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Can a Quebec Engineer Use a Coworking Address? OIQ Audit

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Executive Summary

A Quebec engineer can work from a coworking space, but no OIQ rule found in this audit says that a virtual address or a rotating desk automatically counts as the engineer's principal place of practice. The Ordre des ingénieurs du Québec (OIQ, the engineering order) requires each member to elect a professional domicile by naming the place where the member principally practises, and that address is public and appears in the member directory (www.oiq.qc.ca). A change of that address must be entered within 30 days (www.oiq.qc.ca). Because the test is where the work actually happens, a mail-only plan is a mailing arrangement, not a practice location, unless the engineer genuinely works there (this is a reading of the rule, not an OIQ position).

The 2023 place-of-practice rules add three functional duties: the place where the engineer meets clients must protect confidentiality, the engineer must have access to up-to-date documentation, and the engineer must ensure continuity of services during absence (gpp.oiq.qc.ca). Files must be kept at least 10 years after closure (gpp.oiq.qc.ca). The regulation names no type of premises, so each gate becomes a question for the operator, answered by contract terms, a bookable private room, access-controlled storage, and a written coverage plan. Where those proofs are missing, the answer is "unresolved, ask the OIQ" rather than "pass".

Four different addresses are involved. The OIQ domicile is public. A sole proprietor's Registraire des entreprises du Québec (REQ, the business register) domicile is the principal residence (cdn-contenu.quebec.ca), with an optional professional address that cannot be a post office box (www.quebec.ca). The Canada Revenue Agency says a mailing address can differ from the physical address (www.canada.ca). Invoices and mail plans are a fourth layer with no OIQ rule found.

Scale matters. The OIQ counted 65,008 members at 31 March 2026 (www.oiq.qc.ca), of whom 22,090, or 34%, were domiciled in Montréal (www.oiq.qc.ca). Greater Montréal overall office vacancy was 16.7% in Q3 2026 (assets.cushmanwakefield.com), but speech-privacy science offers no pass mark for engineers: the ASTM closed-room method sets no criteria for adequate privacy (store.astm.org).

Recommended path: choose the principal practice location first, test it against the three gates with evidence from the operator, check liability insurance separately, and ask the OIQ in writing about any virtual or rotating arrangement. This report is not legal advice, and the OIQ's own guide says it is not a legal opinion (gpp.oiq.qc.ca).

Introduction and Background

Independent consulting engineers and two-to-five-person firms in Montréal face a question the OIQ guidance answers only in part: can the published professional domicile sit in a shared workspace? This report separates four things that are often blurred, namely the OIQ professional domicile, the firm's REQ registration address, tax-agency addresses, and the mail or invoice address. It then audits three workspace models (a virtual address, a rotating hot desk, and an enclosed private office) against the OIQ's place-of-practice and records rules.

The report is an explainer built from primary sources: the Code des professions, the Loi sur les ingénieurs, the OIQ's Règlement sur les dossiers, les lieux d'exercice et la cessation d'exercice des ingénieurs (the records regulation, I-9, r. 7.3), the OIQ's Guide de pratique professionnelle (GPP, the practice guide), the OIQ annual report, and operator pages that describe their own offerings. The GPP was published for this regulation in May 2023 (gpp.oiq.qc.ca), and its documentary-management page was last modified in September 2025 (gpp.oiq.qc.ca).

The audit found no OIQ or GPP page that addresses virtual offices, coworking, or rotating desks by name. Where the written rules are functional rather than prescriptive, this report marks the cell as "ask OIQ" instead of inventing a verdict.

The publisher, 2727 Coworking, is a Montréal operator of private offices, hot and dedicated desks, a meeting room and a virtual-office address, so it is itself one of the options a reader might consider. That interest is disclosed here, and the publisher's own pages are not used as evidence. Nothing in this report asserts that any operator, including the publisher, offers storage or rooms that meet an OIQ requirement; readers should obtain that evidence from each operator in writing.

Decision Tree: Salaried Engineer, Private Consultant or Firm

The first fork is the engineer's mode of practice, because the OIQ's address rules and insurance obligations both change with it.

Salaried engineer in general practice

The OIQ's insurance page defines general practice as providing professional services internally rather than to the employer's clients (www.oiq.qc.ca). For these members the address question is mostly the employer's. The OIQ says a member with several jobs must choose the one where the member works the majority of the time (www.oiq.qc.ca). A member working at a client's site through outsourcing declares the employer's name and address, not the client's (www.oiq.qc.ca). A coworking address matters only if the employer places the engineer there.

