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## Corporation Records of the Government of Ontario

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This research guide describes government records in the Archives of Ontario collection that document the creation and existence of Ontario corporations. Please note that:

- The Indexes and records that this research guide describes are available in the Archives of Ontario's Reading Room only. If the records you need are NOT on microfilm, it usually takes one or two business days to retrieve them.
- The Archives of Ontario does not hold information on the value of shares of defunct corporations.

All descriptions for records mentioned in this guide are available in our online Archives Descriptive Database. You will find the database and all guides mentioned in this guide in the "Accessing Our Collections" section of our website.

This guide is divided into the following sections:

- A: What type of business are you looking for?
- B: What records we have
- C: Starting your search
- D: Finding the records
- E: Using the Index to corporations 1867-1906
- F: Finding records of incorporation
- G: Finding the corporation file
- H: Other corporation-related records

### **A: What type of business are you looking for?**

When researching a business, you need to know what type of business it is:

A *corporation* is a legal entity separate from his shareholders (if you own shares in a corporation, you are not legally responsible for its actions or its debts). Only

corporations can have the words corporation, limited (but not limited partnership) or, incorporated, or their abbreviation or French version, in their name. Corporations incorporated outside of Ontario can obtain an *extra-provincial license*, which allows them to operate in Ontario.

A *partnership* is a business where the co-owners are responsible for the assets and debts of the business (if the business goes bankrupt, the co-owners also go bankrupt). Partners in a *limited partnership* have various levels of involvements and liabilities in the business.

A *sole proprietorship* is similar to a partnership, but with only one owner.

Businesses or individuals can register a *business name*, which only they can use while the registration is valid.

*Benevolent societies* were mutual assistance organizations. They provided various social and economic services to their members, including collective insurance. Examples of these societies include the Ancient Order of Foresters, the Chosen Friends of the Grand Council of Ontario, and the Oddfellows Independent Order Lodges.

Partnership, sole proprietorship and business name registrations are filed together, separately from corporation records. For information on researching these, or benevolent societies, consult Research Guide 218, *Partnership and benevolent society registration records*.

## **B: What records we have**

If the corporation was incorporated (created) after 1978, please contact the Central Production and Verification Services Branch, Business Registration Services of the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services. The Branch contact information is:

Mailing: 393 University Ave., Suite 200, Toronto ON M5G 2M2

Counter Services: 2nd Flr, 375 University Ave., Toronto ON

Telephone: 416-314-8880

Fax: 416-314-4806

Toll Free Phone (Ontario only): 1-800-361-3223

TDD Phone: 416-314-0843

Website: [Click here to access the Service Ontario website](#)

The Archives of Ontario hold some or all of the following for corporations incorporated before 1979:

*Records of incorporation:* These were the records documenting the creation of the corporation. These include Letters Patent, Statutes, and entries in the Ontario Gazette.

*Corporation files:* These government files may include applications and correspondence pertaining to the incorporation, annual returns, and information about dissolution. For corporations created after 1971, they also include a certificate of incorporation.

## C: Starting your search

To search government's corporation records, you need the *exact name, when it existed* and (for the corporation file) the *corporation number*. You can find all this information through the *corporation list*. If you know the corporation existed prior to 1907 and did not exist (or ceased to file returns) after 1906, go directly to section D, Finding the records.

The *corporation list* indexes all Ontario corporations, arranged by keywords in the name. Key information found in the index includes the corporation's name, date of incorporation and dissolution, and reason for dissolution. The list is available in two locations:

- on microfiche (up to date as of early 2008) in the Archives of Ontario Reading Room (see the end of this guide for our contact information), and
- at the Central Production and Verification Services Branch, Business Registration Services of the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services (see section B above for contact information)

*How to search the index on microfiche:* The Index is arranged by keyword in the name of the corporation. For example, *The Ottawa Curling Club Limited* will appear under keywords Club, Curling and Ottawa, and can be found using any of the three keywords.

Under each keyword, corporations are listed in alphabetical order, using the *full* name. For example, under keyword Curling, corporations would appear in the following order:

Curling and Hockey Equipments Ltd.  
Ottawa Curling Institute Inc.  
The Ottawa Curling Club Limited  
Uxbridge Curling and Lawn Bowling Association Limited

*What to look for:* Table 1, below, shows what to look for when you use the index. After checking the index, go to section D, Finding the records.

Column Number	Information	What to Do
2	Contains the unique Ontario corporation Number	Write down the number (if there is one).

Column Number	Information	What to Do
11	<p>Indicates the type of corporation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 9: Refers to corporations created before 1908 that did not file statutory documents (such as annual returns) with the Government after 1906. This means that there is no corporation file.</li> <li>▪ T: Refers to "Inactive corporations" that submitted some filings after 1906 but was dissolved before 1978 (these file numbers have a "TC" prefix).</li> </ul> <p>No code: Refers to "Active" corporations, still in existence in 1978 or created since (these file numbers have a "C" prefix).</p>	<p>Write down the information you find, including the dates of creation and dissolution. Once you have consulted the index, go section D to decide which part of this guide you need to consult next, based on the information you have found so far.</p> <p>If your research is limited to learning when a corporation existed, you may not need to consult any other records.</p>

*If you do not find a corporation name:* There may be a number of possibilities:

- the corporation was created through a provincial statute (law): see section F (Finding incorporation records) of this guide for more information;
- it was a partnership or a sole proprietorship: see Research Guide 218, *Partnership and Benevolent Society Registration Records*, for more information;
- the corporation was incorporated federally or in another province.

