Countdown to Dissolution

How Canadian corporations actually cease to exist

Most corporations do not wind up. They are struck off.

CorpCentre measured every recorded exit from the federal register to find out how corporate existence actually ends.

The answer: 68.2% of the 723,987 federal dissolutions on record were for non-compliance — a certificate issued because a form was not filed.

> *"Most corporations do not wind up. They are struck off."*

The majority pathway has no safeguards

The Canada Business Corporations Act is drafted around the orderly exit — liquidation, court supervision, creditor protection. Almost none of it is used. On the current pace, corporations struck off for failure to file outnumber voluntary wind-ups by more than four to one: 76,632 against 17,228 a year. 81.6% of removals are involuntary.

Administrative strike-off carries no stay, no creditor notice regime, no trustee, no court supervision. It is the majority pathway out of corporate existence, with none of the protections of the minority one.

The Act's orderly exit is the minority pathway — by four to one.

The clock is precise

Of the corporations dissolved in 2026, none was struck off earlier than 31 months after the anniversary of its last filing. The interval is a mechanism, not a range: two annual returns unfiled, a notice of intent about two months later, and the certificate a median of 150 days after that — against the 120 days the Act sets as the minimum. Corporations Canada's published policy is to move only after two years without filing, and that is almost exactly what the measurement shows.

Miss one return and the clock starts. Miss the second, and the certificate is about seven months away.

The notice works — for those who read it

Corporations Canada issues roughly 120,792 notices of intent to dissolve a year. 63.4% of noticed corporations are struck; 36.6% — some 44,000 a year — are not: they file, or otherwise leave the pipeline before the certificate issues.

More than a third of noticed corporations save themselves. The notice is the last cheap exit.

Enforcement runs in cycles

Strike-off volume tracks the registrar's calendar, not corporate behaviour: 10,057 to 17,076 a year across 2012–2019, collapsing to 4,059 in 2020, and now running at 5.1 times the 2019 rate.

Whether a default proves fatal depends less on the corporation's conduct than on when the registrar chooses to move.

Dissolved is not always dead

Roughly 9,450 corporations a year are revived. 22.5% of revivals come back within months — median 74 days dissolved. Revival works, and it is entirely unsupervised: an application, a fee, and a corporation that ceased to exist exists again.

What revival does not erase is the gap. A dissolution on the record has to be explained to every bank, insurer and counterparty who looks — and while dissolved, the corporation's existence, capacity and property are all in question.

Revival is possible. Explaining the gap to your bank is the hard part.

What actually prevents this

Know the dates. The annual return runs from the anniversary date, not the fiscal year, and the register's own warning reaches only a fraction of those in default — silence is not safety.

Fix what is already behind. A late return is an afternoon. A dissolved corporation is a revival, a fee, and a permanent gap in the record.

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.

BY THE NUMBERS

68.2% of 723,987 federal dissolutions were for non-compliance

4 to 1 — struck off versus voluntary wind-up: 76,632 against 17,228 a year

120,792 notices of intent to dissolve issued a year

74 days — median time dissolved among quick-bounce revivals

31 months — last filed return to certificate

IN THIS SERIES

Report 1 — Active Does Not Mean Compliant. The federal register, measured the same way. Published.

Report 2 — Immatriculée Does Not Mean Compliant. The Quebec companion.

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Research note. Figures are computed from Corporations Canada open data — the active CBCA extract of 4 August 2026, the inactive-or-dissolved extract of 6 August 2026, and 2026 monthly transaction records. Annualizations carry their observation windows in Report 3, which contains the full methodology, confidence grading and limitations.

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.