

Canadian Consular Work Abroad

CANADIAN consular work embraces services provided both to Canadian citizens and to citizens of other countries. Most of the consular work abroad is handled by members of the Department of External Affairs either at diplomatic missions or at consular offices. In some countries, officers at a diplomatic mission may hold concurrent appointment as consuls and thus be empowered to perform, in addition to their diplomatic duties, consular duties such as the protection of Canadian citizens, trade promotion and information work; elsewhere consular work may be handled either by diplomatic missions direct, where the volume of consular work is relatively small, or by consular offices separate from the mission itself, in countries where consular work is too complex and voluminous to be dealt with at one diplomatic post. Where, as in the United States, Canada has Consulates General and Consulates as well as a consular section at the Embassy, the separate consular offices are under the general jurisdiction of the Head of the diplomatic mission, and do consular work within a given consular district or territory in the country.

Although the Department of External Affairs bears the major responsibility for providing consular services abroad through the Canadian diplomatic missions, High Commissioners' Offices and consular posts, much consular work is also performed, in countries where there is no External Affairs representation, by officials who are not members of this Department. Certain services, such as issuance and renewal of passports, issuance of visas, arrangements for naval visits, and certain duties under the Canadian Citizenship Act, are provided by Canadian Trade Commissioners' Offices abroad. In addition, United Kingdom posts perform many consular services on behalf of Canada in countries in which there are no Canadian Government posts.

Canadian consular work abroad may be examined under two general classes: (1) matters involving entry into and exit from Canada of Canadians and non-Canadians, and (2) the performance of activities in the general public interest and the extension of particular services to individual Canadian citizens.

Travel Documents

Matters involving entry into or exit from Canada take up a large part of the time of officers performing consular duties abroad, especially since the services are rendered not only to Canadians but to foreigners. The work involves issuance of travel documents of various kinds and issuance of visas. A number of different travel documents are issued. The most important of these are passports. Canadian passports are issued to Canadian citizens only, who have established their Canadian citizenship and their personal identity. There are three types of passports: ordinary, special and diplomatic. Ordinary passports are issued to private Canadian citizens who are abroad or are proceeding abroad on private business or as tourists. They have a blue cover. Special passports, which have a green cover, are issued to persons on official Canadian Government business as well as to certain groups of persons holding positions in the Federal and Provincial Governments. Diplomatic passports