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Virtual or Private Office for Montréal Lawyers: B-1 Audit

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Executive Summary

For a Montréal lawyer, choosing between a virtual office, a coworking desk with a reserved room and a private office comes down to the evidence showing that the premises comply with the Regulation respecting accounting and standards of professional practice of lawyers (B-1, r. 5). Section 3 requires a professional domicile with a civic address that is easy to find (www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca). Section 5 requires an enclosed room, arranged so that conversations cannot be heard from outside (www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca). Section 6 requires arrangements for service of any proceedings, as well as a system for mail, calls and emergencies.

Three addresses must not be confused. The professional domicile falls under the regulation. The business address registered with the Registraire des entreprises (REQ) is governed by a different statute, which requires an update within 30 days (www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca) and does not accept a P.O. box as a natural person's business address (www.quebec.ca). A mail-only service is a logistical convenience. An address alone provides, at most, the civic address: it does not provide the enclosed room required by section 5, and neither the regulation nor the Barreau's pages state that it is sufficient or insufficient. This point must be confirmed in writing with the Barreau du Québec.

The report provides a section-by-section matrix (Table 1), a reception test log with timestamps and escalation (Table 2), a comparison of the three configurations (Table 3) and published prices (Table 4). The obligations rest with the lawyer; the operator provides the infrastructure and documentation: an address-use agreement, a room plan, access rules, and a reception and escalation protocol. Law societies in other provinces recommend a room dedicated to private discussions (lso.ca) and files that third parties cannot access (www.lawsociety.bc.ca).

On pricing, published starting rates from Montréal operators range from \$35 per month for a virtual office (www.montrealcowork.com) to \$2,200 per month for private offices (halte24-7.com), with varying tax and term conditions. Greater Montréal's office vacancy rate was 18.0% in the second quarter of 2026 (mktgdocs.cbre.com). An address change on the Roll of the Order takes effect on the date of the request and cannot be backdated (www.barreau.qc.ca). No plan, including one offered by this page's publisher, is presumed compliant without written verification and a site visit.

Introduction and Context

Why This Question Arises

A solo lawyer or small Montréal firm typically compares three options: an address with mail service (what providers call a “virtual office”), a coworking desk combined with a reserved meeting room, or a private office leased for exclusive use. Before price comes a narrower legal question: what must the premises declared as the **professional domicile** include, and what evidence can establish this before signing? The applicable text is the Regulation respecting accounting and standards of professional practice of lawyers (CQLR, chapter B-1, r. 5), whose consolidated version on LégisQuébec was “à jour au 1er juillet 2026” when consulted on October 27, 2026 (www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca).

This report takes an audit approach: it examines sections 3 to 6, 10, 17 and 18 individually, translates each requirement into evidence to observe or request, then compares three configurations without deciding in advance that any arrangement is lawful or unlawful. The regulation uses “doit” to set out the lawyer's obligations; it does not say which business model meets those requirements. This document is not legal advice: any ambiguous point should be confirmed in writing with the Barreau, which offers lawyers starting a practice a free start-up visit service (www.barreau.qc.ca).

For transparency, this page's publisher, 2727coworking.com, operates workstations, private offices, meeting rooms, virtual offices and business addresses in Montréal. It is therefore an option comparable to those mentioned, and its offerings are subject to the same checks.

English Terminology and Québec Equivalents

English-language searches mix concepts that legal French distinguishes. The following list draws on entries from the Office québécois de la langue française (OQLF).

- **Coworking**: the OQLF favours “cotravail” (vitrinelinguistique.oqlf.gouv.qc.ca) and defines a **coworking space** as a place “où l'espace, les ressources et les coûts sont partagés” (vitrinelinguistique.oqlf.gouv.qc.ca).
- **Hot desk**: a **shared desk** (“bureau partagé”) is an unassigned workstation made available to a worker as availability permits (vitrinelinguistique.oqlf.gouv.qc.ca).
- **Virtual office**: as defined by the OQLF, a “bureau virtuel” is a digital collaboration environment (vitrinelinguistique.oqlf.gouv.qc.ca). Providers use it to mean a commercial address, mail reception and sometimes room hours: the expression therefore does not refer to any regulatory requirement.
- **Registered office**: the **head office** (“siège social”) is a company's principal establishment, where its legal activities are concentrated (vitrinelinguistique.oqlf.gouv.qc.ca).
- **Mailing address, P.O. box**: the **mailing address** (“adresse postale”) is used for mail delivery (vitrinelinguistique.oqlf.gouv.qc.ca); a **P.O. box** (“case postale”) is a numbered, locked compartment, generally located in a post office (vitrinelinguistique.oqlf.gouv.qc.ca).
- **Meeting room, private office, mail handling**: “salle de réunion”, “bureau privé” and “traitement du courrier” are market terms with no regulatory definition in the regulation.

