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NEQ Lookup: Checking a Business in the Québec Enterprise Register

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Why check a business before signing

A general contractor asks for a 30% deposit to renovate your premises. A new client wants 60 days to pay. A landlord has you sign a commercial lease in the name of a “numbered company.” In all three cases, one question comes before the price: who exactly are you doing business with?

In Québec, the first place to look for the answer is the enterprise register, which is free to consult. Five minutes is enough to find out whether the business exists, whether its registration is in good standing and who runs it. This does not guarantee the quality of the work, but it helps you avoid costly mistakes: signing with a dissolved entity, paying a business that does not exist or suing the wrong person in a dispute.

This guide covers looking up a business **that is not your own**. To obtain your own number, see our guide to the [NEQ and registering a business in Québec](#). This article is for information purposes and does not constitute legal advice.

What the Québec enterprise register is

The register is maintained by the Enterprise Registrar under the [Act respecting the legal publicity of enterprises](#) (RLRQ, c. P-44.1). Section 99 of this Act provides that « toute personne peut consulter le registre » and that consultation is free, except where a regulation provides for fees.

Registration, and therefore an NEQ, is [mandatory for any business operating in Québec](#), with exceptions, including an individual operating a sole proprietorship under their own first and last name, and a non-profit organization governed by the Civil Code. A self-employed person who invoices under “Julie Gagnon, graphic designer” may therefore be complying with the rules without appearing in the register.

According to [Québec.ca](#), a record includes the NEQ, registration status, names used, establishment addresses, officers and directors, and the names of ultimate beneficiaries.

What the register **does not** provide:

- the business's financial health or debts;
- its permits (RBQ licence, professional orders);
- its registration for GST and QST;
- certain personal information: under [section 99.1 of the Act](#), dates of birth are never available for consultation, nor are home addresses when a business address has been declared.

The register also reflects what the business itself has declared. As Données Québec points out, [businesses are responsible for the accuracy of the information they declare](#).

Looking up a business for free

Access is available through the [Search for a business in the enterprise register](#) page on Québec.ca. It offers three types of searches:

Search type	What you enter	What you get
Search for a business	The NEQ, name or a related word	A list of matching businesses, followed by the statement of information
Individual, by first and last name	First and last name	The businesses associated with that person
Individual, by NEQ	The NEQ of a sole proprietorship	The person's name and a list of businesses with similar names

Practical steps

1. Start with the NEQ if it appears on the invoice, quote or contract. It is the most reliable identifier, since two businesses can have almost identical names.
2. If you do not have an NEQ, search by the business's trade name, then by the legal name on the contract. A corporation can operate under several names.
3. If the name search is inconclusive, switch to the **advanced search**, which Québec.ca specifically offers when the NEQ is unknown.
4. Open the statement of information and keep a dated copy in your supplier file.

Looking up a person associated with businesses

A search by first and last name is useful when a subcontractor introduces themselves by name and you want to know which entity actually issues the invoice. It also shows whether an officer is associated with other businesses, some of which may have had their registration cancelled.

A useful reminder: an individual operating a sole proprietorship **cannot hold more than one NEQ**. If a self-employed person gives you two NEQs beginning with 22 on two invoices, ask why. Finally, a shared name is not proof: cross-check the address or business name.

Reading the NEQ: the first two digits

The NEQ has ten digits. According to the [official description of information items](#), the first two indicate the legal form:

Prefix	Legal form	What this means for you
11	Legal person (e.g., corporation, cooperative)	An entity separate from its shareholders: it takes on the obligations and makes the payments.
22	Individual operating a sole proprietorship	You contract with the individual, who is personally liable for the debts.
33	Partnership, association or other group	Check the partners and the partnership's purpose.
88	Public authority	A government department, municipality or public body.

Reading the statement of information section by section

These are the sections useful for a routine check, based on the [Québec.ca page](#):

Identification. The NEQ and current name. Compare the name word for word with the invoice and contract.

Addresses. The *domicile* is a legal person's head office, a sole proprietor's home address or a partnership's principal establishment. The *elected domicile* is the address to which documents are sent for the purposes of the Act. An individual's *business address* cannot be a post office box.

Registration. The registration date is the date the NEQ was assigned, and it never changes. A business registered three weeks ago that claims to have been "established for 15 years" warrants a question.

Status and legal form. Registration status (see below), type of business, date of constitution and governing legislation (Québec, federal or other legislation).

Update dates. The date of the last annual updating declaration, the filing deadline for the year concerned and, if none has ever been filed, the message « Aucune déclaration de mise à jour annuelle n'a été produite à ce jour ».

Bankruptcy and remedies. The Bankruptcy section, displayed only for NEQs beginning with 11 or 22, indicates whether or not the business is bankrupt, or that no information has been declared since February 14, 2011. The message « L'entreprise fait l'objet d'un recours » appears if an application for a remedy has been submitted to the Registrar.

Amalgamation, liquidation or dissolution. Indicates whether the corporation resulted from an amalgamation or whether a liquidation or dissolution document has been filed.

Activities. The economic activity code (CAE) and the number of employees in Québec. An “IT supplier” registered as operating in food services is something to note.

People. Directors, officers who are not board members, the three shareholders holding the most votes and ultimate beneficiaries (generally, individuals holding 25% or more of the voting rights or fair market value). The person signing your contract should appear in this section or have a clear power of attorney.

Establishments and index of names. Operating addresses in Québec and all names used, both current and previous. The index of names quickly links a trade name to a numbered company.

Registration status and cancellation by the Registrar

The status may be, for example, « immatriculée », « radiée d'office » (by the Registrar) or « radiée sur demande » (often after operations have ceased). When a registration has been cancelled, the [record](#) specifies the date and circumstances: read them. Cancellation by the Registrar is not always a sign of a problem, since the Act also provides for the automatic cancellation of a legal person that has been [amalgamated](#) or [dissolved](#). After an amalgamation, check the NEQ of the resulting corporation.