## D: Finding the records

To find the records you need, use Table 2 (below), to determine which section of this research guide you need to consult next.

Corporation was created	Incorporation records	Corporation files
Before 1907	Go to section F (Finding incorporation records)	For corporations with no-post 1906 filing ("9" in the last column of the corporations List), go to section E (Using the Index to corporations, 1867-1906).  For other corporations, go to section G (Finding the corporation file).
1907 to 1971	Go to section F (Finding incorporation records)	Go to section G (Finding the corporation file)
1972 to 1978	Go to section G (Finding the corporation file)	Go to section G (Finding the corporation file)
After 1978	Contact the Central Production and Verification Services Branch, Business Registration Services, Ministry of Government and Consumer Services (see contact information in section B)	Contact the Central Production and Verification Services Branch, Business Registration Services, Ministry of Government and Consumer Services (see contact information in section B)

## E: Using the Index to corporations 1867-1906

The Index to corporations, 1867 to 1906 (Series RG 55-6) lists corporations that *were dissolved before 1907* or that *filed no records after 1906*.

The index provides a reference to:

- the *charter book* containing the letter patent;
- the *incorporation file*, including applications, correspondence and other records pertaining to the incorporation;
- *annual returns, miscellaneous records and correspondence* filed with the Ontario Department of the Provincial Secretary, up to 1906.

The index is located on microfilm reels MS 480, reel 1 (A to P) and reel 2 (Q to Z). Both reels are available in the Archives' Reading Room.

Figure 1 shows an example of an index card. When you find the name of the corporation, write down all the information on the index card. Then, see below for instructions on where to go from there.

<b>Dupont Gold Mining</b>				
<b>INC</b>	18 Oct. 1899	<b>1889</b>	<b>1898</b>	
<b>LIB</b>	58-20	<b>1890</b>	<b>1899</b>	255
<b>FILE</b>	5299	<b>1891</b>	<b>1900</b>	1043
<b>MISC</b>	5588/99 By-Law	<b>1892</b>	<b>1901</b>	1752
	Re Stock	<b>1893</b>	<b>1902</b>	
	5599/1900 By	<b>1894</b>	<b>1903</b>	
	Law re Stock	<b>1895</b>	<b>1904</b>	
	Defunct 7559/05	<b>1896</b>	<b>1905</b>	
				<b>1897</b>

Here are explanations of the words and abbreviations you will find on the index cards and the steps to take:

*INC*: refers to the date the corporation was incorporated or was issued an extra-provincial licence.

*LIB*: refers to the liber (book) and book entry for the charter book (e.g., Liber 58, entry 20). For instructions on retrieving the charter book itself:

- If there is no letter before the liber number, [click here to access the database description for Series RG 55-1, Company charter books](#);
- If the letter “L” comes before the liber number, [click here to access the database description for Series RG 53-41, Licenses for extra-provincial corporations](#);
- If the letters “GS” come before the liber number, [click here to access the database description for Series RG 53-18, Great seal books](#).

*FILE*: refers to the incorporation file, which may contain incorporation correspondence, applications and other documents.

*YEAR* with file number: refers to the years the corporation submitted annual reports.

*MISC*: refers to miscellaneous records that the corporation submitted to the Department of the Provincial Secretary (e.g., by-laws, copies of prospectus, notice of dissolution).

*Note*: The records above, except for the charter books, are part of the general correspondence of the Department of the Provincial Secretary; [click here to access the database description for sub-series RG 8-1-1, General correspondence of the Department of the Provincial Secretary](#). Request the records by quoting RG 8-1-1 and the corporation name, file number and year. For files in the years columns, you need to quote the year *after* the one written down on the card [e.g., for the file with the entry 1901 – 1752, request file 1752, year 1902]. There may be a delay in making these records available, for

preservation reasons. Contact the Archives (see our contact information at the end of this guide) or consult the reference staff for more information.

## F: Finding records of incorporation

Until 1971, incorporation was usually done through the issuance of *letters patent*. In addition, notices of incorporations were filed in the *Ontario Gazette*. In a few cases, incorporation was done through a *statute* (law) of the Provincial legislature.

*Letters Patent* provide names of the individuals incorporating the corporation and the purpose for the corporation. They are arranged in *charter books*, which may also include extra-provincial licenses (allowing out-of-province corporations to operate in Ontario), and surrenders of charters. Use of letter patents ceased in 1971.

