

Figure 7 **TURNAROUND TIME FOR APPLICATIONS**
(In Percentages)

		1995/96	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99
Submitted by mail	Turnaround Target: 10 days	63%	88%	97%	97%
Submitted in person	Turnaround Target: 5 days	96.6%	97%	97%	98%

HOW DO CLIENTS GET THEIR PASSPORTS?

Most applicants prefer to apply for passport in person across the country. About one in every five persons do so by mailing in their application.

increase was so high. The Central Region dealt with a significant rise in the number of mail-in applications this year, particularly at the beginning of the winter season. In a survey, more than half of the respondents indicated that they needed their passports for winter holidays and other leisure travel.)

Our Telephone Call Centres

Our toll-free call centres are located in Toronto, Montreal, Surrey and Hull. They receive over 1.3 million calls a year. These calls are handled either by an interactive voice reply system available twenty four hours per day and seven days per week or by our call centre staff during normal business hours and working days. Our staff handle questions on the status of passport applications, requirements of applying for a passport or travel document, prices, urgent applications, and replacing lost or stolen documents. In 1998-99, our call centre staff responded to over 1.2 million calls—an accessibility rate of 93 percent. The industry standard is 70 percent. (see FIGURE 4: Call Centres Access Rate.) The automated service handles mainly routine requests such as office locations and hours of operation.

Processing time

The speed with which an applicant receives a passport depends, in part, on how he or she applies. If an applicant sent a passport application form in by mail, the Passport Office usually processes the application within ten business days after receiving it. If the applicant submitted an application form in person to anyone of its offices, the Passport Office processes it within five business days.

The Passport Office has continuously drawn closer to meeting its self-imposed delivery standards for in-person and mail-in applications over the past few years (see FIGURE 7: Turnaround Time for Applications).

It is rare for the Passport Office to take longer than five or ten business days to process an application. Delay is a direct result of either the fact that an applicant has not furnished all the requirements or because of security reasons. In the latter case, some applications must be examined in greater detail. Integrity and security are always our highest priority. Even in these cases, however, it rarely takes longer than seven business days to process an in-person application and seventeen business days for a mail-in.