

WHY PROVIDING RESIDENCY INFORMATION GIVES YOU AN ADVANTAGE AND ENCOURAGES PRODUCTION IN BC.

There is a symbiotic relationship between employers and technicians in terms of tax incentives. Some technicians might not accept this and object to requests by employers for residency documents. However, by ensuring you are a qualified resident of BC for purposes of tax incentive claims by the employer, and demonstrating this to the employer through documents, the employer brings work here and hires you. A breakdown in this relationship challenges the viability of film-making and television production in BC. This is especially significant for those employers who borrow money ‘up-front’ at the beginning of a production based on the projected tax-incentive payout they will receive once production has concluded.

How serious is this issue? It depends on the employer but some producers have claimed that up to thirty percent of the crew had not provided residency documentation by midpoint of the production. So, the employer had no way to verify it would be guaranteed the incentive funds in respect of approximately thirty percent of the payroll paid to technicians working on the production. That represents a significant amount of money for many employers.

Within this issue is a somewhat overlooked complication: new residents to British Columbia. I have recently observed several technicians who are in Canada on work visas or have relocated from other provinces and have hired on to productions only to discover that they do not qualify as residents of BC in respect of the incentive programs. This matter is problematic and has implications for mobility of technicians between jurisdictions. In the least, it may mean working in another sector until one’s residency qualification is achieved by living in BC for a certain amount of time. For non-Canadians here on work visas, they may have to rely on the understanding of an employer who will accept the loss of incentive monies caused by employing them. However, getting an employer to accept such a loss is unlikely.

At the end of the day, demonstrating your residency circumstances through documentation is critical to your ongoing employment and, to a larger extent, the viability of certain productions shooting in BC. If you get your residency documents together, keep them current, and provide them to an employer at the beginning of a production you will be further ahead than your competitors who lack such preparedness. Moreover, by so doing you will help to ensure productions keep coming to BC.

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