Private consultant working alone

A self-employed engineer is in private practice, and the OIQ says the insurance obligation then depends on the activities performed (www.oiq.qc.ca). Occasional private practice is limited to fees of CAD 15,000 or less in reserved-activity services per 12-month period starting 1 April, among other conditions (www.oiq.qc.ca). This profile is the most likely to consider a hot desk or a mail plan.

Two-to-five-person firm

An engineer who delivers services through a general partnership or a share corporation is not treated as a self-employed worker, even if working alone inside the firm, and cannot use the occasional private-practice category (www.oiq.qc.ca). Firms also need records to be accessible: the regulation treats files kept by the firm as the engineer's own files if the engineer can enter documents and information about the engineer's services in them (www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca). The workspace must therefore serve every engineer's access rights.

The inference that drives this audit

The OIQ page allows a member who performs no reserved activity to elect the personal residence or the employer's address as the professional domicile (www.oiq.qc.ca). The page states no equivalent flexibility for members who do perform reserved activities, which suggests, as an inference, that those members should name a place where they genuinely work. That inference is the main reason this report treats a mail-only address as unresolved.

What the OIQ Means by Domicile Professionnel

The legal source

The Code des professions requires every professional to elect domicile by telling the order's secretary where the professional principally practises (www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca). The professional must also report every other place of practice (www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca), and changes to the domicile, other places or the email address must be notified within 30 days (www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca). The OIQ restates this for engineers: the member must make known the place where the member principally practises (www.oiq.qc.ca).

Public by law

The Code makes information on practice places other than the domicile public as well (www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca). The OIQ confirms that the address is public and appears in the member directory (www.oiq.qc.ca), and directs the public to that directory to confirm a member is in good standing (www.oiq.qc.ca). A client who searches the directory therefore sees the address the engineer chose.

The 30-day change rule

The OIQ gives 30 days to update the professional domicile or the email address in the member portal (www.oiq.qc.ca), and the same 30 days apply to a change of employer (www.oiq.qc.ca). For a firm that moves between workspace models, this clock starts on the day the principal practice place changes, not when a lease is signed or a mailbox is activated (a practical reading of "change").

What the rules do not say

No page in the audit defines "principal practice" by hours or tenancy type. The only quantified hint is the "majority of the time" test for members with several jobs. The records regulation refers to the "domicile professionnel" only in passing, for example when a notice to clients may be published in a newspaper circulating where the domicile was located (www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca). The Code of ethics lets an engineer require that client requests to consult, correct or retrieve a file be made at the professional domicile during usual working hours (www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca). That clause matters for a mail-only address: if clients are told to attend an address where the engineer is never present, the clause cannot work as intended.

The Code des professions also bars a false, misleading or incomplete representation (www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca). Whether a mail-only address presented as a practice location could be read that way is untested in the sources reviewed, so it belongs on the list of questions for the OIQ.

Four Addresses, Four Jobs

Most confusion comes from using one address for four distinct purposes. *Table 1* below lays out what each address is for, what the sources say about it, and whether a coworking or virtual address is addressed in the sources.

Role	What the source says	Public?	Coworking or virtual address addressed?
OIQ professional domicile	Place where the member principally practises; 30 days to update	Yes, in the member directory	**Not addressed.** Ask OIQ
Other places of practice (OIQ)	Must also be declared to the order; public	Yes	**Not addressed.** A second desk or room may belong here, ask OIQ
REQ, sole proprietor domicile	Principal residence of the natural person (cdn-contenu.quebec.ca)	Hidden from consultation if a professional address is declared (www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca)	Not applicable to a business address
REQ, optional professional address	Principal place of work or business (cdn-contenu.quebec.ca)	Yes; a post office box cannot be used (www.quebec.ca)	**Not addressed beyond the P.O. box exclusion**
REQ, establishment addresses and domicile élu	Establishment addresses are listed, with the principal one identified (www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca); an optional chosen domicile requires a named recipient (www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca)	Register is open to anyone (www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca)	A mail-handling service may fit a chosen-domicile concept; verify with the Registraire
Tax agencies	The CRA says the mailing address can differ from the physical address (www.canada.ca), and books and records held elsewhere must be reported (www.canada.ca)	No	Mailing differs from physical is allowed by the CRA; Revenu Québec requires separate address-change notice (www.revenuquebec.ca)

