



## eTA Expansion: Communications Issue Note for Countries

### NARRATIVE

Canada introduced the [Electronic Travel Authorization \(eTA\)](#) in 2015. It is a digital travel document that most [visa-exempt travellers](#) need to travel to or transit through Canada by air. The eTA application is used by Canadian officials to conduct light-touch, pre-travel screening of these air travellers. It costs CAN\$7 to apply, and most applications are approved automatically within minutes.

[Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada \(IRCC\) first expanded its eTA program in April 2017](#) to include eligible Brazilians, Bulgarians and Romanians. Canada lifted the visa requirement for all citizens of Bulgaria and Romania later that year. Today, eligible Brazilian nationals continue to enjoy visa-free air travel to Canada.

Following the successful expansion of Canada's eTA program to Brazil in 2017, foreign nationals from an additional 13 countries may become eligible to [apply for an eTA](#), instead of a visitor visa, to travel to or transit through Canada by air:

- Antigua and Barbuda
- Argentina
- Costa Rica
- Morocco
- Panama
- Philippines
- St. Kitts and Nevis
- St. Lucia
- St. Vincent and the Grenadines
- Seychelles
- Thailand
- Trinidad and Tobago
- Uruguay

These changes come into effect on June 6, 2023. To be eligible to apply, individuals from these countries must have either held a Canadian visitor visa in the past 10 years, or currently hold a valid United States (US) non-immigrant visa.

### KEY MESSAGES

- Canada is a destination of choice for people looking to visit, do business or reunite with family and friends. That is why we are committed to improving our immigration programs and services by making them more efficient and equitable for people around the world.
- Starting June 6, 2023, travellers from 13 additional countries who have either held a Canadian visa in the last 10 years, or who currently hold a valid US [non-immigrant visa](#), can now apply for an eTA instead of a visa when travelling to Canada by air. Those who are not eligible for an eTA, or who are travelling to Canada by means other than air (for example, by car, bus, train and boat—including by cruise ship), will still need a [visitor visa](#).

- Introducing visa-free air travel will make it faster, easier, and more affordable for thousands of travellers to visit Canada for up to 6 months for either business or leisure. It will also help grow Canada's economy by facilitating more travel, tourism and international business, and by strengthening Canada's relationships with these countries, while keeping Canadians safe.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

- The eTA is a pre-travel screening requirement that was designed and built for air travel and can't be used for other modes of transportation (for example, car, bus, train, boat). The nature of air travel is unique and air carriers are subject to specific reporting and technical requirements that don't exist for other modes. This includes determining whether a traveller has the right documents to enter Canada before they board the plane.
- This rule applies to all travellers to Canada, including [visa-exempt travellers](#). These individuals only require an eTA when travelling to Canada by air, and don't need one when entering Canada by other means.

### Information for visa-required travellers

- Today, nearly 100% of visitor visas issued by Canada are multiple-entry visas. This visa allows travellers to visit Canada multiple times, for up to 10 years, without having to reapply each time.
- We have also put in place visa facilitation programs in a number of countries, so tourists, business travellers and students get their visas within days of applying and often without requiring as much paperwork. Some of these programs include the [Student Direct Stream](#), the [Transit Without Visa Program](#) and the CAN+ program, which offers expedited processing for applicants who have held a Canadian visitor visa in the last 10 years or hold a valid US non-immigrant visa. IRCC also provides [visa support services for organizers](#) of international events taking place in Canada.
- Over the years, IRCC has built one of the most extensive networks of [visa application centres](#) (VACs) worldwide. Canada has 167 VACs in 112 countries, and in 2022, 95% of applicants who provided their biometrics had a VAC in their country of residence.
- To respond to the growing number of people who want to visit, work and study in Canada, IRCC is pursuing a number of solutions to improve client service and process visa applications more quickly. We are exploring new digital solutions, adding processing resources and further streamlining the visa application process.

## Client FAQs and general information

### Q1. How does an eTA work and how do I apply for one?

You can [find out about eTAs on our web page](#), and learn who is eligible and how to apply.

Applying is a simple, inexpensive (CAN\$7) online process that takes minutes to complete. All travellers need is a passport, a debit or credit card, an email address and access to the Internet. Travellers should make sure to only use the official Government of Canada website, [Canada.ca/eTA](#), to apply for their eTA.

### Q2. How do I know if I am eligible to apply for an eTA under the new rules?

You may be eligible to apply for an eTA if you are a citizen from one of the 14 eligible countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Morocco, Panama, Philippines, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Seychelles, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, and Uruguay. You must also meet the following three conditions:

- You are travelling to Canada **by air** (flying to or transiting through a Canadian airport) while using a valid passport from a country listed above.
- At the time of application, you have held a Canadian temporary resident visa (TRV) within the last 10 years, or you hold a valid US [non-immigrant visa](#) (you will be asked for proof of this requirement).
- You are coming for a short visit, business trip or tourist activity (normally for stays of up to 6 months).

If you are not eligible for an eTA, or you are travelling to Canada by means other than air (for example, by car, bus, train and boat—including by cruise ship) you will still need a [visitor visa](#).

Visit [Canada.ca/etA](#) to find out if you're eligible for an eTA and learn how to apply for one.

If you are eligible, you have the option to apply for an eTA while your visa application is still in progress. You are allowed to have both documents and are not required to withdraw one application to apply for the other.

