

Press Release

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland has now an operational portable passport system. This system will first be sent by the Finnish Embassy in Ottawa to the Consulate in Vancouver and after that to the Consulate in Toronto.

Vancouver

The portable passport system will be available in the Finnish Consulate in Vancouver from Tuesday February 16, 2010 until Wednesday March 31, 2010. All applicants must make an appointment for a passport application. The Finnish Consulate in Vancouver is generally open on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. During the Olympic Games (February 12 – 28, 2010), the Consulate is open every day. However, it may be necessary to close the consulate without notice to provide urgent consular assistance.

Toronto

The portable passport system will be operational at the Finnish Consulate in Toronto after the Easter holidays from Tuesday April 6 until June 30, 2010. Again, all applicants must make an appointment.

Finnish Grand Festival, Sault Ste Marie July 28 to August 1, 2010

The Embassy will also make the portable passport system available at the Finnish Grand Festival in Sault Ste Marie, Ontario. The purpose is to provide passport service to the Finns living both in Canada and in the US. The embassy will send an additional press release containing detailed schedule and instructions closer to the event.

Instructions

Information on the portable passport system availability in Toronto, Vancouver and Sault Ste Marie will also be available on the Embassy website www.finland.ca. The application process is virtually the same as at the Embassy in Ottawa.

A passport application form is no longer in use. The passport system generates the application and with the portable system the photo will be taken as part of the application process (this is different from the process at the Embassy in Ottawa, where the applicant provides a photograph). The applicant signs on a special pad and a fingerprint scan is taken. As the fee is set in euros, it may change with exchange rate fluctuation. Valid fees are posted in the Services section of the Embassy website (140.00 CAD in January 2010).

A passport application can only be processed if the applicant's personal data (name, date and place of birth) in the Finnish population register is up-to-date (further information: www.vaestorekisterikeskus.fi or www.maistraatti.fi). For example name changes due to a marriage or divorce cannot be processed in the passport system. These have to be updated in the population register ahead of time. Also, children born outside of Finland cannot be issued a Finnish passport until their birth and citizenship details are entered into the Finnish population register.



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Future use of the portable passport system in Canada

The Embassy will inform the Finnish community of the circulation of the portable passport system at suitable venues within the Finnish Community via press releases and on the Embassy website. The costs involved in bringing the portable passport system to events and cities within Canada will create constraints on availability. Therefore, the portable system might be in a specific area only for few days in any given year.

Passport applications can be made in Finland at the local police station. The police can send the passport to the Embassy in Ottawa (by request) if the passport cannot be issued by the end of the stay in Finland. In fact, a passport application can be made at any passport issuing point in the world with the request to forward the passport to Canada (check the Foreign Ministry web site www.formin.fi for locations and contact information for Finnish missions). The Embassy in Ottawa will then make arrangements to forward the passport to the applicant's home address.

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