



Opening a Personal Bank Account: Understanding Your Rights

Your rights

Under Canadian law, you have the right to open a personal bank account. You can open an account even if:

- you don't have a job
- you don't have money to put in the account right away
- you have been bankrupt.

Exceptions: The bank can refuse to open an account for you if they suspect you have committed a crime related to any bank, if you harass or threaten a bank employee, or if you show false identification.

How to open an account

To open an account, you have to:

- go to the bank in person, and
- show the bank some identification (ID).

You must use *original* ID, not photocopies.

What identification (I.D.) do you need?

There are different combinations of ID you can use. **You have three choices.**

Choice 1 – Show two pieces of ID from List A:

- Canadian driver's licence
- current Canadian passport
- Canadian birth certificate
- Social Insurance Number (SIN) card
- Old Age Security card with your Social Insurance Number (SIN) on it
- Certificate of Indian Status
- provincial or territorial health insurance card (this cannot be used in Ontario, Prince Edward Island or Manitoba)
- Certificate of Canadian Citizenship or Certification of Naturalization
- Permanent Resident card or a Citizenship and Immigration Canada form IMM 1000, IMM 1442, or IMM 5292

LIST A

If you don't have two pieces of ID from List A above, you can:

Choice 2 – Show one piece of ID from List A and one piece of ID from List B, below:

- employee ID card with your picture on it
- debit card or bank card with your name and signature on it
- Canadian credit card with your name and signature on it
- client card from the Canadian National Institute for the Blind with your picture and signature on it
- current foreign passport

LIST B

OR

Choice 3 – Show one piece of ID from List A and have someone the bank knows confirm that you are who you say you are.

Can you show other types of I.D.?

Yes. To find out what they are, call the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada (FCAC) toll-free at: 1-866-461-3222.

What can you do if the bank won't open an account for you?

- The bank must give you a letter saying that it will not open an account for you. If you do not receive it, ask for it. The bank must also tell you how to contact FCAC.
- Tell the bank you want to make a complaint. By law, all banks must have a complaint-handling process.
- Contact FCAC for more information.