Three Addresses That Must Not Be Confused

The Lawyer's Professional Domicile

Section 3 states that the professional domicile must have a civic address and be easy to find, “au moyen d'une enseigne ou autrement” (www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca). It also requires a telephone listed in the local directory and “accessible par télécopieur,” a computer and a professional email address.

Two qualifications are necessary. First, the references to directories and fax machines date from 2010: the professional inspection self-assessment guide still asks questions about locating the professional domicile (www.barreau.qc.ca), but the current scope of each detail should be confirmed with the Barreau. Second, the regulation does not define “domicile professionnel” beyond section 3, and the Barreau's pages do not say whether a virtual office address, a residence or a coworking desk satisfies it.

The domicile must also match the address on the Roll of the Order. Since the December 1, 2025 notice to members, changes are made through the portal, under the “Coordonnées” tab (www.barreau.qc.ca). A change takes effect on the date of the request (www.barreau.qc.ca) and cannot apply to an earlier date (www.barreau.qc.ca). A lawyer should therefore not declare an address before obtaining written proof of access to the premises.

The Business Address Registered with the REQ

The REQ maintains a separate register. Under the Act respecting the legal publicity of enterprises, registration identifies the addresses of establishments in Québec, specifying the principal establishment (www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca). “Domicile” has its own meaning here: for a legal person, it is the address of its head office (cdn-contenu.quebec.ca); for a natural person, it is the address of their principal residence (cdn-contenu.quebec.ca). A natural person's business address is their principal place of work or business (www.quebec.ca), and a P.O. box cannot serve as that address (www.quebec.ca).

These rules govern registration, not a lawyer's professional domicile. An address accepted by the REQ as a head office does not demonstrate that an enclosed room is available to meet clients, or vice versa.

Mail: Mailing Address, P.O. Box and Business Address Services

The third matter is simply receiving mail. Revenu Québec states that mail forwarding does not remove the obligation to notify it of an address change (www.revenuquebec.ca), and Canada Post excludes privately administered mailboxes from its service (www.canadapost-postescanada.ca). A business address service agreement must therefore state who receives mail, how often, and what happens to registered mail or items delivered by courier.

The Consultation Room: A Fourth Element

Section 5 refers not to an address but to premises: “un cabinet de consultation ou un autre local lui permettant de rencontrer des clients” (www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca). This is where the three configurations differ: an address alone does not provide this room, a coworking desk provides it only if an enclosed room is actually available, and a private office provides it at all times.

Section-by-Section Audit of Regulation B-1, r. 5

Table 1 translates each relevant section into a requirement, evidence to inspect on site, a question to ask the operator and a division of responsibilities. The regulation places the obligation on the **lawyer** (“l’avocat doit”); the operator can only provide the infrastructure and documentation, without taking over responsibility for compliance.

Table 1. Matrix of regulatory sections, requirements, evidence to inspect on site, questions for the provider and responsibility

Section	Requirement (interpretation of the text)	Evidence to inspect on site	Question for the provider	Responsibility
Sec. 3 (domicile)	Civic address, premises that are easy to find, computer and professional email address (www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca)	Full address in the contract; firm name at the entrance or in the directory; telephone line	Is displaying the name permitted? Who holds the telephone account?	Lawyer; operator for signage
Sec. 4 (documentation)	Access to current legal documentation, on site or nearby (www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca)	Stable network; storage	What connection is guaranteed?	Lawyer