*Finding the letters patent*: First, consult one of the following indexes to find the book and page number:

Scenario	Instruction
For corporations <i>dissolved before 1908</i>	<a href="#">Click here to access the database description for Sub-series RG 55-15-1</a> Index to Company Charters, 1868-1908
For corporations incorporated <i>before 1908 and active after 1908</i> , and corporations <i>created between 1908 and 1946</i>	<a href="#">Click here to access the database description for Sub-series RG 55-15-2</a> Index to Company Charters, 1868-1946
For corporations created <i>between 1946 and 1971</i>	<a href="#">Click here to access the database description for Series RG 55-2</a> , Index to Company Charters

Once you have the book and page number, consult one of the following:

- [Click here to access the database description for Series RG 55-1, Company charter books, 1869-1971](#). It includes the surrenders, cancellations, change of names and licenses for extra-provincial corporations, except for the dates of the next three series
- [Click here to access the database description for Series RG 55-23, Surrenders and cancellations of company charter books \(1919-1929\)](#)
- [Click here to access the database description for Series RG 55-28, Companies change of name books \(1919-1928\)](#)
- [Click here to access the database description for Series RG 53-41, Licenses for extra-provincial corporations \(1868-1928\)](#) [Click here to access the database description for Series RG 53-18, Great seal books](#). It

has incorporations that the Lieutenant Governor made through proclamation.

*Ontario Gazette*: The Gazette included notices of incorporation, until the 1990s. Copies of the Gazette are available in the Archives' reading room, as well as major public and university libraries throughout Ontario.

*Statutes*: For an alphabetical listing of corporations incorporated by statute before 1902 (including the year and statute number), consult P.H. Beaudoin, *Incorporated Bodies: Private and Local Law (1896)* and the *1901 Supplement* covering the years 1897-1901. Both books are available on microfilm at the Archives (microfilm reel MS 292 reel 1).

For a list specific to railway companies, see R. Dorman, *A Statutory History of the Steam and Electric Railways of Canada, 1836-1927*. There is a copy in our library (Call Number: 385 Dor).

For information on finding statutes, please refer to Research Guide 207, *Researching Ontario Bills and Statutes*.

## **G: Finding the corporation file**

There are two types of corporation files, for active and dormant corporations. Active corporations are those that exist today, or have existed as some point after 1978. Dormant corporations are those that ceased to exist before 1979.

The Archives holds dormant corporation (TC) files *TC 1 to TC 3155*, *TC 3221* and *TC 21293 to TC 23885*. For more information on how to order these records [click here to access the database description for Series RG 55-5, Dormant corporation files](#).

We also hold *parts* of some active and dormant corporation files created between 1908 and 1959. This is because, during the 1970's, the Companies Branch of the former Ontario Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations microfilmed "essential" documentation from some files. The "essential" material (*which forms the active or dormant corporation file as it exists now*) included documentation verifying the incorporation of the company, supplementary letter patents, changes of name and alterations to the by-laws. The ministry transferred "non-essential" records, like routine correspondence and annual returns, to the Archives. [Click here to access the database description for Series RG 55-4, Active corporation files](#).

With the exceptions noted above, the Central Production and Verification Services Branch, Business Registration Services, Ministry of Government and Consumer Services holds all corporation files. Please see section B above for contact information.



## H: Other corporation-related records

*Regulatory records:* Various government ministries and agencies have been and still are regulating corporations, depending on their line of business. [Click here to access the Archives Descriptive Database](#) (use the Advanced Search Option, “Search Groups of Archival Records”) for records series from the following ministries and agencies (the list is not exhaustive):

- Liquor Licence Board of Ontario (enter RG 36-\* in the Archival Reference Code field)
- Ontario Security Commission (RG 70-\* in the Archival Reference Code field)
- Registrar of Loan and Trust (RG 83-\* in the Archival Reference Code field)
- Superintendent of Insurance (RG 82-\* in the Archival Reference Code field).

*Bankruptcy files:* The Archives of Ontario holds court records on bankruptcies over 20 years old. For more information, consult Research Guide 330, *Finding a bankruptcy file*.

*Corporations’ own records:* The Archives of Ontario has the records of some corporations. [Click here to access the Archives Descriptive Database](#) using the name of the corporation.

## Making Contact

### Ready and Willing

Although unable to do your corporation records research for you, our reference staff are waiting to assist you. You may telephone or write to them by mail or email or — best of all — visit the Archives of Ontario.

### Contact us

Telephone: 416-327-1600 Toll free (Ontario): 1-800-668-9933  
Fax: 416-327-1999  
Email: [Click here to send an email to the Archives of Ontario](#)  
Address: Archives of Ontario, 134 Ian Macdonald Blvd., Toronto, ON M7A 2C5

### Website

For information about the Archives’ holdings, as well as access to research guides and other customer service materials available through the Archives of Ontario, please [click here to visit our website](#).

## **Customer Service and Research Guides**

The Archives of Ontario has published a series of in-depth research guides on a variety of specific topics. For more information, please see “Research Guides and Tools” under “Accessing Our Collection” on the home page of the Archives website.

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**[Click here to access the website for © Queen's Printer for Ontario, 2009](#)**

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