

Dual Citizenship & Child Abduction

Many International child abductions involve parents and children who have dual citizenship. If the abducting parent carries a second passport, Canadian authorities may encounter difficulties in preventing the abduction. The Government of Canada cannot prevent another country from providing passport services to Canadian parents or children who are also citizens of that country.

You or your lawyer can request that a foreign diplomatic or consular mission not provide passport services for your child. To do so, provide the mission with a written request, along with a certified copy of any court orders dealing with custody or foreign travel by your child. Inform the foreign diplomatic or consular mission that you have also sent a copy of your request to the Consular Affairs Bureau of Foreign Affairs Canada in Ottawa.

For more information, consult the publication *International Child Abductions: A Manual for Parents* at www.voyage.gc.ca.

Marriage, divorce and child custody: Canada recognizes the legality of marriages performed in other countries. However, marriages performed in Canada may not always be considered legal in other countries. Similarly, divorce and child custody documents issued by Canadian courts may not be recognized.

Education: If the country of your second citizenship provided

you with free education, especially at the secondary or professional level, you may be held liable for reimbursing the costs. This is particularly the case if you obtained the education outside the country of your second citizenship.

Inheritances: Some countries may not permit the transfer of inheritances to nationals with a second citizenship.

Preparation and knowledge are the keys to avoiding problems associated with dual citizenship. If you have any questions or concerns, contact the country of your second citizenship before you travel. Formally establish whether you are subject to any outstanding obligations such as military service, taxation or education repayment. This information should be *confirmed in writing*. Carry this document with you when you travel — some dual citizens have received inaccurate or incomplete information from officials representing the country of their second citizenship.

A bilateral treaty between Canada and China establishes that China will recognize the Canadian citizenship of persons with Chinese ancestry if they enter China using a Canadian passport.

A Canadian citizen of Chinese origin travelled to China on his Chinese documents instead of his Canadian passport. He was arrested for problems associated with a business venture and jailed shortly after his arrival. Despite repeated requests for visitation rights by the Canadian government, access was denied for over four years.

If you do run into problems abroad because of your dual citizenship, contact the nearest Canadian embassy or consulate immediately. If you're unable to make contact and require immediate assistance, place a collect call to the Operations Centre, Consular Affairs Bureau, Foreign Affairs Canada, at (613) 996-8885. You can also contact us by e-mail, at sos@international.gc.ca.