

Final Canadian Citizenship Act Reforms Effective as of June 11, 2015

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Background

As I [previously reported](#), on February 6, 2014, Citizenship and Immigration Minister (the “Minister”) Chris Alexander first unveiled Bill C-24, the [Strengthening Canadian Citizenship Act](#), which proposed significant amendments to the *Canadian Citizenship Act* (R.S.C., 1985, c. C-29). I also [previously reported](#) that, on June 19, 2014, Bill C-24 received Royal Assent and became law.

Some of the amendments described in Bill C-24 [came into force](#) last year. On June 5, 2015, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (“CIC”) [announced](#) that the remaining amendments would become effective on June 11, 2015.

A summary of the most significant changes, which came into force on June 11, 2015, appears below:

- Adult applicants must now be *physically present* in Canada for at least 1,460 days (four years) during the six years preceding the date of their application, and they must be also be physically present in Canada for at least 183 days in each of the four calendar years during the qualifying period.
- Adult applicants must now meet any applicable requirement under the [Income Tax Act](#) [R.S.C., 1985, c. 1 (5th Supp.)] to file an income tax return for each of the four taxation years during which they claim to have been resident in Canada.

- Applicants between the ages of 14-64 (changed from 18-54) must demonstrate, in one of Canada's official languages, knowledge of Canada and of the responsibilities and privileges of citizenship.
- Citizenship was automatically extended to additional "lost Canadians" who were born before 1947 and who did not become citizens on January 1, 1947, when the first *Canadian Citizenship Act* came into effect.
- Adult applicants must now declare their intent to reside in Canada once they become citizens and meet their personal income tax obligations in order to be eligible for citizenship.
- There are stronger penalties for fraud and misrepresentation (to a maximum fine of \$100,000 and/or up to five years in prison).
- The Immigration Consultants of Canada Regulatory Council ("ICCRC") is now designated as the new regulatory body for citizenship consultants. As a result, only lawyers, notaries (including paralegals and students at law), and now ICCRC member may be paid to provide representation or advice in Canadian citizenship matters.

New citizenship application forms also became available on the CIC website on June 11, 2015. Any citizenship application received using the prior forms after June 10, 2015, will be returned to the applicant.