
Partnership and Benevolent Society Registration Records

218 Customer Service Guide

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This research guide will help you find Ontario government records related to the registration of partnerships and benevolent societies.

Getting Started

Step 1: Confirming the Type of Business that Is the Focus of Your Research

In conducting your research, you need to confirm whether the records you are looking for relate to a business that is a partnership, a sole proprietorship, a corporation or a benevolent society:

- A *partnership* is a business where the co-owners are responsible for the assets and debts of the business (i.e., 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, with only one owner. A sole proprietorship may also be called an “unincorporated business.”
- A *corporation* (also called a company) is legally separate from its shareholders or owners, who are not responsible for its liabilities and assets. Depending on its corporate structure, the name of a corporation includes one of the following words or abbreviations: “Corp.,” “Corporation,” “Inc.,” “Incorporée,” “Incorporated” “Limited,” “Limitée,” “Ltd,” “Ltée.” If you are researching a corporation, see *Research Guide 217: Corporation Records of the Government of Ontario*.
- *Benevolent societies* were mutual assistance organizations. They provided various social and economic services to their members, including collective insurance. These societies included the Ancient Order of Foresters, the Canadian Order of Foresters, the Chosen Friends of the Grand Council of Ontario, the Loyal True Blue Associations, the Knights of Pythias, the Oddfellows Independent Order Lodge and many others.

The Records

Partnership and Sole Proprietorship Records

Partnerships and sole proprietorships are registered through a declaration that states when they were registered and by whom.

Partnerships and Sole Proprietorships Registered Before July 1, 1973

- Declarations were filed in each county.
- A declaration was needed only for creating the business but some owners filed declarations when there was a change in ownership or when dissolving the business.
- For Thunder Bay District, contact the local Land Registry Office. For other counties, [click here to access the database description for RG 55-17, Expired partnership and sole proprietorship registrations, pre-1975.](#)

Partnerships and Sole Proprietorships Registered July 1, 1973-December 31, 1991

- Declarations were filed centrally (existing businesses had to file a new declaration before December 31, 1974).
- All declarations had to be renewed every five years.
- [Click here to access the database description for RG 55-16, Expired partnership and sole proprietorship registrations, 1973-.](#)

Partnerships and Sole Proprietorships Registrations from January 1, 1992 to today:

- [Click here to access the ServiceOntario website for information.](#)

Benevolent Society Records

Benevolent Society Incorporation Documents

- Under the Act Respecting Benevolent, Provident and Other Societies, 1874, incorporation records of benevolent societies were filed with the local County Court or Clerk of the Peace. Incorporation records may be included in government records series from the County Court and Clerk of the Peace for each county and district. The following series pertain directly to incorporation:
 - [Click here to access the database description for RG 22-5818, York County Court Incorporation of Benevolent and Friendly Societies Records](#)
 - [Click here to access the database description for RG 22-5880, York County Clerk of the Peace Incorporation of Benevolent and Friendly Societies Records](#)
 - [Click here to access the database description for RG 22-1876, Essex County Clerk of the Peace Incorporation Declarations](#)

- [Click here to access the database description for RG 22-4988, Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry United Counties Clerk of the Peace Incorporation Declarations.](#)

Benevolent Society Files

The Archives holds files documenting benevolent corporations for the years 1873 to 1969. [Click here to access the database description for RG 55-7, Index to benevolent societies corporation files](#) for a microfilm list and instructions on using the index. The files themselves are part of RG 55-8 Benevolent Societies Files.

If you do not find a file, try searching the Archives' corporation records. (See *Research Guide 217: Corporation Records of the Government of Ontario*.)

Regulatory Files

[Click here to access the database description for RG 82-1, Regulatory Records of the Superintendent of Insurance.](#)

Other Benevolent Society Records

The Archives has the private records of some benevolent societies. [Click here to access the Archives Descriptive Database for the society name.](#)

Making Contact

Ready and Willing

Although unable to do your research for you, our reference archivists 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

Email: [Click here to email 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. [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 "Customer Service and Research Guides" under "Accessing Our Collection" on the home page of the Archives website.

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