Role	What the source says	Public?	Coworking or virtual address addressed?
Client invoices and letterhead	No OIQ rule located; the general ban on misleading representation applies	Client-facing	Ask OIQ; keep consistent with the directory

The crosswalk shows that only the first two rows are OIQ matters. The REQ rows concern the firm's or sole proprietor's business registration, where a natural person's professional address is defined by principal place of work or business. If the declared professional address stops being valid the registrar can ask for a correction, and the Quebec government says the home address is then published (www.quebec.ca). In practical terms, an engineer who moves from one workspace to another has up to four separate update duties running at once.

REQ timing

Changes to registered information are due within 30 days under the business-publicity statute (www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca), and the government's current-update page repeats the 30-day window (www.quebec.ca). Every registered enterprise also files an annual update (www.quebec.ca); for sole proprietorships and partnerships not combined with a tax return the window runs from 1 January to 15 June (www.quebec.ca), and for corporations it runs from 15 May to 15 November (www.quebec.ca).

Tax agencies

Revenu Québec says a business address change must be reported even where Canada Post forwarding is used (www.revenuquebec.ca). The CRA says its physical business address cannot be a rural route or post office box (www.canada.ca). A mailbox plan therefore does not substitute for these reports.

The 2023 Place-of-Practice Gates

The records regulation sets minimum standards for the place where an engineer practises. In this audit, "gates" is the editor's shorthand for the three duties in articles 7 to 9, not a term used by the regulation; articles 8 and 9 are personal duties of the engineer, not pass/fail criteria that a workspace must meet on its own. The OIQ's own summary of the May 2023 regulation lists three requirements: respecting the confidential nature of conversations with clients, allowing access to the up-to-date documentation required in the course of the profession, and ensuring continuity of services in case of absence (gpp.oiq.qc.ca). Article 7 applies to the place of practice where the engineer holds a conversation with a client, which the regulation says must be arranged so as to ensure respect for the client's right to confidentiality (www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca).

Gate 1: confidential client conversations

The regulation names an outcome, not a room type. Engineers also carry a professional-secrecy duty under the Code des professions (www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca). For a workspace audit, three kinds of evidence answer this gate:

- **Contract:** exclusive use of an enclosed room for the booked time.
- **Room description:** the walls, door and any measured acoustic result.

- **Booking record:** a calendar showing the room is available when client meetings actually occur.

Acoustic science gives vocabulary but not a mandated number. NRC Canada's building digest defines the Articulation Index as running from zero, for perfect privacy, to unity (web.mit.edu). Acoustics Today describes an Articulation Index below 0.05 as "confidential" speech privacy and 0.05 to 0.15 as "normal" (acousticstoday.org). For closed rooms, NRC researchers define Speech Privacy Class as the measured noise level outside the room plus the measured level difference (jcaa.caa-aca.ca), and their scale labels SPC 70 as minimal speech privacy (jcaa.caa-aca.ca). The ASTM closed-room method measures privacy but states that it does not recommend criteria for adequate speech privacy (store.astm.org), and the open-plan method predicts average privacy, not the privacy of specific occupants (webstore.ansi.org). A 2026 review adds that meeting reverberation-time targets does not necessarily ensure acceptable speech privacy (cris.unibo.it).

The honest reading: no engineer-specific threshold exists in the sources, so a hot desk in an open area is hard to defend on this gate for client calls, while an enclosed room with a door is easier to defend but still unmeasured. A Montréal operator can say its phone booths are soundproofed, as Montréal CoWork states for its 20 booths (montrealcowork.com), but that is a vendor claim, not a measurement.

Gate 2: access to up-to-date documentation

The regulation requires access to the up-to-date documentation needed for the practice (www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca). In a workspace this splits into two parts: reference material (codes, standards, drawings) and the engineer's own project files. Both need dependable internet and a secure way to reach cloud systems. The Canadian Centre for Cyber Security says sensitive data should not be sent over open networks without additional encryption (www.cyber.gc.ca), recommends a corporate VPN on unmanaged networks (www.cyber.gc.ca), and says organizations should never connect public Wi-Fi networks to their corporate networks (www.cyber.gc.ca). The Government of Canada's public guidance warns that anyone can connect to public Wi-Fi (www.getcybersafe.gc.ca). A shared workspace network sits somewhere on that spectrum, and only the operator can say where.

