

BUSINESS TRAVEL TO MEXICO

Doing business in Mexico requires a demonstrated commitment to the market, characterized by frequent visits and a personal presence. The following are some general tips on travelling to Mexico.

1 Travel and hotel reservations. Direct scheduled non-stop flights to Mexico City run from Toronto and Vancouver. Although most taxi fares from the airport are not expensive — and are not metered — the rates in the tourist taxis available at hotels may run somewhat higher. Hotels should be booked well in advance, particularly during the height of the tourist season, from November to April.

2 Entry regulations. Canadian business people intending only to survey the market and establish contacts require a tourist card, issued free and valid for six months. These can be obtained from travel agents upon issuance of airline tickets, or from Mexican diplomatic posts in Canada. However, if Canadians intend to engage in business transactions such as concluding contracts or implementing the terms of an agreement, a business visa is required. The type of visa required falls under one of the following categories:

A If the person travelling to Mexico is being remunerated in Canada and is travelling to Mexico to engage in business negotiations or provide technical assistance, the following are required:

- ▶ a passport valid for at least six months after the start of the trip;
- ▶ two passport-size photographs;
- ▶ a completed visa application;
- ▶ a letter from the Canadian company requesting the visa, which states the nature of the business, the name of the company the person will be visiting in Mexico, the length of stay, and which specifies that the person will be remunerated in Canada; and
- ▶ a fee.

B If the person travelling is going to be remunerated by a Mexican company, the following are necessary:

- ▶ the Mexican Immigration Office (Secretaría de Gobernación) must issue a special authorization;
- ▶ the Mexican employer must ask for this authorization and direct that it be sent to the Mexican consulate or embassy nearest the prospective traveller (this procedure can take 15 to 45 days);
- ▶ once the authorization arrives at the embassy or consulate, the Canadian business person must fill in an application, present two photographs and a valid passport, and pay the fee.

The document can be ready in 24 hours from the time the application is submitted in Canada. Visas are usually issued for a one-year period, and are valid for multiple entries into the country.

Business visas can be obtained from the Embassy of Mexico in Ottawa, or from Mexican consulates in major Canadian cities.