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GETTING YOUR PAPERS IN ORDER

Temporary Entry for Business People

Canadians are in the fortunate position of being able to travel to the United States or Mexico on vacation without visas — a valid passport is not even mandatory. We can enter the United States with the most minimal documentation, and Mexico merely requires identification and completion of a tourist card provided on planes, or at the border when driving in.

However, business people vacationing in Mexico who may happen to luck into a business transaction should be wary before they buy, sell or sign anything. Despite the easing of rules governing business travel under the NAFTA, there is a chance that deals struck in Mexico can be voided if entry was not made for business purposes.

Officials caution the business traveller to contact the consulates of Mexico and the U.S. before entering either country.

In the case of Mexico, all in-bound travellers fill out a Forma Migratoria (FM), the immigration form. This is what most people refer to as the "tourist card", but for most business people — those whose temporary stays will be no more than a year — the FM3 document is required. This is available from one of Mexico's consulates across Canada: in Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal, Quebec City or at the Embassy in Ottawa. For those who live too far

from any of these cities to apply in person, the Mexican government will accept applications by mail.

The documentation needed for an FM3 includes:

- an application;
- two pictures of the individual;
- a valid Canadian passport;
- a letter from an employer specifying what the person's activities will be while in Mexico, and by whom he/she will be paid; and
- payment of a permit fee.

Those who apply by mail are cautioned that the entire passport, not merely photocopied pages, must be

submitted. Applicants are strongly advised to use a secure method, such as bonded courier, to send passports.

The fee for the FM3 is currently U.S.\$73 (C\$99). The fee will be stated to the applicant in Canadian dollars, but is adjusted at the beginning of each month based on current exchange rates.

It is important to note that contracts or other legal documents signed in Mexico by persons without the correct entry papers may not be

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The Exporter's Best Friend

The deal has been struck, and you are ready to begin sending your product to your selected distributor, agent or customer in Mexico. The next step is to determine what requirements exist to transport the window-frames, chair-backs, frozen fish products or car parts from Montreal to Monterrey, Calgary to Cancun, A to B.

This is the point at which you will almost certainly wish to engage the services of a **freight forwarder**. These transportation intermediaries can help small- and medium-sized companies as well as infrequent shippers to move

goods to market on time, undamaged, and at the lowest price.

Freight forwarders can act as principals or as agents. As agents only, the intermediary's responsibility ends once the shipment has been handed over to a licensed carrier, who then becomes liable for its carriage and delivery.

As principal, the freight forwarder can virtually take care of a shipment from the door of the exporter to that of the consignee.

This entails advising the customer on all questions regarding

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