Gate 3: continuity in case of absence

The regulation requires the engineer to take the necessary measures to ensure continuity of services (www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca). Under article 9, an engineer who is absent from the place of practice during normal business hours must take those measures and must also tell people who try to reach the engineer how long the absence will last and what to do in an emergency. Articles 8 and 9 are duties of the engineer, not obligations of a workspace operator. For a one-person practice that means more than a mail plan: a named substitute engineer, a monitored phone or email message, and a documented way for that substitute to reach files. For a firm it also means rotating access rights so that one person's absence does not block a file.

The same regulation sets stronger duties when practice stops. The cessation rules work as follows:

- **Permanent stop:** an engineer practising alone assigns records to another engineer (www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca), with notice to the order at least 45 days before the planned date (www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca).
- **Temporary stop:** a cessation beyond 90 consecutive days triggers further notice and custody rules (www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca).

- **No assignment possible:** the secretary of the order takes possession of the records (www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca).

A coworking contract that ends with the member's account closing should not trap files the successor needs.

Files, Access Rights and the Ten-Year Clock

What the records rules require

The practice guide states that reasonable measures must be taken to preserve the confidentiality and integrity of records at all times (gpp.oiq.qc.ca). The regulation also requires retention of each file for at least 10 years after the date of closure (www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca). The OIQ's summary states the same duty in plain terms (gpp.oiq.qc.ca). After the period, an engineer may destroy a file provided confidentiality is preserved (www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca).

Digital and paper files

The OIQ practice guide sets out four expectations:

- **Confidential access:** documents are consulted so as to preserve the confidentiality of their content (gpp.oiq.qc.ca).
- **Access control:** a document-management system supports control of access (gpp.oiq.qc.ca).
- **Durable storage:** media allow quick and secure access for the whole retention period (gpp.oiq.qc.ca).
- **Digital archives and backup:** confidentiality is preserved by restricting access (gpp.oiq.qc.ca), and a backup copy is kept in a separate and secure location (gpp.oiq.qc.ca).

Where archiving is entrusted to an intermediary, the engineer must understand the extent of the intermediary's responsibility (gpp.oiq.qc.ca). That sentence is the most relevant to workspace selection, because a coworking operator that stores boxes or hosts a shared drive would likely be such an intermediary (an inference, not an OIQ statement).

Quebec privacy law adds a second layer. The Commission d'accès à l'information (CAI, the privacy regulator) says a business must put security measures in place against confidentiality incidents (www.cai.gouv.qc.ca), lists physical measures such as controlling access to offices and server rooms (www.cai.gouv.qc.ca), and lists restricting access to rooms or filing cabinets that hold paper records (www.cai.gouv.qc.ca). Every business must keep an incident register (www.cai.gouv.qc.ca) for at least five years (www.cai.gouv.qc.ca). By default the person with the highest authority is the privacy officer (www.cai.gouv.qc.ca). Personal information must be destroyed once no longer needed, the only restriction being a legal retention period (www.cai.gouv.qc.ca), which is how the engineers' 10-year rule and the privacy rule fit together.

The retention timeline

The clock runs from the closure date of each file, not from the end of the engineer's contract with a workspace. *Table 2* below shows a worked timeline.

(Hypothetical Example) A firm completes a building-systems design on 30 June 2026 and closes the file on 30 September 2026.

Date	Event	Basis
30 June 2026	Work completed (assumed)	Hypothetical
30 September 2026	File closed (assumed)	Hypothetical
30 June 2029	Three years after the assumed completion date, used only as an illustrative proxy; the general personal-action period runs from the day the right of action arises	Civil Code art. 2925 (www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca)
30 June 2031	Five years after completion; period for loss of the work for engineers who directed or supervised it	Civil Code art. 2118 (www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca)
30 September 2036	Earliest date the file may be destroyed, if confidentiality is preserved	Regulation art. 6
After 2036	General 10-year prescription period also expressed in the Code	Civil Code art. 2922 (www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca)

The regulatory minimum outlasts the five-year period in the example, so the shared-space contract has to cover a decade of access. The Civil Code also provides that where an injury appears progressively, the period runs from the day it first appears (www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca), so these arithmetic dates are floors for planning, not predictions of legal exposure. Whether to keep files longer is a decision for the firm and its insurer, which this report does not make. When an engineer leaves an employer, the GPP says the engineer cannot take or keep copies of records held by the employer or firm (gpp.oiq.qc.ca), and that anyone has the right to see documents about them in a file held after a practice ends (gpp.oiq.qc.ca).