Section	Requirement (interpretation of the text)	Evidence to inspect on site	Question for the provider	Responsibility
Sec. 5 (enclosed room)	Enclosed room, conversations inaudible from outside (www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca); no one else enters during the meeting	Solid door, walls extending to the ceiling, listening test in the corridor	Is the room guaranteed at the required times? Who holds the keys and codes?	Lawyer; operator for layout and access
Sec. 6 (absence)	Arrangements for service and a system for calls, mail, email and emergencies (www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca)	Written protocol, reception log, escalation instructions	Who accepts delivery by a bailiff? Who notifies the lawyer, and within what time frame?	Lawyer; operator for implementation
Sec. 10 (correspondence)	Domicile address appears on correspondence (www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca)	Clause authorizing use of the address on letterhead	Is use as a professional domicile authorized in writing?	Lawyer; operator for authorization
Sec. 17 (confidentiality)	Confidentiality of files and information received (www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca)	Lockable filing cabinet; third-party access (cleaning staff, reception)	Who holds keys? What are the after-hours arrangements?	Lawyer; operator for physical access
Sec. 18 (files)	Active files kept on site or in an appropriate archiving location (www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca)	Locked storage, or archiving elsewhere	Is storage offered in writing, and on what terms?	Lawyer; operator if offered

The “Requirement” column remains this report's interpretation and does not replace an opinion from the Barreau. Three findings emerge:

- **Sections 3 and 10:** the easiest to document because they concern visible elements (address, signage, numbers, email).
- **Sections 5 and 17:** these depend on the **actual use** of the premises. A room “available for booking” is not, in itself, a room at the lawyer's disposal when the meeting takes place.
- **Section 6:** it introduces a time dimension (“selon la durée de cette absence”) that only a written, tested protocol can demonstrate.

Limits of an Address Alone

An address alone satisfies the civic address requirement in section 3 and, if the contract permits, section 10. It does not provide the room required by section 5, or the workspace and storage covered by sections 4 and 18. For section 6, everything depends on the reception service. These findings do not establish that an address alone is unlawful: for each section not covered, the lawyer must demonstrate compliance elsewhere, for example with a reserved room.

Law societies in other provinces take a comparable approach, without binding the Barreau du Québec. The Law Society of Ontario presents a virtual office as a supplement for a lawyer with limited space, offering meeting rooms, mail handling and administrative support (lso.ca); it notes that every work environment must allow lawyers to fulfil their professional obligations (lso.ca). In a 2015 article, the Canadian Bar Association reports the views of a lawyer who felt that a virtual office was a poor fit for her practice (cba.org), while another lawyer sees it as an address that lends credibility (cba.org). These are personal accounts, not standards.

Site Visit: Finding the Premises, Telephone, Access and Confidentiality

Finding the Premises, Telephone and Fax

Three tangible elements should be checked before signing anything:

- **Signage or directory:** photograph the entrance and floor directory, then ask in writing whether the firm's name can appear there.
- **Telephone line:** ask who holds the account and how calls are answered.
- **Fax:** since the text still mentions it, have the Barreau confirm whether electronic fax is sufficient.

The self-assessment guide should be read with care on this point: the current scope of each detail still needs to be confirmed with the Barreau.

Confidentiality in an Enclosed Room

The room required by section 5 must be arranged so that conversations cannot be heard from outside, a risk the Law Society of Ontario describes as potentially prejudicial to the client when third parties can identify the matter ([Iso.ca](http://iso.ca)). The Barreau du Québec's self-assessment guide also asks whether the premises are arranged so that third parties cannot hear conversations (www.barreau.qc.ca). On site, one person speaks at a normal volume in the room while another listens at the door, in the corridor and in the adjoining common area; the result is recorded with the date, time and room name. Glass partitions, a partition that stops short of the ceiling or shared ventilation are signs of possible sound leakage. The same section bars anyone else from entering during the meeting unless authorized by the lawyer (www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca): ask whether the operator's staff can enter during a meeting, and whether the booking is secured or merely entered on a calendar.

The Law Society of Ontario provides guidance from outside Québec: an open-plan space should have a reception area with restricted access ([Iso.ca](http://iso.ca)) and a room dedicated to private discussions ([Iso.ca](http://iso.ca)). The Barreau du Québec's guide for in-house lawyers (April 2025) advises holding video conferences and telephone calls in an enclosed meeting room (www.barreau.qc.ca) and avoiding discussions about files in common areas (www.barreau.qc.ca). The Canadian Bar Association generally recommends avoiding work on confidential matters in public places (cba.org). These texts do not directly address coworking, but the reasoning is the same.

Third-Party Access and File Storage

The Barreau notes that files must not be accessible to unauthorized persons (www.barreau.qc.ca) and suggests a locked filing cabinet or locked office when the lawyer is absent (www.barreau.qc.ca). It also recommends having anyone who may have access sign a confidentiality undertaking (www.barreau.qc.ca), which, in a shared space, includes cleaning, reception and security staff. Active files are kept at the professional domicile or in an appropriate archiving location (www.barreau.qc.ca), and closed files for at least seven years after closing (www.barreau.qc.ca). A short-term coworking agreement must therefore make provision for where files will be kept when the lease ends.