The most concerning case is the one covered by [section 59](#). After notifying the business, the Registrar may cancel its registration if it has failed to file its updating declarations for two consecutive years. The same section adds that cancelling the registration of a legal person constituted in Québec **results in its dissolution**.

In practice:

- **Before signing:** a Québec corporation whose registration has been cancelled by the Registrar under section 59 is dissolved. Wait until its status is restored.
- **The situation is reversible.** The business can apply to have the cancellation revoked by filing the missing declarations and paying the fees and penalties (s. 63). An interested person other than the business, such as a creditor, can also apply (s. 64).
- **The effect is retroactive, with a qualification.** Once the cancellation is revoked, the registration is deemed never to have been cancelled and the legal person never to have been dissolved, « sous réserve des droits acquis par un tiers » (s. 67).

- **Existing contract:** ask the other party to bring its registration back into good standing and consult a lawyer before making any further payment.

If your own business is affected, our article on [the reasons for cancellation by the Registrar](#) explains how to resolve the situation.

Warning signs to watch for

Finding in the record	Why it is a warning sign	What to do
No annual update filed, or the last one is old	Two years of non-compliance can lead to cancellation by the Registrar; officers and addresses may be out of date	Ask why; confirm the signatory's identity through other means
Status « radiée »	The corporation may have been dissolved or the business closed	Read the circumstances; do not sign until its status is restored
Bankruptcy section: « en faillite »	The business may no longer control its assets	Check the federal bankruptcy register (see below)
Name or NEQ differs from the one on the invoice	The invoice was issued by another entity, or may even involve impersonation	Require an invoice with the exact name
Address inconsistent with the one on the contract or bank transfer	An update error, or fraud involving a change of banking details	Call a known contact, rather than the number in the email
Signatory not listed among directors and officers	Authority to sign needs to be established	Ask for a resolution or power of attorney

Under [section 98](#), registered information (name, domicile, directors, addresses, etc.) is proof of its contents in favour of third parties acting in good faith, and a business whose registration has been cancelled by the Registrar cannot dispute what it has declared. This is why keeping a dated copy of the record is useful.

Going further: useful cross-checks

Depending on the amount at stake, add these checks:

- **GST/HST:** the [Canada Revenue Agency's GST/HST Registry](#) is free. Using the first nine digits of the number, the business name and the transaction date, it confirms that the supplier is registered, which matters for your input tax credits.
- **QST:** Revenu Québec offers an online service and an [API to validate a QST registration number](#) (a ten-digit number followed by « TQ » and four digits); they return the number's status and the business name.
- **Federal corporation:** if the governing legislation is a federal statute, [Corporations Canada's federal corporation search](#) lets you confirm its existence by name, corporation number or business number.

- **Bankruptcy and insolvency:** the Bankruptcy section of the Québec register relies on what has been declared. The Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcy maintains the federal register of bankruptcy and insolvency records; an [\\$8 fee is charged to access its documents](#) (in effect in October 2026).
- **Open data:** to check dozens of suppliers, the « [Registre des entreprises](#) » dataset from [Données Québec](#) (six CSV files linked by NEQ) is updated every two weeks under a CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 licence (no commercial use), without individuals' names and addresses.

Five-minute verification checklist

Before a deposit, a lease or extending credit to a client:

1. Obtain the other party's NEQ and exact legal name, then read the prefix (11, 22, 33 or 88).
2. Check for the status « immatriculée »; if the registration has been cancelled, read the date and circumstances.
3. Check the last annual update and the Bankruptcy and Remedies sections.
4. Confirm that the signatory is listed among the directors, officers or partners, or holds a power of attorney.
5. Compare the domicile, elected domicile and establishments with the addresses on the contract.
6. Validate the GST and QST numbers on the invoice.
7. Keep a dated copy of the record and validations.

Illustrative example. A Montréal small or medium-sized business receives a quote requiring a deposit from « [Rénovations Boréal](#) ». The NEQ begins with 11: a corporation. The record shows a numbered company, with « [Rénovations Boréal](#) » in the index of names: consistent. The status is « immatriculée », but the last annual update was two years ago, and the signatory is not a director. The business asks for written proof of authority to sign, validates the tax numbers and reduces the deposit pending the return to good standing.

What about your own record?

Your clients, banks and landlords will perform the same check on you: an annual update filed on time and addresses consistent with your invoices inspire confidence. For deadlines, see our article on [the annual updating declaration with the REQ](#).

If you are looking for a stable civic address for your business, [2727 Coworking](#) offers a business address at 109-2727, rue Saint-Patrick, in Griffintown, along the Lachine Canal.

Sources

- [Search for a business in the enterprise register](#) — Québec.ca
- [Description of information items in a record in the register](#) — Québec.ca
- [Québec enterprise number \(NEQ\)](#) — Québec.ca
- [Act respecting the legal publicity of enterprises \(RLRQ, c. P-44.1\)](#) — [LégisQuébec](#)
- [Enterprise register \(dataset\)](#) — [Données Québec](#)
- [Confirming a GST/HST account number](#) — [Canada Revenue Agency](#)

- [Application programming interface \(API\) to validate a QST registration number — Revenu Québec](#)
- [Federal corporation search — Corporations Canada](#)
- [List of frequently requested topics — Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcy](#)

Source links

Links cited in this article, in order of first appearance. Full addresses are provided for readers using extracted text.

1. <https://www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca/fr/document/lc/P-44.1>
2. <https://www.quebec.ca/entreprises-et-travailleurs-autonomes/obtenir-renseignements-entreprise/numero-entreprise-quebec>
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