Active Does Not Mean Compliant

What the federal register actually tells you about your corporation

Your corporation says Active. That is the only thing it says.

CorpCentre measured the whole federal register to find out what sits behind that word.

The answer: 27.98% — more than one in four — stand in evidenced breach of at least one core annual obligation of the Act.

One in five is already behind

20.02% of federal corporations with at least one annual return due have not filed it. Among seasoned corporations the figure is 15.39%.

That is not an estimate built on a single test. Corporations Canada issues roughly 120,792 notices of intent to dissolve each year — 18.80% of the active register. Two unrelated measures, one built from filing records and one from the registrar's own enforcement activity, arrive at the same answer.

Roughly one active federal corporation in five is in default right now. All of them still read Active.

You will probably not be warned

The register does carry a warning: the status Active – Dissolution Pending (non-compliance). But only 26.5% of corporations actually in default carry it. Nearly three-quarters show nothing at all.

> *"Active is a legal status, not a compliance signal."*

And the flag does not measure how far behind a corporation is. It measures whether the registrar happens to be moving against it at that moment. 25.2% of corporations one year behind are flagged — against 3.2% of those two years behind.

Being further behind makes you less likely to be flagged, not more.

The flag is a countdown, not an alarm

26,951 corporations carry the dissolution-pending flag today. At roughly 10,458 notices issued each month, that is about 2.6 months of flow. Corporations pass through the flag; those that neither cure nor are struck off pass out of it and stop being flagged at all.

By the time the register warns you, the clock is already short — and the silence afterwards is not a reprieve.

Most corporations don't fail. They lapse.

Corporations struck off for failure to file outnumber voluntary wind-ups by more than four to one: 76,632 against 17,376 a year on the current pace. 81.5% of all removals are involuntary. Across the register's entire history, 68.2% of federal dissolutions were for non-compliance.

The orderly wind-up the Canada Business Corporations Act is drafted around is the minority pathway, by four to one.

Corporations do not mostly end by decision. They end by neglect.

One corporation in eight says so on its own return

Every CBCA corporation must hold an annual meeting of shareholders, or pass resolutions in lieu, and the annual return asks for the date of the last one. 55.36% declare a meeting within the fifteen months section 133 allows.

Of the corporations that answer the question at all, roughly one in eight declares a date that is already outside the interval — an admission of non-compliance, on a return the corporation has just signed and filed itself.

Put the two together — those already behind on filings, and those admitting a late meeting on a return filed on time — and 27.98% of active federal corporations, more than one in four, stand in evidenced breach of at least one core obligation of the Act.

These corporations are current on their filings. They are still not compliant.

And the obligations are no longer annual

Since January 2024 the Act has required corporations to record and file information about their individuals with significant control. The duty runs on two clocks: the information goes in with the annual return, and any change must be recorded and filed within fifteen days — not saved up for the next return.

The exposure is personal. A corporation that fails to comply faces a fine of up to $100,000. A director or officer who knowingly authorises or permits the failure faces up to $1,000,000, five years' imprisonment, or both.

The compliance calendar is no longer once a year, and the consequences are no longer only the company's.

What actually prevents this

None of it is difficult. It is a maintenance problem that looks like a legal problem, and it fails for the same reason maintenance always fails — nobody owns the calendar.

Know the dates. Annual return, anniversary, meeting or resolutions in lieu, ISC review, registered office, director changes. Each has its own deadline and none of them announce themselves.

Fix what is already behind. A late return is an afternoon. A dissolved corporation is a revival — an application, a fee, and a gap in your corporate existence that has to be explained to every bank, insurer and counterparty who looks.

Then keep it that way, deliberately, with someone accountable for it.

Incorporating takes an afternoon. Staying incorporated takes a system.

If you want to know where your own corporation — or your clients' corporations — sit against these measurements, we can tell you. CorpCentre works with businesses and their professional advisors on keeping the corporate record current.

Contact us

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Research note. Figures are computed from Corporations Canada open data — the active CBCA extract of 4 August 2026 (642,674 records), the inactive-or-dissolved extract of 6 August 2026 (820,389 records), and 2026 monthly transaction records. Full methodology, confidence grading and limitations are in Report 1.

Disclosure. Prepared by Lionel J. Perez, CEO of CorpCentre, which provides the corporate compliance services described above; readers should weigh that interest. No allegation is made against any corporation: non-compliance with a corporate filing obligation is an administrative condition, not evidence of wrongdoing.