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About Being a Permanent Resident of Canada

A permanent resident is someone who has acquired permanent resident status by [immigrating to Canada](#), but is not yet a [Canadian citizen](#). Permanent residents have [rights and privileges](#) in Canada even though they remain citizens of their home country. In order to maintain permanent resident status, they must fulfill specified [residency obligations](#).

A person in Canada temporarily, such as an international student or a temporary foreign worker, is **not** a permanent resident.

Refugees who are resettled from overseas arrive in Canada as permanent residents through the [Government-Assisted Refugee Program](#) or the [Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program](#). However, people who make refugee claims in Canada (either at a port of entry or a CIC office) are **not** permanent residents. In order to become one, these people must receive a positive decision on their refugee claim from the Immigration and Refugee Board. Then, they must apply for and be granted permanent resident status.

Learn about:

- [What permanent residents can do](#)
- [What permanent residents cannot do](#)
- [Keeping your permanent resident status](#)
- [Losing your permanent resident status](#)
- [The Permanent Resident Card](#)

What permanent residents can do

As a permanent resident, you and your dependants have the right:

- To receive most social benefits that Canadian citizens receive, including health care coverage.
- To live, work or study anywhere in Canada.
- To apply for [Canadian citizenship](#).
- To protection under Canadian law and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

You must pay taxes, and respect all Canadian laws at the federal, provincial and municipal levels.

What permanent residents cannot do

As a permanent resident, you and your dependants cannot:

- Vote or run for political office.
- Hold certain jobs that have a high-level security clearance requirement.
- Remain in Canada if you are convicted of a serious criminal offence and have been told to leave the country.

Keeping your permanent resident status

Your permanent resident status allows you to live in Canada, but there is also a time limit on how long you can live outside the country. To keep your status as a permanent resident, you must live in Canada for at least two years within a five-year period.

For further information on residency obligations, please see Appendix A of [Applying for a Permanent Resident Card](#).

Losing your permanent resident status

There are several ways you could lose your permanent resident status:

- A permanent resident who does not meet their residency obligations could lose permanent resident status.
- If convicted of a serious crime, a permanent resident may be deported from Canada.

When you become a Canadian citizen, you are no longer a permanent resident.

The Permanent Resident Card

If you intend to travel, the [Permanent Resident Card](#) is the official proof of your status as a permanent resident in Canada.

This wallet-sized plastic card is required for all permanent residents of Canada seeking to re-enter Canada on a commercial carrier (airplane, boat, train or bus).

If you leave the country, you will need this card to return to Canada. If you do not plan to leave the country, you do not need the card.

Related links

- [Becoming a Canadian citizen](#)
- [Permanent Resident Card](#)