For shared premises, the Law Society of British Columbia states that non-lawyers sharing a space should not be able to access the lawyer's area (www.lawsociety.bc.ca), and the Nova Scotia Barristers' Society encourages lawyers to consider who can open mail or receive confidential communications (nsbs.org).

Service, Mail, Calls and Emergencies During an Absence

Section 6 concerns lawyers who are absent from their professional domicile during normal business hours: they make arrangements for any proceedings to be served on them and provide a system for their calls, messages, mail, email and emergencies (www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca). Two points from the Code of Civil Procedure help define what to ask of the operator.

- **Notification and service:** notification may be made by any appropriate method that provides proof of delivery, but **service** is notification by bailiff when required by law (www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca). An originating application, for example, is served by bailiff (www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca).
- **Notification by technological means:** this is made to the address designated by the recipient, provided it is active at the time of sending.

These sections do not say that an operator may or must accept service, and the regulation does not establish this. This report does not assert that 2727coworking.com or any other operator accepts service or offers file storage: these services must be confirmed in writing. If the operator refuses deliveries by bailiff, the lawyer must arrange another mechanism that complies with section 6 and include it in the protocol.

The Code of Professional Conduct of Lawyers adds standards of conduct without tying them to a type of premises: reasonable availability and diligence, and reasonable measures to ensure that people working with the lawyer protect confidential information (www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca). In a continuity guide, the Law Society of Alberta recommends documenting the location of the mail service and how to access it (documents.lawsociety.ab.ca) and having email and voicemail monitored during an absence (documents.lawsociety.ab.ca).

Reception Test Log

Table 2 is a log template the lawyer can maintain before declaring the domicile, and afterwards. Values are to be recorded during testing: the table contains no results.

Table 2. Reception test log with timestamps and escalation (template to complete)

Timestamp	Test	Expected result under the protocol	Measured response time	Person who acted	Escalation (who, method, time)	Evidence retained
To be recorded	Registered letter delivered while the lawyer is absent	Receipt logged, notification sent	To be recorded	To be recorded	To be recorded	Notification email, log
To be recorded	Hand delivery by courier	Acceptance or refusal according to the contract; immediate notification	To be recorded	To be recorded	To be recorded	Proof of delivery or refusal

Timestamp	Test	Expected result under the protocol	Measured response time	Person who acted	Escalation (who, method, time)	Evidence retained
To be recorded	Call to the firm's number, lawyer unreachable	Message forwarded within the agreed time frame	To be recorded	To be recorded	To be recorded	Call log
To be recorded	Emergency call (court deadline)	Forwarded by a second method, to a second contact	To be recorded	To be recorded	To be recorded	Messages and acknowledgements
To be recorded	Client visit without an appointment	Directed to the room, without disclosing other occupants' identities	To be recorded	To be recorded	To be recorded	Visit notes

The log makes the operator's promise verifiable: a response time of “within 24 hours” means nothing until it is measured. It also provides a dated record in case of questions from the Barreau, whose professional inspection assesses file management, bookkeeping and the firm's organization (www.barreau.qc.ca). Tests are repeated after any change in staff, building or contract.

Virtual Office, Coworking Desk or Private Office: The Comparison

Table 3 compares the three configurations in terms of confidentiality, permanence, handling of legal documents and mail, files and cost. No cost cell contains an invented amount: the actual cost is established by a written quote. The last row places this page's publisher's offering in context, without attributing compliance to it.

Table 3. Comparison of three configurations for a Montréal lawyer

Criterion	Address only (virtual office)	Coworking desk with a reserved room	Private office (exclusive)
Address and ease of finding the premises (sec. 3)	Civic address provided; firm signage to be confirmed	Civic address provided; signage to be confirmed in writing	Address and signage can be controlled through the lease or agreement
Enclosed room (sec. 5)	No dedicated room; room to be rented elsewhere or by the hour (documents.lawsociety.ab.ca)	Enclosed only during the booking; actual availability to be demonstrated	Permanently enclosed; listening test and key control to be checked
Permanence	No lawyer present on site	Presence at chosen times; common area open to others	Continuous presence possible
Service, mail, calls (sec. 6)	Written protocol required; acceptance of deliveries by bailiff is not presumed (www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca)	Same requirement; shared reception requires attention (nsbs.org)	Dedicated or shared reception; protocol to be documented
Files (secs. 17 and 18)	No storage unless specified in writing; archiving elsewhere	Locked storage to be requested; after-hours access to be regulated (www.lawsociety.bc.ca)	Filing cabinet and door under the lawyer's control

