

Client Verification

IN-PERSON VS. VIRTUAL (INDIVIDUALS)

If a client retains you to provide legal services, you must comply with Client Identification and Verification requirements.

Identification requires gathering information about the client. **Verification** of identity is the process of confirming that the client or third party is who, or what, they say they are. You can verify the client's identity using one of the following methods: a) government-issued photo identification method, b) credit file method, and c) dual process method.

If you are required to verify your client's identity and you use the government-issued photo identification (ID) method, you can do so either in-person or virtually. You must ensure that the document is **authentic, valid, and current** per [The Rules of the Law Society of Alberta](#), Rule 119.50(6). Below are the steps required for each method.

In-Person



Step 1: Identify risks

In the course of obtaining information about the client and the proposed legal services, identify and assess risks to determine if it is proper to act. Make reasonable inquiries and record the results. Consider the Red Flags Quick Reference Guide.



Step 2: Set up an in-person meeting

Book an in-person meeting with your client. Ask them to bring along government-issued photo ID that includes their name, photograph, and unique identifier number.



Step 3: Confirm ID is authentic

During the meeting, review the ID for inconsistencies in the characteristics of the document, such as texture, character spacing, and design features. Look for special security features like holograms and barcodes, or markers like logos and symbols. Refer to this video for guidance or refer to guidelines by the issuing government agency.



Step 4: Confirm ID is valid and current

During the meeting, hold the client's ID under good lighting. Check the client's photo, birth date and expiry date. Ensure the photo and name match the client in your office and that the expiry date is current. [Click here for more tips.](#)



Step 5: Document and retain a record

Document the process you followed to verify your client's identity and retain a copy of all documents, including a scanned copy of the ID.



Virtual (Digital)



Step 1: Identify risks

In the course of obtaining information about the client and the proposed legal services, identify and assess risks to determine if it is proper to act. Make reasonable inquiries and record the results. Consider the Red Flags Quick Reference Guide.



Step 2: Set up a virtual meeting

Book a virtual meeting with your client using secure and private videoconferencing technology. Ask the client to have their ID with them when you meet.



Step 3: Confirm ID is authentic

Use verification technology and the provider's defined procedures to confirm the government-issued photo ID is genuine and obtain and retain authentication confirmation. Technology can compare the ID to known characteristics, security features or markers to determine if it is an authentic document.



Step 4: Confirm ID is valid and current

During the meeting, ask the client to hold their ID to the camera and compare it to the ID that was authenticated. Check that the name and photo match and the expiry date is current. Ask the client to send a high-resolution photo of their ID.



Step 5: Document and retain a record

Per Rule 119.51, document the process you followed to verify your client's identity and retain a copy of all documents, including a scanned copy of ID and confirmation of its authenticity from the verification technology provider.

Looking for a digital authentication provider?

There are several reputable companies that offer products that use authentication technology to verify identity in accordance with the digital verification method.

The Digital Identification and Authentication Council of Canada (DIACC) has developed a certification process for providers and lawyers can seek out providers with this certification as a starting point when exploring digital authentication and verification technology options.

For more anti-money laundering and client identification rules and resources, visit the Law Society website at lawsociety.ab.ca/aml



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