



Overview

The 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games in Vancouver are less than four months away, and the Canadian government is preparing to process more than 10,000 work permits for foreign workers related to the games. In response to the expected increase in labor market opinion and work permit applications, a facilitative process has been developed by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSD), and the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA). Under the facilitative process, the work permit, labor market opinion and port of entry process for the foreign work force employed through the Vancouver 2010 Organizing Committee (VANOC) will be streamlined. U.S. firms involved in the games should be aware of the work permit process to ensure a smooth entry to Canada.

Background

Canada's Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, states that a foreign national may not work in Canada unless authorized. This includes work performed by foreign nationals providing goods and/or services in Canada under VANOC sanctioned contracts. Authorization would include a valid Labor Market Opinion and Work Permit. Work is defined in the regulations as "an activity for which wages are paid or commission is earned, or that competes directly with activities of Canadian citizens or permanent residents in the Canadian labor market." There are three separate Government Agencies partnering to streamline the process.

- 1) Human Resources Canada (HRSDC) – review employer applications outlining job offer details to foreign workers and issue an opinion on the likely impact to the Canadian labor market.
- 2) Citizenship Immigration Canada (CIC) – review work permit applications from foreign nationals.
- 3) Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) – fulfill its commitment to the Games allowing for the efficient arrival and processing of the workforce at all Canadian entry points.

The streamlined process of obtaining a Labor Market Opinion applies to employers such as VANOC; Sponsors; Members of other organizing committees; employers providing goods and/or services directly under contract with VANOC (Master contractors); and subcontracted employers who have entered into contracts with Master Contractors to provide goods and/or services pertaining to a contract with VANOC.

There are three steps that need to be completed prior to entering Canada.

1. Obtain a Labor Market Opinion from HRSDC
2. Obtain a Work Permit from CIC including submitting \$150.00 per application.
3. Receive letter of Introduction from CIC to present at the port of entry.

VANOC will provide HRSDC with the names of all companies that were successful in submitting bids for contracts for goods and services for the 2010 Winter Games. HRSDC will contact these firms directly to begin the process of obtaining the work permits for their workers. Master Contractors must provide a letter of authentication to any subcontractor on company letterhead verifying that the subcontractor is providing goods and services directly related to Master Contractor's contract with VANOC.

The employer outlines the job descriptions, duties and occupational requirements. In addition, the employer agrees to conduct sufficient and timely recruitment efforts to hire and train Canadians prior to submitting an application for a foreign worker. Note: The employer is responsible for and must pay upfront for accommodations of the workers while working between Dec 12, 2009 and April 21, 2010.

Once the above criteria have been met and the US firm receives a Labor Market Opinion, the next step is to submit the foreign nationals' details and work permit fees.

In all cases employers must pay the CDN \$150 work permit fee for each foreign worker. Payments must be made with a certified check from a Canadian bank.

Once the Workforce Opinion has been completed, fees are paid and work permit is authorized employers will received a CIC letter of introduction and a copy of the HRSDC/Service Canada Primary Workforce Opinion letter to present upon arrival at the Canadian port of entry. Foreign workers must bring the letter with them, along with a Passport or Travel Document valid for the duration of their stay. These letters will assist Canada Border Services in identifying foreign workforce contracted through VANOC. Foreign workers must be admissible to Canada.

It is the intent of the Canadian government to have all work permits pre-processed and pre-authorized prior to the foreign national entering the country.

Implications for US firms: All U.S. firms who have won contracts or subcontracts with VANOC need to be aware that all work permits will be processed prior to the games and that all foreign workers must carry their CIC letter of introduction and Workforce Opinion letter with them to the port of entry. Canada Border Services will have specific lanes dedicated to processing Olympic Games foreign workers at ports of entry in all major cities in Canada.

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Comments and Suggestions: We welcome your comments and suggestions regarding this market research. You can e-mail us your comments/suggestions to: Customer.Care@mail.doc.gov. Please include the name of the applicable market research in your e-mail. We greatly appreciate your feedback.

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