

Choosing, registering and protecting your corporate name



Things to know

- If you are incorporating a Canadian subsidiary, you may use a name that you choose or have a numbered name assigned to you.
- Whether you will be carrying on business through a Canadian subsidiary, or carrying on business in Canada as a foreign corporation, you will need to register in each province and territory in which you will carry on business. You will need to have your name approved in some provinces and territories.
- You can't assume that the name you use in another country is available for use in Canada – it may be that the name has been registered by another company or is being used by another business.
- Registering your corporation does not guarantee that you have a legal right to use the name – if your name is confusingly similar to an existing corporate name, business name or trademark, the owner of that name or mark may convince a court to order that you stop using your name and pay damages.
- A Nuans search can help compare your proposed name with a database of names that includes registered and applied-for trademarks, provincial and federal corporate names, and most provincially registered business names (except corporate and business names in Québec).
- Trademark searches can help assess whether your proposed name is the same as or similar to a registered or unregistered trademark.
- A corporation may carry on business using a name different from its registered corporate name or assigned numbered name.
- A corporation that carries on [business in the province of Québec](#) must have either a bilingual name or a name in French, unless the name is a trademark.

USEFUL RESOURCES

Government of Canada

- [Corporations Canada](#)
- [Naming a corporation](#)
- [A guide to trademarks](#)
- [Trademarks CIPO homepage](#)
- [Ordering a Nuans search](#)
- [Choosing a business name](#)

Things to do

- Select a name that is distinctive and does not cause confusion with any existing name or trademark.
- Ensure that your name does not include unacceptable terms (such as the word “Bank”) or words that are misleading or obscene, or that suggest that you provide obscene, scandalous or immoral services.
- Order a Nuans search – this can be done [online](#) or through a service provider known as a “search house”.
- Consider ordering one or more trademark searches – a search of registered and applied-for trademarks can be conducted online at a [government website](#), or through a law firm or other service provider (a search conducted by a service provider can also cover unregistered trademarks).
- If you intend to conduct business online through a [Canadian domain](#), conduct searches to determine whether the relevant domain is available.
- Consider whether to register a “business name”.
- Consider whether to apply for a [trademark registration](#) for your corporate or business name (and other distinctive words, symbols or designs) – registration can help prevent latecomers from using a confusingly similar name or trademark anywhere in Canada.

RELATED TOPICS

- [Registering a .CA domain name](#)
- [Registering your trademarks](#)
- [Filings and registrations](#)
- [Doing business in Québec](#)



Need more info?

Contact us at counsel@osler.com