

TEMPORARY FOREIGN WORKERS

Foreign workers are eligible to enter Canada for non-discretionary purposes only. In the film industry, a foreign worker is coming to Canada for an economic service, which is deemed “essential”. The process to enter Canada will differ depending on whether the worker is entering from the United States or outside the United States.

Work permits and LMIA/C-14 exemption documents are reviewed and approved on a case-by-case basis by IRCC, Service Canada, and CBSA where applicable. Applicants must meet eligibility and admissibility criteria to enter Canada.

FILM/TV WORKERS ENTERING FROM THE US:

Workers who are seeking entry to Canada from the U.S. must meet one of the following conditions:

- Their place of habitual residence is in Canada and they hold a valid work permit; or
- They are coming to Canada for the first time to begin their employment and are in possession of a valid work permit or Port of Entry (POE) Letter of Introduction, and have proof of employment at a Canadian business which is operating (i.e. film production)

To apply for a work permit, a foreign worker needs either:

- An LMIA ([Temporary Foreign Worker Program](#)), or
- A C14-exempt offer of employment ([International Mobility Program](#))

A LABOUR MARKET IMPACT ASSESSMENT (LMIA)

All foreign **non-union** cast and crew (producers are exempt) must obtain a positive LMIA before entering Canada to work on a Motion Picture project.

- **Estimated timeline*: 3 business days**
- **Estimated cost*: \$1,155 per person**
- Employers must [apply](#) for the LMIA through Service Canada and pay the processing fee (\$1,000 per worker).
- Once the employer receives a positive LMIA, the worker can apply and pay for their work permit (\$155) either [online](#) or directly at the Port of Entry if they meet [all conditions](#).

If you need more clarification, contact [Bill Gibson](#) at Service Canada.

A C14-EXEMPT OFFER OF EMPLOYMENT

Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) handles the exemption application for **high level union positions** through their International Mobility Program (IMP). The IMP lets employers hire a temporary worker **without** an LMIA.

- **Estimated timeline*: 1 business day**
- **Estimated cost*: \$385 per person**
- Confirm if the union position is eligible for an LMIA exemption under [exemption code C14](#). If there is uncertainty, connect with the [International Mobility Worker Unit](#). Workers must have both:
 - a letter of support from the production, and
 - a letter of concurrence from the relevant union or guild
- Employers must submit an offer of employment through the [Employer Portal](#) and pay the required employer compliance fee (\$230).
- Once the employer receives an Offer of Employment number (“A-number”), the worker can apply and pay for their work permit (\$155) either [online](#) or directly at the Port of Entry if they meet [all conditions](#).

*Please note these are estimates only based on requirements at the time of writing. Total processing time excludes the collection of any required documents prior to submitting. Total fees due are ultimately dependent on the specifics of the application and current requirements from IRCC, Service Canada, and CBSA.

COMMERCIAL WORKERS ENTERING FROM THE US:

IRCC categorizes workers entering Canada from the US to engage in international business activities *without directly entering the Canadian labour market* as [work permit exempt business visitors](#) under the International Mobility Program.

- **Estimated timeline*: Same day**
- **Estimated cost*: No anticipated fees**
- The following foreign nationals may be considered under the business visitor category:
 - Film producers employed by foreign companies for commercial shoots; or
 - Essential personnel entering Canada **for short durations** (typically no longer than 2 weeks) for a foreign-financed commercial shoot
- If workers meet the following criteria, they do not require a work permit per [Regulation 186a](#):
 - Legally present in the US, regardless of nationality;
 - A US citizen or Green Card holder; and
- The Canadian commercial production house must provide the worker with a Business Invite Letter stating the job/purpose of the foreign worker and that the individual is work permit exempt.
- Prior to the worker travelling to the border, the Canadian commercial production house should communicate the worker's name and point of entry to CBSA.
- If the worker is from a country that [Canada requires a visa](#) for entry, they must apply for it in the US.

FILM/TV/COMMERCIAL WORKERS ENTERING FROM OUTSIDE THE US:

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, workers in the film and television industry entering Canada from outside the US must have a **Port of Entry (POE) Letter of Introduction** before attempting to board a flight to Canada. Workers applying online **from abroad** are now eligible for **priority processing** (14-day service) if they self-identify as part of the film and television industry.

- **Estimated timeline*: 3-4 weeks (inc. LMIA or C-14 exemption processing)**
- **Estimated cost*: \$240 per person + LMIA or C-14 exemption fees**
- Please note [general entry requirements by country](#) and IRCC's guide for [applying outside of Canada](#)
- Prior to submitting the IRCC work permit application, workers are required to:
 - Provide a positive LMIA, or
 - Provide a C-14 Offer of Employment number ("A-number")
- [Apply online](#) for a work permit through IRCC and pay for the work permit (\$155) and biometrics (\$85).
- Schedule a visit to a [Visa Application Centre](#) (VAC) to physically provide biometrics. Bring the Biometrics Instruction Letter (BIL) received after submitting the work permit application online.
- After submitting the work permit application, request priority processing for film and TV workers using IRCC's [web form](#). Copy and paste the message below into the "Your enquiry" field:

"FILMTV2020: Requesting priority processing for Film & TV Industry workers due to COVID-19"

- Once the application is processed, the worker will receive a Port of Entry (POE) Letter of Introduction. The worker must present the POE at the airport to board a flight to Canada. The worker will be issued a work permit upon arrival in Canada.

Where possible, IRCC will make a decision on the application within **3 weeks** (5 days to identify the application for priority processing and 14 days to process it). Requests that do not include the code **FILMTV2020** may take longer to identify.

ARRIVING IN CANADA:

Although workers can enter Canada by land or air, YVR is the recommended Port of Entry. Workers must comply with all current COVID-19 travel restrictions and testing and quarantine requirements. All workers entering Canada must:

- Be asymptomatic;
- Provide mandatory travel information through [ArriveCAN](#);
- Submit a [BC self-isolation plan](#); and
- Additional testing and quarantine requirements when [entering by air](#); or
- Additional testing and quarantine requirements when [entering by land](#)

Requirements and resources are current at the time of writing; however, they are subject to change at any time. Stay apprised of all [travel restrictions and requirements](#) when planning non-discretionary travel to Canada.

Additional resources:

[Government of Canada – Travel restrictions in Canada](#)

[British Columbia – Travel and COVID-19](#)

[Flying to Canada checklist](#)

[Driving to Canada checklist](#)

[Creative BC – Cross Border Services](#)

[Creative BC – COVID-19 Motion Picture Resources and Updates](#)

[IRCC Employer’s Roadmap to hiring and retaining internationally trained workers](#)