Auditing Three Workspace Models

The audit uses three models: a **virtual address or mail plan**, a **rotating or hot desk**, and an **enclosed private office**. Cells use a three-state scale: **Pass possible** if the model can plausibly meet the gate when the listed evidence is supplied, **Unknown** if the sources do not settle it, and **Ask OIQ** if the written rules do not address the model. No cell is a legal verdict. *Table 3* below summarizes the matrix.

OIQ question	Virtual address or mail plan	Hot or rotating desk	Enclosed private office	Evidence the operator must supply
Is it where I principally practise? (domicile)	**Ask OIQ.** A mail-only plan has no workstation by design (see *Table 4*)	**Ask OIQ.** Depends on how often and where the engineer actually works	**Pass possible.** Dedicated, continuous use is closest to the "principal place" idea	Written contract term, access logs or attendance, signed statement of use

OIQ question	Virtual address or mail plan	Hot or rotating desk	Enclosed private office	Evidence the operator must supply
Confidential client conversations	**Unknown.** Needs a bookable room, which may cost extra	**Unknown.** Open areas depend on phone booths and rooms	**Pass possible.** Lockable door, where the operator offers one	Room plan, door and wall description, booking guarantee, any acoustic test report
Current documentation access	**Unknown.** No desk, so reference material is remote	**Unknown.** Internet is usually included, but network security is not stated	**Pass possible only if** the operator offers a private network or VPN	Network design, VLAN or private-line option, uptime commitment
Continuity if absent	**Unknown.** Mail handling exists, but a named substitute and file access are separate	**Unknown.** Desk can be used by a substitute only if the contract allows	**Pass possible only if** the operator allows a named substitute to share the room	Authorized-user clause, 24/7 access terms, named substitute plan
Secure files and 10-year retention	**Ask OIQ.** Address plans rarely include storage	**Unknown.** Locking cabinets exist in some products, but records need access control	**Pass possible only if** the operator offers a lockable cabinet or secured room	Storage specification, access list, backup location, end-of-contract file return
Insurance fit	**Check separately**	**Check separately**	**Check separately**	Broker confirmation; workspace insurance does not replace the engineer's own coverage

Table 3 shows why a private office is the only model with several cells that can reach "pass possible" on evidence alone, and why a mail-only plan shows "ask OIQ" on both the domicile row and the file-retention row. These ratings are the editor's structural judgement, not findings of the OIQ or any regulator. They assume features an operator may or may not offer (a lockable door, a private network or a shared room), and no operator was verified to provide them.

Insurance is a separate question

The OIQ states that professional liability insurance protects against professional faults and is an obligation for the member, as protection for the public (www.oiq.qc.ca). In private practice, the obligation depends on the activities performed, and a member who joins the supplementary collective plan personally must carry at least CAD 500,000 per claim (www.oiq.qc.ca). Since 7 November 2024, article 187.11 of the Code des professions has required an engineer who performs only non-reserved activities within an engineering organization to demonstrate that the employer carries equivalent insurance (www.oiq.qc.ca), and the Code requires a guarantee against professional liability for members practising in a legal person (www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca). A workspace operator's general liability policy is not an engineering professional-liability policy, and the OIQ materials provide no basis for treating it as a substitute. Whether a change of premises needs notice to the broker is a policy question; the audit found no OIQ rule on it.

Operator disclosures in Montréal

Table 4 below summarizes what several Montréal-area operators say about themselves, as of 8 November 2026. These are vendor statements, not independent measurements, and none addresses OIQ requirements.

