

THE BUSINESS NUMBER

Basic Facts

- Is a nine digit number issued to business entities by the Canada Revenue Agency (i.e. 12345 6789)
- Is called 'the BN' in short form; it has also been known as the national Business Number, the federal Business Number 'the BN' or 'the BN9' though CRA prefers that it be called simply 'the Business Number'
- was adopted, in March 2004, in BC as a 'common identifier' (single identifier for a business, used by more than one public sector agency); the ideal state is 'one business, one number'
- the original agencies adopting the BN in BC included the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Competition, Science and Enterprise (now Ministry of Small Business and Revenue) and Workers' Compensation Board (now WorkSafeBC)
- BC BN partners now also include the Ministry of Housing and Social Development, and the Ministry of Labour and Citizens' Services
- since November of 2004, the BN has been issued automatically to all new corporations in BC
- a BN is also required by sole proprietorships, general partnerships and others having a licence or relationship with a BC BN partner
- The BC Business Number Index (BNI) has approximately 663,000+ Business Numbers in it; the numbers in this index are growing by 25,000 to 50,000 per year in BC (~25,000 new incorporations and ~25,000 new sole proprietorship or general partnership registrations annually)
- The BC BNI also has approximately 950,000+ Program Accounts in it
- These program accounts are assigned to business entities who register for any of PST, Hotel Room Tax, WorkSafeBC; Liquor Licences; or, as mentioned above, incorporate in BC
- Extra-provincial corporations are also assigned a program account when they register in BC
- the BNI does not include accounts for programs administered by CRA (GST, Corporate Income Tax, Payroll Deductions, Import/Export)
- A program account or BN15 consists of the BN9 plus a two letter program designation and a 4 digit sequence number (i.e. 12345 6789 BC 0001); in summary then it is a 15 alpha-numeric identifier based on the BN9
- Basic business data is attached to the legal entity and program account in the BNI; this information is keyed by BN and includes business type; account status; legal, operating and assumed names; mailing and business address; and, corporate data
- More than 95% of all business entities in BC have a BN

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Public Sector Benefits of the BN

The public sector benefits include improved decision making, time and money savings, reduced risk exposure, and better service to business clients because:

- Partners can issue or subscribe to business information message updates based on the BN
- The Business Number Index is searchable thus providing fast and convenient access to basic business information
- Facilitates more efficient data and information sharing thus improving collaboration and communication
- More certainty about unique identity of customer
- Improved quality of information about businesses
- Could be used to increase registration compliance
- Could be used to resolve 'set-offs' (money owed to government by a business v/s money owed to that business by government)
- The BN is used by most provincial jurisdictions across Canada

Private Sector Benefits of the BN

The private sector benefits include savings of time and money because:

- Single identifier for many transactions
- Faster turn-around
- Reduced time to comply

Additional Benefits of the BN when used in conjunction with OneStop's e-services

Benefits to the private sector are estimated at a time savings of 5 to 5 ½ hours (\$112) on average when using the business registration service, and 6 to 7 hours (\$123) on average when using the business address change service because:

- Single Internet portal to many registrations and other services
- Choice of time, location and channel for transactions with public sector
- Basic business data needs to be entered only once
- Session information saved for additional registrations or transactions at a later point in time
- Easy access to integrated and relevant information about regulation and compliance requirements
- Provides clients with option to self-serve
- Streamlined business registration
- Decreased interaction costs
- Simplified payment processes