

New Canadian Citizenship Rule for Canadians Born Abroad

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On **December 15, 2025**, the Government of Canada passed Bill C-3 to change the first-generation limit on citizenship by descent.

This **new law** allows a Canadian parent born or adopted outside Canada to pass on Canadian citizenship to their children born or adopted outside Canada, provided they have spent a cumulative three years (or 1,095 days) in Canada before their child's birth or adoption.



In other words, you may be a Canadian citizen if your parent was born or adopted outside Canada to/by a Canadian citizen, and if your parent spent at least three years in Canada before your birth.

The infographic below is a very simple summary of the changes under Bill C-3:

First Generation Limit

Before Bill C-3

Great-Grandparent

Born in Canada or
obtained naturalization =
Canadian Citizen

Grandparent

Born outside of Canada =
Canadian citizen based on
citizenship by descent

Parent

Born outside of Canada
after April 17, 2009 =
Non-Canadian citizen due
to First Generation Limit

You

Born outside of Canada
after April 17, 2009 =
Non-Canadian Citizen due
to first-generation limit

After Bill C-3

Great-Grandparent

Born in Canada or
obtained naturalization =
Canadian Citizen

Grandparent

Born outside of Canada =
Canadian citizen based on
citizenship by descent

Parent

Born outside of Canada; if
Grandparent spent 3 years in
Canada before Parent's birth =
Canadian Citizen

You

Born outside of Canada; if
Parent spent 3 years in
Canada before Parent's birth =
Canadian Citizen

Challenges for proof of Canadian Citizenship

One of the challenges for proof of Canadian Citizenship is obtaining the correct supporting documents to show. At **TDS**, we can assist with ordering birth/death certificates across Canadian provinces or help clients obtain other types of proof of birth and Canadian citizenship, such as baptism or census documents.

Next steps

If you or someone you know has a Canadian ancestor, it may be worth exploring whether you or they are a Canadian citizen. To confirm whether you are a Canadian citizen, you will have to submit a proof of citizenship application to **Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada**. We can assist you in obtaining the necessary documents and applying for proof of Canadian citizenship.

For more information, please contact **Katie Leung** at khl@tdslaw.com.

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