Criterion	Address only (virtual office)	Coworking desk with a reserved room	Private office (exclusive)
Cost	Based on an actual quote (see Table 4)	Based on an actual quote; room hours included or extra depending on the operator	Based on an actual quote; lease terms vary
Publisher's offering (2727coworking.com)	Business addresses and virtual offices offered in Montréal, according to the publisher	Workstations and meeting rooms offered, according to the publisher	Private offices offered, according to the publisher; compliance to be confirmed in writing and through a site visit

The essential difference is not cost, but **proof of room availability**:

- **Address only:** the room required by section 5 is outside the offering.
- **Coworking desk with a reserved room:** the room depends on a booking.
- **Private office:** the room is part of the offering.

Each may or may not comply depending on implementation, which prevents any advance conclusion. A lawyer quoted by the Canadian Bar Association noted the inconvenience of constantly having to book a room to meet clients (cba.org); a lawyer who meets clients every week should factor in this friction. The Law Society of British Columbia allows shared meeting rooms provided care is taken to ensure that conversations cannot be overheard (www.lawsociety.bc.ca), and the Nova Scotia Barristers' Society advises an off-site or virtual meeting when discretion is essential (nsbs.org). A reserved room may therefore suit occasional meetings, while a firm receiving clients every day would benefit from permanent premises.

Questions and Documents to Request from the Provider

Before declaring a professional domicile, the lawyer should obtain the following in writing, before signing:

- **Address-use agreement:** a clause authorizing use of the address as the professional domicile, on letterhead, on the website and in the declaration for the Roll (secs. 3 and 10). Ontario requires that office-sharing arrangements not be misrepresented in advertising (iso.ca).
- **Room plan and photos:** wall materials, partition height, ventilation (sec. 5).
- **Access and booking rules:** who holds keys, codes or cards; whether staff can enter during a meeting; how the time slot is guaranteed (sec. 5).
- **Reception protocol:** deliveries accepted (regular mail, registered mail, courier, bailiff), notification methods and time frames, log (sec. 6).
- **Escalation protocol:** designated second contact, second communication method, written time frame (sec. 6).
- **After-hours access arrangements:** cleaning staff, security, other tenants, confidentiality undertaking (sec. 17).
- **Storage offering and end of contract:** lockable space, term, what happens to files and mail at the end (secs. 17 and 18).
- **Insurance:** the Law Society of Ontario encourages checking whether a coworking space's terms, including insurance, suit a legal practice (iso.ca).

- **Telephone and exclusivity:** account holder, how calls are answered (documents.lawsociety.ab.ca), exclusive possession of the space (documents.lawsociety.ab.ca).

The escalation protocol and address-use agreement are the documents least often offered without prompting and, under section 6, the most useful to a lawyer who is away.

Analysis of Data and Evidence

Montréal's Office Market

According to CBRE, Greater Montréal's office vacancy rate stood at 18.0% in the second quarter of 2026, its lowest level since the second quarter of 2023 (mktgdocs.cbre.com). Cushman & Wakefield reported 17.9% for the same period (www.cushmanwakefield.com), two measures with different methodologies but results within a tenth of a percentage point of each other. CBRE also reports that 31.1% of available space has been listed for more than 36 months (mktgdocs.cbre.com).

For downtown, CBRE's statistical table gives a vacancy rate of 16.9%, average net asking rent of \$22.39 per square foot, additional rent of \$22.00 and average gross rent of \$44.39 (mktgdocs.cbre.com); the currency is not specified and is presumed to be Canadian. For Class AAA, the average is \$35.35 per square foot (mktgdocs.cbre.com), within a net rent range of \$33.00 to \$42.00 (mktgdocs.cbre.com).

An illustrative calculation by the publisher, not an offer: 200 square feet at downtown's average gross rent of \$44.39 represents approximately \$8,878 per year, or nearly \$740 per month; 300 square feet, approximately \$13,317 per year, or nearly \$1,110 per month, before taxes, furniture, lease term and fit-out. These areas are smaller than those typically offered in traditional office buildings, making a comparison with private offices in shared spaces worthwhile.