Operator	Documented offerings (operator's own words)	Relevant to OIQ gates
WeWork (Montréal)	Dedicated desk in a shared lockable office (www.wework.com); meeting rooms bookable by the hour (www.wework.com)	Memberships include meeting rooms and phone booths (www.wework.com); no OIQ statement
Regus (Montréal)	Mail sent to a prime Montréal address (regus.com); a plan adds private office or coworking access five days a month (regus.com); notes that registering under a virtual address is not allowed in some regions (regus.com)	Address-only plans give no workspace access (regus.com); forwarding costs extra (regus.com)
Spaces (Montréal)	Hot desks to dedicated offices (www.spacesworks.com); virtual office with mail and call handling (www.spacesworks.com)	Day access to a private office (www.spacesworks.com)
Hedhofis (Old Montréal)	Lockable private offices, dedicated desks and meeting rooms (www.hedhofis.com); address-only plan without workstation (www.hedhofis.com)	Address usable with the business registry (www.hedhofis.com); no OIQ statement
Montréal CoWork	Private offices with 24/7 badge access (montrealcowork.com); business address and mail reception (montrealcowork.com)	Soundproofed phone booths; mail scanning at extra cost (montrealcowork.com)
Espace Beaubien (Rosemont)	Assigned desk with locking cabinet (espacebeaubien.com); fully dedicated private office (espacebeaubien.com)	Day-rate desk open 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. on weekdays (espacebeaubien.com)
2727 Coworking (Griffintown, publisher of this report)	Private offices, hot and dedicated desks, a meeting room and a virtual-office address, according to the publisher	No OIQ-specific claim is made here; request the same evidence list as from any operator

The table is a map of questions, not a ranking. No operator page in the audit stated that its address had been accepted for professional-order registration, and none mentioned the OIQ; the closest statements concern business-registry use and a general caveat that some regions disallow virtual addresses. The publisher's row is deliberately uncited and descriptive only, and the reader should test it exactly like the others.

Data Analysis and Evidence

The OIQ population

At 31 March 2026 the OIQ's annual report shows:

- **Total members:** 65,008 (www.oiq.qc.ca).
- **Montréal domicile:** 22,090 members, or 34% (www.oiq.qc.ca).
- **Private practice of reserved activities:** 11,592 members (derived share of all members: about 17.8%) (www.oiq.qc.ca).
- **Occasional private practice:** 902 members (www.oiq.qc.ca).
- **Exempt from the supplementary plan:** 5,657 of the 11,592, about 48.8% (derived), because a firm or employer covers them (www.oiq.qc.ca).

- **Basic plan only:** 53,416 members (www.oiq.qc.ca).

Because a member can hold several jobs, these categories are job-based and should not be summed.

Self-employment and remote work context

Statistics Canada reported that 19.0% of Canada's own-account workers in 2023 were in professional, scientific and technical services, the largest industry share (www150.statcan.gc.ca). In Montréal, the city's compilation of Institut de la statistique du Québec data shows self-employed workers rising from 136,800 in 2024 to 152,900 in 2025 (ville.montreal.qc.ca), a rise of about 11.8% (derived). In May 2026, 78.8% of employed Canadians worked exclusively outside the home (www150.statcan.gc.ca) and 11.4% worked exclusively from home (www150.statcan.gc.ca). These numbers do not measure engineers specifically.

The Montréal office market

Cushman & Wakefield put Greater Montréal overall office vacancy at 16.7% in Q3 2026, down from 18.2% a year earlier (assets.cushmanwakefield.com). CBRE reported 17.3% for Q3 2026 (www.cbre.com), and Altus Group reported an availability rate (a different measure) that fell 110 basis points year on year (www.altusgroup.com). Downtown Class AAA overall vacancy was 7.7% in the Cushman & Wakefield data (assets.cushmanwakefield.com), while CBRE reported Class AAA vacancy of 3.0% (www.cbre.com). The firms define geography and class differently, so the figures are not averaged here. Cushman & Wakefield also put average asking gross rent for all classes in Greater Montréal at CAD 36.21 per square foot (assets.cushmanwakefield.com), with Central Class A at CAD 47.55 (assets.cushmanwakefield.com). No originator figure for the share of flexible space in Montréal was retrievable, so none is given.

Displayed operator prices

Price points are operator-stated and undated unless noted. Hedhofis lists its corporate address at CAD 89 a month before taxes at Old Montréal and four other locations, with a page update date of 2 November 2026 (www.hedhofis.com), and mail forwarding as an option at CAD 50 a month (www.hedhofis.com). Espace Beaubien lists mailing-address access at CAD 20 a month on one daily plan (espacebeaubien.com) and meeting rooms between CAD 30 and CAD 60 an hour depending on the room (espacebeaubien.com). Currency is not printed on the Hedhofis page, so CAD is an assumption. A low address fee says nothing about whether the place meets the three gates, so price belongs at the end of the audit, not the start.

