

should be advised and provided with a travel itinerary which will then be passed along to the consular officer at the responsible mission. The mission can then follow-up by making the necessary arrangements for the prison visit. It must be stressed that prior arrangements are very important as foreign prisons have widely varying visiting procedures; you might otherwise have to spend hours, if not days, making the necessary arrangements. Moreover, language is often a problem and arrangements may have to be made for an interpreter to attend the visit.

Transfer of Offenders Treaties

One of the most effective instruments for assisting Canadians imprisoned abroad is transfer to a Canadian prison. While the possibility of transfer does little to resolve the problems of prisoners while abroad, it can provide a longer-term solution by permitting Canadians to serve a portion of their sentences in Canadian penal institutions, where they will be closer to their friends and family, and where they can more easily prepare for their return to normal life in Canada. Once transferred, the prisoners become subject to Canadian parole regulations and may therefore, in some cases, qualify for earlier release than would have been the case had they not elected to transfer.

In jurisdictions where transfer treaties apply, the transfer mechanism itself is not unduly complicated, although it cannot be set in motion until the judicial process has been concluded and no appeals remain outstanding. The transfer request must be initiated by the detainee who, supplied with the requisite documentation by the consular officer, submits two sets of completed documents (one set each to his home and host country governments). These are then considered and, if all parties agree, the transfer proceeds, although the detainee has the option of withdrawing his/her application at any time before transfer arrangements have been made. There is no specified cut-off date for the submission of an application for transfer.