Published Operator Prices

Table 4 brings together prices advertised by Montréal operators as of October 27, 2026, as displayed on their pages. These are not quotations: the pages are undated and terms (duration, taxes, promotions) differ. Prices change: they should be verified with the operator before any decision. Not all operators are located downtown.

Table 4. Published prices from Montréal operators (consulted October 27, 2026, before any quote)

Operator	Arrangement	Published price	Terms stated on the page
ECTO (coworking cooperative)	Business address service (virtual office), basic and professional	\$50 per month (ecto.coop); \$80 per month (ecto.coop)	No mention of taxes on this page
ECTO	Flexible and dedicated desks; meeting room	\$200 per month (ecto.coop); \$400 per month (ecto.coop); room at \$40 per hour or \$125 per four-hour block (ecto.coop)	Prices before taxes (ecto.coop)
Rezomont	Virtual office	\$75 per month (www.rezomont.com)	Taxes not specified

Operator	Arrangement	Published price	Terms stated on the page
Montréal CoWork	"Bronze" virtual office; private office; room	\$35 per month (www.montrealcowork.com); private office from \$705 per month per workstation (www.montrealcowork.com); room from \$25 per hour (www.montrealcowork.com)	Plus taxes, according to the page
Halte 24-7	Drop-in desk; dedicated desk; private offices; room (4 people)	\$249 per month (halte24-7.com); \$399 per month (halte24-7.com); \$850 to \$2,200 per month (halte24-7.com); \$35 per hour (halte24-7.com)	Plus taxes, according to the page
WeWork (downtown)	One-person private office; monthly membership; daily access	From CA\$560 per month (www.wework.com); CA\$408 per month (www.wework.com); CA\$54 per day (www.wework.com)	Private office at CA\$560: taxes and fees extra, 12-month commitment, promotional offers included; the page does not mention an equivalent condition for monthly membership (CA\$408) or daily access (CA\$54) (www.wework.com)
2727coworking.com (this page's publisher)	Desks, private offices, meeting rooms, virtual offices and business addresses in Montréal, according to the publisher	By written quote: no price is displayed here	No plan is presumed compliant with sections 3, 5 and 6 without written verification and a site visit

Three findings emerge. The gap between an address alone (\$35 to \$80 per month) and a private office (from \$560 up to \$2,200 per month) is an order of magnitude, which explains the appeal of an address, but it does not provide premises. Prices cannot be compared line by line: some plans include room hours, others do not. Finally, these are starting prices, not rates for a particular legal practice; the address-use agreement and escalation protocol may change the final amount. Prices "plus taxes" are subject to GST of 5% and QST of 9.975% (www.revenuquebec.ca); as a calculation, a \$400 dedicated desk comes to approximately \$459.90 including taxes.

The Roll in Context

The Barreau's 2025-2026 annual report counts 31,501 members on the Roll as of March 31, 2026, including 16,002 in the Montréal administrative region, approximately 51% (www.barreau.qc.ca). The Barreau-mètre 2022, based on 2020 data and a sample of 500 respondents, reported that 24.02% of respondents practised alone (www.barreau.qc.ca) and that 42.99% of lawyers were in private practice (www.barreau.qc.ca). These data are more than five years old: they indicate the scale of demand, not a current measure. The cited documents quantify neither the number of lawyers using a virtual office or coworking space in Montréal nor a compliance rate for these arrangements.

Case Studies and Practical Examples (Hypothetical)

The following three scenarios are **hypothetical examples**, with no operator-specific data. They apply the matrix in Table 1 and do not conclude that any arrangement complies.

Scenario A: Solo Lawyer Practising from Home (Hypothetical Example)

She wants to keep her home address off her correspondence. Section 3 requires a civic address and premises that are easy to find, without saying whether a residence or a virtual office address meets that requirement; the regulation and the Barreau's pages do not resolve the question. At the REQ, "domicile" means her principal residence, while the business address is her principal place of work or business: two concepts that must not be confused with the professional domicile. For section 5, she needs an enclosed room for her clients, which a room rented by the hour could provide. Sections 6 and 18 require a protocol for service and mail, and secure storage of active files. This should be confirmed with the Barreau before declaring the address in the portal.