Cost worksheet

Table 5 below gives a worksheet with user-entered lines. Formula: **monthly cost = workspace fee + (booked room hours x hourly rate) + storage + forwarding or scanning + network or VPN + broker-confirmed insurance change**. Only the operator's displayed numbers are filled in.

Line	Virtual address	Hot desk	Private office
Base fee	Operator quote (displayed example: $89, Hedhofis)	Operator quote	Operator quote

Line	Virtual address	Hot desk	Private office
Room hours per month x rate	Enter hours x rate (displayed example range: $30 to $60 per hour)	Enter	Included hours? Enter
Storage or locker	Enter	Enter	Enter
Mail forwarding or scanning	Displayed example: $50	Enter	Enter
Network or VPN	Enter	Enter	Enter
Insurance change confirmed by broker	Enter	Enter	Enter
Total	Sum	Sum	Sum

(Hypothetical Example) An engineer books 6 room-hours a month at the displayed range: 6 x $30 to 6 x $60 gives $180 to $360 a month before the base fee. The point of the worksheet is that variable room hours can outweigh the address fee, and that the room is the part that serves the confidentiality gate.

Visit Checklist for a Montréal Operator

Take this list into the walk-through and request written answers, which are better evidence than verbal assurances.

- **Domicile use:** Will the operator confirm in writing that the member will work on site on a regular schedule? Is there any clause limiting use of the address for regulatory registration? Regus, for example, warns that some regions disallow registration under a virtual address.
- **Directory alignment:** Is the exact suite and address the same text that will appear in the OIQ portal and the REQ record?
- **Confidential rooms:** Is an enclosed room guaranteed at the times of client meetings? Which rooms have solid doors, and what do the walls reach? Ask for any measured speech-privacy report; none is mandated.
- **Booking rules:** Can rooms be booked without a membership or by the hour (www.hedhofis.com)? What happens when the room is full?
- **Documents and storage:** Is there a lockable cabinet or locker, and who else holds keys? Does the operator access it? Who can enter the room after hours?
- **Network:** Is there a private network or fixed line, or only shared Wi-Fi? Does the operator permit an engineer's VPN? The Cyber Centre baseline asks for two-factor authentication on cloud administrative accounts (www.cyber.gc.ca) and encryption of sensitive information stored off premises (www.cyber.gc.ca).
- **Continuity:** Is access 24/7? Can a named substitute engineer enter if the member is unavailable? What are the operator's emergency contacts?
- **Mail:** Are mail scanning and forwarding included or extra? Who signs for deliveries of confidential documents?

- **Contract exit:** What notice ends access? How and when are files returned? A 12-month commitment may apply to larger offices (montrealcowork.com).
- **Insurance:** Does the operator carry its own cover, and is it clear that this is not a substitute for professional liability? Ask the broker, not the operator, whether the premises matter.

Owner-Side Sign-off and Update Workflow

A written sign-off turns the audit into a file that can be shown to the OIQ or a broker. Nothing here is mandated; the sequence matches the deadlines in the sources.

1. **Choose the principal place.** The owner, or each engineer in a firm, records where most work will happen and cites the OIQ rule that the domicile is the principal practice place.
2. **Run the three gates.** For each gate (confidential conversations, current documentation, continuity), attach the evidence from the checklist and mark pass possible, unknown or ask OIQ.
3. **Send the open questions to the OIQ in writing.** Ask whether a virtual address, rotating desk or booked-room model can serve as the principal place and as an additional place of practice. Keep the reply with the file.
4. **Confirm insurance.** Written confirmation from the broker that the chosen arrangement is compatible with the member's coverage category.
5. **Sign the contract.** Insert clauses on authorized users, file return, access after hours and notice of change of address.
6. **Update public records.** Within 30 days of the change: OIQ portal, REQ, and the tax agencies. Align invoices and letterhead.
7. **Run the ten-year file register.** Record closure dates, so that the earliest destruction date is traceable.
8. **Re-test annually.** The OIQ requires a declaration of places of practice and activities at annual registration, according to its own brief on Bill 67 (www.oiq.qc.ca), so a yearly review matches that cycle.

