

Police certificates for Canada immigration

Who needs one, validity rules, how to get one in 16 countries and what to do if it's late.
Checked against canada.ca.

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Interactive version: nclcfrench.com/police-certificates-canada-immigration

QUICK ANSWER

For Canada PR through Express Entry, you and each family member aged 18 or older need a police certificate from every country where you stayed 6 months in a row or longer in the last 10 years, except Canada and time before age 18. The one from your current country must be issued no more than 6 months before you submit your application.

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Who needs a police certificate for Canada PR

IRCC's online system asks for a police certificate for you and every family member aged 18 or older, for every country where you or they stayed 6 months in a row or longer during the last 10 years. You don't need one for time spent in Canada or for any period before age 18.

You upload them with your permanent residence application, after the invitation to apply. Your partner's and adult children's certificates belong in the same application, so plan for the whole family. The full list of other documents is in the [Express Entry document checklist](#).

- Count each country separately: a 7-month work contract in the United Arab Emirates counts, two separate 4-month stays don't.
- Your country of citizenship only counts if you stayed there 6 months in a row since age 18 in the last 10 years.
- Upload scanned colour copies of the originals. IRCC doesn't accept certified true copies.

How recent must a police certificate be?

Country	IRCC's rule
The country where you live now	Issued no more than 6 months before you submit your application
Any other country	Issued after the last time you stayed there 6 months in a row or longer
Expired certificate from a past country	Still accepted if it was issued after your stay ended and it isn't your current country

Ask for the current-country certificate soon after the ITA. One obtained long before the ITA may be too old by the time you submit.

How to get a police certificate: India, Philippines, Nigeria and more

What IRCC's country pages say for the most common countries. Each country's page on canada.ca has the full instructions and contact details.

Country	Certificate IRCC wants	Where to apply
India	Police Clearance Certificate (character certificates are not accepted)	Passport office (Passport Seva) or local district police in India; Indian embassy, consulate or BLS centre abroad
Philippines	NBI Multi-purpose Clearance Certificate	Online or at an NBI office; abroad, through a Philippine embassy or consulate, or by mail
Nigeria	Police Character Certificate	Central Criminal Registry, Force C.I.D. Annex, Alagbon Close, Ikoyi, Lagos, in person or by mail with certified fingerprints
Pakistan	Police Character Certificate or Police Clearance Certificate	Your provincial police in Pakistan; abroad, the nearest Pakistani embassy or consulate
China	Certificate of No Criminal Record	Public Security Bureau or police station of your hukou area; abroad, by mail, online or through a representative with power of attorney
United Arab Emirates	Police Clearance Certificate from one emirate	Police of the emirate (Dubai Police also online); abroad, the nearest UAE embassy
Morocco	Fiche anthropométrique (citizens) or Bulletin no 3 (foreign nationals)	Local police station, Moroccan embassy or consulate, or the Service central des casiers judiciaires in Rabat

Algeria	Bulletin no 3	Ministère de la Justice (online at mjustice.dz) or your local police station
Cameroon	Police Clearance Certificate (a Bulletin no 3 alone is not enough)	Get a Bulletin no 3 first, then apply to the Judicial Police in Yaoundé; abroad, through a representative or the Cameroon embassy
France	Bulletin no 3	Online from the Casier judiciaire national
United States	FBI Identity History Summary	Online from the FBI's CJIS Division
United Kingdom	Police Certificate	ACRO Criminal Records Office, online
Brazil	Certidão de Antecedentes Criminais (federal; state certificates are no longer accepted)	Brazilian Federal Police: online if you have Brazilian ID (CIE and CPF), otherwise in person at a Federal Police office
Mexico	Constancia de datos registrales	Fiscalía General de la República (FGR), with a supporting letter from IRCC, or through a visa application centre
Iran	Certificate of no criminal record	Police+10 centre or the Sana system in Iran; abroad, the nearest Iranian embassy
Bangladesh	Police Clearance Certificate	Online from the Bangladesh Police (pcc.police.gov.bd)

If the certificate isn't in English or French, upload it with a translation by a certified translator. Fingerprints you give for a police certificate are not the same as IRCC biometrics.

When to request police certificates after the ITA

The invitation to apply gives you 60 days, and IRCC advises requesting certificates early because they take time.

1

DAY 1

List every country

For you and each family member aged 18+, write down every stay of 6 months in a row or more in the last 10 years.

2

DAYS 1–3

Open each country's page on canada.ca

Check the exact certificate name, where to apply and whether you need fingerprints, photos or a request letter from IRCC.

3

WEEK 1

Apply and keep every receipt

Save payment receipts, application numbers, emails and courier tracking numbers. They are your proof if the certificate is late.

4

ON ARRIVAL**Translate if needed**

Book a certified translator for certificates not in English or French as soon as they arrive.

5

BEFORE DAY 60**Upload or explain**

Upload the scanned colour certificate. If one hasn't arrived, upload a letter of explanation with your proof of request instead.

Police certificate checklist

For each country on your list

- ☐ **Exact certificate name from IRCC's country page**
A local or character certificate is not accepted where IRCC asks for a national one (India, Brazil).
- ☐ **Valid passport and ID copies**
Many countries also ask for proof of your address and dates of residence.
- ☐ **Passport photos** If required
Some countries ask for several, with their own size rules.
- ☐ **Fingerprints** If required
Taken by a police service. Not the same as IRCC biometrics.
- ☐ **Request letter from IRCC** If required
Some countries won't issue a certificate without one. Upload a note saying so in the police certificate slot.
- ☐ **Authorization for a relative or representative** If applying abroad
Some countries let someone apply for you with a power of attorney or authority letter (China, Morocco, Cameroon, Pakistan).
- ☐ **Fee paid and receipt saved**
The receipt is your proof of request if the certificate is late.
- ☐ **Certified translation** If not EN/FR
Upload the certificate and the translation together.
- ☐ **Issue date checked**
Current country: issued within 6 months before you submit. Others: after your last 6-month stay.

Family members

- ☐ **Spouse or common-law partner (18+)** Spouse
Same rule: every country of 6+ months in a row in the last 10 years.

☐ **Dependent children aged 18 or older** Child 18+

Each adult child needs their own certificates.

Police certificate delayed? Don't let the ITA expire

If a certificate won't arrive before your 60-day deadline, IRCC accepts a letter of explanation plus proof you made your best effort, such as a confirmation receipt, a payment receipt, a delivery notice or a tracking number. Combine them into one file and upload it in the certificate slot. Use our **letter of explanation template**, then follow your **ITA checklist** for the rest.

Common police certificate mistakes

DO

- Request certificates in the first week after the ITA, starting with the slowest country.
- Use the exact certificate named on IRCC's country page.
- Check the issue date of the certificate from the country where you live now.
- Include your spouse and any children aged 18 or older.
- Keep every receipt and tracking number until you have your decision.

DON'T

- Don't upload an Indian character certificate or a Brazilian state certificate.
- Don't upload a certified true copy: IRCC wants a scan of the original, in colour.
- Don't forget countries where you worked or studied for 6 months in a row.
- Don't leave the upload slot empty if a certificate is late.
- Don't confuse police fingerprints with the biometrics IRCC asks for.

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