especially if the country of your other nationality provided you with free education at the secondary or professional level or paid for your education in Canada or a third country.
- **The country of your second citizenship may prohibit** the transfer of an inheritance to you as a dual national.

## Implications of renouncing your Canadian citizenship

If you are a citizen of another country and are living outside Canada, you can renounce your Canadian citizenship by applying through any Canadian embassy or consulate abroad. The procedures can take many months to complete. If you renounce your Canadian citizenship, you will become a foreign national and cannot obtain a Canadian passport nor seek Canadian consular assistance. Moreover, you will not be able to return to Canada unless you go through immigration procedures and meet applicable entry requirements. For example, some foreign nationals may require a visa to enter Canada.

## HOW CAN YOU PREVENT PROBLEMS?

If you are a dual citizen, or are considering becoming one, you can minimize risks and complications for yourself and your family by learning about the consequences of having dual citizenship and taking these actions:

- **Know your citizenship status.** Obtain information from the appropriate authorities of any country where you may be a citizen. Also be sure to contact Citizenship and Immigration Canada or the nearest Canadian government office abroad. Canadian officials will be happy to provide you with information or tell you where it may be available.
- **Find out whether dual citizenship will create difficulties for you,** if the country of your other citizenship recognizes dual nationality, and whether you can keep your foreign citizenship, before applying for Canadian citizenship.

## Dual citizenship and parental child abductions

Many international child abductions involve parents and children with dual citizenship. If the abducting parent carries a second passport, Canadian authorities may encounter difficulties in preventing the abduction. The Government of Canada cannot prevent another country from providing passport services to Canadian parents or children who are also citizens of that country.

You or your lawyer can request that a foreign diplomatic or consular mission not provide passport services for your child. To do so, provide the mission with a written request, along with a certified copy of any court orders dealing with custody or foreign travel by your child. Inform the foreign mission that you have also sent a copy of your request to Consular Services of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada in Ottawa.

For more information, consult the publication *International Child Abductions: A Manual for Parents* at [www.travel.gc.ca](http://www.travel.gc.ca).

- **Consider formally renouncing your second citizenship**, if you are able to do so and if it will eliminate certain risks. Citizenship cannot be renounced simply by making a personal declaration. You need to apply to the appropriate authorities of the country concerned and obtain formal approval. The necessary procedures can be lengthy and complex. Contact the country's embassy or consulate in Canada for information.
- **Contact the appropriate officials of the country of your second nationality before visiting there** if you have any questions or concerns.

*A Canadian citizen of foreign origin travelled to his birth country on the documents of his other citizenship instead of his Canadian passport. He was arrested for problems associated with a business venture and jailed shortly after his arrival. Despite repeated requests for visitation rights by the Canadian government, access was denied for more than four years.*

A bilateral treaty between Canada and China establishes that China will recognize the Canadian citizenship of persons with Chinese ancestry if they enter China using a Canadian passport.

- **Find out if you have obligations**, such as taxes, military service, or repayment of educational costs, in any country where you are a citizen. Have the information confirmed in writing and carry the document while travelling.
- **Contact the nearest Canadian embassy or consulate immediately** if you run into problems related to dual citizenship. If you cannot make contact and require immediate assistance, call collect to the Emergency Operations Centre of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada in Ottawa at **613-996-8885** (where service is available). Or contact us by e-mail, at **sos@international.gc.ca**.

## WHERE CAN YOU GET MORE INFORMATION?

### Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada

#### Consular Services

[www.travel.gc.ca](http://www.travel.gc.ca)  
125 Sussex Drive  
Ottawa ON K1A 0G2

#### General

1-800-267-6788 (in Canada  
and the U.S.) or 613-944-6788  
TTY: 1-800-394-3472 (in Canada  
and the U.S.) or 613-944-1310  
[travel@international.gc.ca](mailto:travel@international.gc.ca)

#### Emergencies

613-996-8885 (call collect from  
abroad, where service is available)  
[sos@international.gc.ca](mailto:sos@international.gc.ca)

#### Publications (free)

Access our smart-travel publications  
at [www.travel.gc.ca/publication](http://www.travel.gc.ca/publication) or  
order by calling 1-800-267-8376  
(in Canada) or 613-944-4000.

#### Country Travel Reports (free)

Our Travel Reports provide vital  
information on safety and security,  
local laws and customs, health  
conditions, and entry requirements for  
approximately 200 travel destinations.  
This information is available on-line  
([www.travel.gc.ca](http://www.travel.gc.ca)) or by phone:  
1-800-267-6788 (in Canada and the  
U.S.) or 613-944-6788.

#### Diplomatic offices

Canadian government offices  
abroad: [www.travel.gc.ca/offices](http://www.travel.gc.ca/offices)

#### Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC)

[www.cic.gc.ca](http://www.cic.gc.ca)

#### CIC Call Centre

1-888-242-2100 (in Canada)  
TTY: 1-888-576-8502 (in Canada,  
from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Eastern Time)

#### Passport Canada

[www.passportcanada.gc.ca](http://www.passportcanada.gc.ca)

#### Passports, certificates of identity, and travel documents

1-800-567-6868 (in Canada and  
the U.S.); 819-997-8338 (outside  
the continental U.S.)  
TTY: 1-866-255-7655