If the location changes, the same list is rerun: new evidence, new sign-off, and a fresh 30-day clock. The records on the old premises must go with the practice or be handed to an assignee if practice stops.

Implications and Future Directions

Three implications follow. First, **the OIQ's functional wording favors evidence over labels**: a coworking contract is neither approved nor excluded by name. Second, **address plans and workspace plans are different products**. A mail-only plan can support correspondence while leaving the principal-practice question unanswered, and the REQ itself excludes a post office box as a professional address. Third, **privacy law and engineering records law pull in the same direction**. The CAI's physical-security examples and the OIQ's access-control language suggest that a private room with a lockable cabinet is the cleanest answer for client files.

Future directions are uncertain. The OIQ may publish clearer guidance on telework and shared premises; the audit found none as of November 2026. Office vacancy is easing on both Cushman & Wakefield and CBRE measures, which could shift flexible-space pricing, but this report does not forecast prices.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Can a Quebec engineer use a coworking address?

Yes for work, and conditionally for the OIQ domicile. The domicile must be where the member principally practises. A coworking office or desk where the engineer genuinely works can be that place if the three gates are met; a mailbox alone raises an unresolved question for the OIQ.

Does the OIQ allow a virtual office?

The audit found no OIQ statement that allows or excludes a virtual office. The relevant text is functional. Ask the OIQ in writing.

Can the OIQ address differ from the REQ address?

They are separate records with separate rules, and the sources do not require them to coincide.

How fast must a change be reported?

OIQ: 30 days. REQ: 30 days. Revenu Québec requires a separate notice.

What about professional liability insurance?

It depends on the practice type, and a firm structure changes the plan. A workspace provider's general cover is not a substitute for it.

Can a hot desk satisfy the confidential-conversation rule?

Only if a private room or booth is reliably available for client calls. No numeric standard is mandated.

What about a two-to-five-person firm?

Firm records count as each engineer's own if the engineer can enter documents in them, so access rights must be shared and documented.

Conclusion

The question "can a Quebec engineer use a coworking address?" has a layered answer. The audited sources neither permit nor prohibit workspace use by name. The binding duties attach to the engineer: name the place of principal practice, keep it current within 30 days, run a place that protects client conversations, documents and continuity, and keep files 10 years after closure.

For a two-to-five-person firm in Montréal, the options easiest to evidence appear to be an enclosed office or a hot desk paired with a guaranteed private room, supported by a contract that names authorized users, specifies storage, and returns files on exit. A mail-only address should be treated as a mailing arrangement until the OIQ confirms otherwise in writing. Cells marked "ask OIQ" remain open, and no operator, including

the publisher, is claimed to satisfy them. Readers wishing to see a Montréal operator's spaces can visit 2727coworking.com (the publisher's own site, a disclosed interest and not evidence for any claim) and apply the same checklist as everywhere else.

Source links

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

1. https://www.oiq.qc.ca/membres/obligations-des-membres/modifier-vos-renseignements-ou-votre-statut
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About 2727 Coworking

2727 Coworking is a Montreal workspace and business-address provider. We serve people who need a place to focus, meet, run a small business or establish a professional mailing presence. Our website offers English and French information about workspace options and services, alongside educational resources for operating a business in Canada.

A workspace that fits the day

Our workspace options include private offices, day passes and desks, and a conference room. These formats help individuals and teams compare a dedicated office with more flexible ways to work or hold a meeting. Prospective members can explore the virtual tour, review current pricing and book a visit before choosing a workspace.

Business addresses and mail

2727 Coworking provides business-address and virtual-mailbox services. Our resources explain the documents and practical questions involved, including guidance for people outside Canada. Service eligibility, included features, availability and access arrangements should be confirmed on the applicable service page or with our team.

Resources for Canadian small businesses

We publish guides, research and planning tools about workspace decisions, business addresses and starting a business in Canada. Our incorporation research includes information for people inside Canada and abroad, with jurisdiction-specific material to help readers identify the next questions to investigate. These educational resources complement our workspace and address services; they are not individualized legal, tax or immigration advice.

Visit or contact 2727 Coworking

Explore private offices, day passes and desks, the conference room, business addresses and virtual mailboxes. Book a visit or contact the team to discuss your needs.

A business address alone does not establish tax residence, immigration status, banking approval or eligibility for a government program.

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