

# Giving Biometrics During COVID-19

*This fact sheet explains the law in general. It is not intended as legal advice for your particular problem. Because each person's situation is different, you may need to seek legal advice. The information in this fact sheet was reviewed by a lawyer, and was last updated on 4 May 2021.*

Canada has joined many other countries in the world in collecting biometrics from visa applicants. As a migrant worker, you may be required to provide biometrics information as part of your work permit or work permit extension application. This factsheet explains what biometrics are, when biometrics are required as part of an application, and temporary COVID-19 exemptions for certain groups of applicants.

## What are biometrics?

Biometrics are measurements of unique biological characteristics. The most common examples would be fingerprints and facial features. Once collected, biometrics information can be used to confirm the identity of an individual upon their entry into Canada. Previously provided biometrics are generally valid for 10 years..

## Who collects biometrics?

Biometrics are provided along with an application submitted to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). If biometrics are required as part of an application, the applicant will be asked to submit their fingerprints and photo.

## Who needs to give biometrics in their applications?

As a general rule, IRCC requires biometrics as part of an application that falls within the following types:

- a visitor visa
- a work or study permit (excluding US nationals)
- permanent residence
- refugee or asylum status
- an extension of your stay in Canada, known as a visitor record
- a work or study permit extension

Therefore, an applicant for a work permit or a work permit extension is normally required to provide biometrics.

It is worth noting that there are exceptions to this general rule. Among others, children under the age of 14 and applicants over the age of 79 (who are not asylum seekers) are not required to provide biometrics as part of their applications.

## I have provided biometrics in my previous applications. Do I need to provide them again in my work permit or work permit extension application?

You may not need to provide biometrics again if you have already provided them in the past. If you are applying for a work permit or a work permit extension, you do NOT need to provide biometrics as part of your application if **either** of the following applies to you:

- You have already provided biometrics as part of a **permanent resident application** that is **still in progress; or**
- You have provided biometrics as part of a **previous application for a visitor visa, study or work permit, and** your biometrics are **still valid.**

[Tip: you can find out if your biometrics are still valid at <https://onlineservices-servicesenligne.cic.gc.ca/extapp/termsAndConditions?&lang=en>]

### Do I still need to give biometrics as part of my work permit or work permit extension application during COVID-19?

It depends on where you are submitting your application. If you are applying for a work permit or a work permit extension from **within** Canada, you do not need to provide biometrics as part of your application. This is because IRCC has exempted anyone in Canada applying for temporary residence from giving biometrics, as a temporary measure under COVID-19. The temporary measure was issued on 15 July 2020 and is valid until further notice at the time when this fact sheet was updated. For latest information and updates on biometrics, visit [Canada.ca/biometrics](https://Canada.ca/biometrics).

However, if you are applying from outside Canada for a work permit or a work permit extension, you may still need to give biometrics as part of your application (unless you have provided biometrics in your previous applications and your biometrics are still valid).

This IRCC webpage allows you to find out if you need to give biometrics by answering a few questions based on your situation: <https://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/biometrics.asp>.

### I need to give biometrics as part of my permanent residence application, how can I do that during COVID-19?

Within Canada, Service Canada Centers are now resuming biometrics collection for PR applicants that need to give biometrics. If biometrics are needed as part of your application, you can now book an appointment online. It is advised that you should not go to a Service Canada Centre unless you have a scheduled appointment. You must wear a non-medical face mask at all times during your appointment. You will provide your fingerprints, but your photo will not be taken, and you will not be asked to provide a photo for your current application. You are required to pay the biometrics fee at the time you submit your application. To book an appointment, visit: [https://apps.canada.ca/login?redirect=/reservation?utm\\_campaign=not-applicable&utm\\_medium=vanity-url&utm\\_source=canada-ca\\_service-canada-appointment](https://apps.canada.ca/login?redirect=/reservation?utm_campaign=not-applicable&utm_medium=vanity-url&utm_source=canada-ca_service-canada-appointment).

If you are outside Canada, you can give your biometrics at a Visa Application Center (VAC), or an Application Support Center (ASC) if you are in the U.S. Normally, biometrics must be submitted no later than 30 days after receiving a final biometric instruction letter (BIL) asking you to give your biometrics. You may be granted an extension if you can demonstrate COVID-19 prevented you from meeting the deadline and you submit your explanation as instructed by the BIL. If you applied on or after 12 April, 2021 and your VAC or ASC is open but you cannot give your biometrics due to COVID-19, you should submit your explanation through this web form: <https://www.cic.gc.ca/english/contacts/web-form.asp>

For more information on biometrics collection service, visit [Canada.ca/biometrics](https://Canada.ca/biometrics).