Scenario B: Weekly Client Meetings (Hypothetical Example)

A lawyer sees four to six clients a week, by appointment. A coworking desk plus a reserved room may be suitable if the room is guaranteed at appointment times, the walls block sound and no one else enters during the meeting. The critical point is **actual availability**: room hours without a guaranteed time slot do not demonstrate that the room is at the lawyer's disposal. Three steps are necessary:

- **Test** booking at peak times.
- **Maintain** the log in Table 2.
- **Keep** proof of bookings.

Section 6 also applies on days when the lawyer is absent.

Scenario C: Small Three-Lawyer Firm in a Private Office (Hypothetical Example)

The enclosed premises are permanent, files can be kept under lock and key, and the telephone number can be listed in the firm's name. The checks shift to other matters: access by building and cleaning staff outside working hours (sec. 17), identifying the premises for visitors (sec. 3), and lease clauses covering the end of the contract and return of files (sec. 18). The actual cost is calculated from the floor area, as in the previous section, plus services.

Implications and Next Steps: What to Confirm with the Barreau

Five points warrant written confirmation before declaring a professional domicile, because the regulation and the Barreau's pages do not resolve them:

- **The status of a virtual office address** as a domicile when the lawyer does not work there regularly.
- **The current scope** of the references to directories and fax machines in section 3.
- **Whether a reserved room is sufficient** under section 5 for a lawyer who frequently receives clients.
- **The validity of a mechanism** entrusting receipt of service to a third party.

- **Archiving** active files away from the domicile, which section 18 permits in “un lieu d’archivage approprié” without defining the term.

Procedurally, the logical sequence is: site visit, written documentation, reception test, then declaration in the portal, since retroactive effect is excluded. A lawyer changing addresses should also update the address with the REQ within 30 days, where applicable. For the next step, the Barreau offers a start-up visit of approximately three hours with an experienced inspector (www.barreau.qc.ca), a natural opportunity to ask these questions.

This report has limitations. The texts may be amended; several Barreau guides are undated or being updated; operators' prices change.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Is a Virtual Office Enough to Comply with the Regulation?

The regulation and the Barreau's pages do not support that conclusion. An address alone may provide the civic address required by section 3, but section 5 requires an enclosed room and section 6 requires arrangements for service, mail and emergencies. The outcome depends on what is provided in addition to the address and on the Barreau's opinion.

What Is the Difference Between a Private Office and a Coworking Desk with a Reserved Room?

A private office is permanent premises to which the lawyer controls access. A coworking desk is an unassigned workstation, combined with a reserved room as needed. The question is whether the room required by section 5 is actually available at appointment times.

Can a Residence Be a Professional Domicile?

The regulation neither expressly prohibits nor authorizes a residence; section 3 lists attributes. No Barreau page resolves the question, hence the recommendation to confirm. Files kept away from the office remain subject to the obligation to ensure their confidentiality and security (www.barreau.qc.ca).

Can an Operator Accept Service on My Behalf?

The regulation and the Barreau's pages do not establish this. The operator's answer must be obtained in writing and recorded in the protocol.

How Much Does a Lawyer's Office in Montréal Cost?

For private offices in shared spaces, published starting prices range from \$560 to \$2,200 per month (Table 4); downtown, average gross asking rent is \$44.39 per square foot per year (mktgdocs.cbre.com). The actual cost is established by a quote.

Where Does the Barreau Send Its Notices?

The Bar Act provides for delivery to the latest address known at the Barreau's head office, or electronically (www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca); the address on the Roll is kept up to date through the member portal.

Conclusion

The decision between a virtual office, a coworking desk with a reserved room and a private office depends less on price than on proof that each requirement is met: a civic address that is easy to find (sec. 3), an enclosed room where conversations cannot be heard from outside (sec. 5), written arrangements for proceedings, calls, mail and emergencies (sec. 6), and file confidentiality and retention (secs. 17 and 18). These obligations rest with the lawyer, not the operator.

The lawyer can focus on four steps:

- **Visit** the premises with the matrix in Table 1.
- **Obtain in writing** the address-use agreement and escalation protocol.
- **Test** reception using the log in Table 2.
- **Declare** the address in the portal only once the evidence is in hand.

Ambiguous points must be confirmed with the Barreau. No plan offered by this page's publisher, 2727coworking.com, is presumed compliant without written verification and a site visit; a lawyer wishing to see the facilities can request a visit from the publisher.

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/rc/b-1,%20r.%205?langcont=en>
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THE PUBLISHER

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.

Website: <https://2727coworking.com>

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