### Q3. If I choose to withdraw my visa application and instead apply for an eTA, will I get a refund for my visa application?

Because you can use a visitor visa for all modes of transportation when entering Canada (you can only use an eTA for air travel), **we don't recommend that you withdraw your visa application**, so you have more flexibility when you travel.

Refunds are not guaranteed. If IRCC has not begun processing a visa application, and you choose to withdraw it, you are eligible for a refund. You will **not** get a refund if IRCC has already started processing your visa application. For more information on refunds, please visit our [website](#).

**Q4. Can I apply for an eTA if I already have a visa?**

You should continue to use your visa for travel to Canada, as long as it is valid. A visa will give you more flexibility, as you can enter Canada via all modes of transportation (air, car, bus, train, boat), as opposed to an eTA, which you can only use for air travel.

If you already have a valid visa, it is possible to apply and be approved for an eTA. However, it is not necessary for you to apply for an eTA until your visa expires.

**Q5. I am from one of the 14 visa-required countries, and I am eligible to apply for an eTA under the new rules. Should I apply for an eTA or a visa? Which is better?**

You need to choose which is best for your situation:

How you are travelling to Canada	What travel document you will need
You are flying to or transiting through a Canadian airport, and you are eligible to apply for an eTA.	You can apply for either an eTA or a visa.
You are flying to or transiting through a Canadian airport, but you are not eligible for an eTA.	You will need a visa.
You are flying to Canada with your family, and you are eligible to apply for an eTA but your family members are not.	You can apply for an eTA or a visa. Your family members will need a visa.
You are driving to Canada from the US, or arriving by bus, train or boat, including a cruise ship stopover (even if you don't plan to leave the ship).	You will need a visa.
You are departing from and returning to Canada on a boat, including a cruise ship, that travels outside Canada.	You will need a visa.
You are travelling between Canada and the US via any combination of plane, train, car, bus or boat travel.	Your best option is to apply for a visa—it will give you the most flexibility.
You already have a valid Canadian visa, and you are planning to fly to Canada.	You can travel with that visa until it expires.

How you are travelling to Canada	What travel document you will need
You are flying to Canada to work or study for more than 6 months.	You will need to apply for a work or study permit. When your permit is approved, you will be given a temporary resident visa, which will allow you to board your flight to Canada.
You are flying back to Canada to work or study after renewing your work or study permit.	You can continue to use your visa if it's still valid. If your visa expired, you will be given an eTA when you renew your permit. You must apply for a new visa if you travel to Canada by means other than air (car, bus, train or boat).

You can also find out if you need a visa or eTA by using our [online tool](#).

**Q6. I am flying in and out of Canada, but I am planning to go on a cruise / may take a trip to the United States. Should I apply for an eTA or a visa? Can I enter Canada by land or sea using an eTA?**

If you are travelling between Canada and the US via any combination of plane, train, car, bus or boat, **your best option is to apply for a visa**, as it gives you the most flexibility. You need a visa to travel to Canada by car, bus, train or boat—including by cruise ship.

You can find out if you need a visa or an eTA by using our [online tool](#).

**Q7. I chose to apply for an eTA because of the quicker processing, but I'm still waiting for it to be approved. What is going on?**

Most people who apply for an eTA are approved within minutes. However, some applications need more time to be processed. For example, some applicants need to submit official documents that must be obtained from the appropriate authorities in their country.

To avoid travel delays, you should always get your eTA **before** booking your flight to Canada.

**Q8. I have a passport from one of the 14 countries, and I am planning to work or study in Canada. Can I apply for an eTA?**

If you are working or studying in Canada for more than 6 months, you need a work or study permit. A temporary resident visa (TRV) will be issued to you once your permit is approved. You **don't** need an eTA if you already have a TRV.

If your previous TRV expired, and you are renewing your work or study permit, you will be issued an eTA. However, you must apply for a new visa if you plan travel to Canada by means other than air (for example, by car, bus, train and boat—including by cruise ship).

You can find out if you need a visa or an eTA by using our [online tool](#).

**Q9. What happens if I am travelling with my family, and some of us are eligible for an eTA while others are not?**

While a parent may be eligible for an eTA, other family members may still need a visa. Family members can use either document to travel to Canada, provided they have the appropriate and valid travel documents with them and meet all other [entry requirements](#).

To make sure that travelling to Canada is easy and stress free, plan ahead and get the right travel documents for all members of your family before booking a flight to Canada.

**Q10. What do I need to board my flight to Canada?**

When you fly to Canada, you must travel with the same passport that you used to apply for your eTA. If you get a new passport, you need to apply for a new eTA.

**Note:** You should also travel with your old passport **in addition to your new one** if it contains your expired Canadian visitor visa, or a valid US non-immigrant visa.

**Q11. Are holders of diplomatic passports eligible for an eTA under the new rules?**

Yes. The same rules apply. If a person holding a diplomatic passport from one of these [14 countries](#) has been issued a Canadian visa in the last 10 years, or has a valid US non-immigrant visa at the time of application, they are eligible to apply for an eTA on either their diplomatic or personal passport.

**Q12. Do Thai and Filipino citizens who are eligible for the Transit Without Visa Program now also have to apply for an eTA?**

No. Thai and Filipino citizens can continue to transit to or from the US under the [Transit Without Visa Program](#) without an eTA. They now also have the option to apply for an

eTA, which allows them to stay in Canada for up to 6 months and is valid for up to 5 years.