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About Statistics Canada

About the Agency

Statistics Canada is the country's national statistical agency, with programs organized into three broad subject matter areas: demographic and social, socio-economic and economic.

Under the Statistics Act, Statistics Canada is required to collect, compile, analyse, abstract and publish statistical information on virtually every aspect of the nation's society and economy.

Each year, the Agency sells about 1.2 million publications, receives 1.3 million data requests and answers over 400,000 telephone inquiries. The fact that Statistics Canada handles so many questions in a year has demonstrated the need to make our information easy to understand and easy to use.

Statistics Canada is divided into about 60 divisions, each of which is responsible for a particular activity in the collection, processing or dissemination of statistics. These divisions are grouped together into six fields -- each of which reports to the Chief Statistician of Canada.

Many divisions function as regular producers of a particular set of data, which is why there will often be a particular subject matter division identified as the originating source of data from Statistics Canada.

About Marketing and Information Services

Within Statistics Canada, this area is responsible for the design and organization of information products in order to serve the needs of all clients -- whether they are within the public or private sectors.

The Dissemination Division is specifically responsible for the development and operation techniques and mechanisms to improve access to Statistics Canada information through electronic formats.

The disc you are currently using is just one example of the many services available through the division. If you have questions or comments about any of Statistics Canada's electronic data products, please call your nearest [Regional Reference Centre](#).

Protecting confidentiality

All information given to Statistics Canada through surveys, the census or any other source is confidential. Statistics Canada does not release any information that identifies an individual or organization.

No other government organization -- not even the RCMP or Revenue Canada -- has the right to see the answers given in confidence to Statistics Canada.

How Data are Released

Overview

Statistics are collected from different sources and in different ways. Statistics Canada data are generally produced from surveys but can also be generated as a by-product of administrative activities (import and export data, for example, can be obtained from Revenue Canada Customs and Excise Forms).

Surveys may either be samples -- where the responses of a few are used to draw conclusions about the complete group, or population -- or censuses -- in which every possible respondent is approached. In general, the source of data cannot be identified from statistics, but Statistics Canada publications publish descriptions of the methodologies used to obtain the data.

Some Statistics Canada data can be issued in up to four separate ways:

1. on official release date: data can be obtained by phone, online through the publicly accessible CANSIM (Canadian Socio-Economic Information Management System) database, in The Daily and in some cases, in preliminary publications.
2. in standard catalogued publications: nearly all Statistics Canada publications are assigned a five-digit catalogue number, indicating subject, frequency of publication and language availability (English/French/bilingual).
3. in compendia publications: such as Canada: A Portrait or Canada Yearbook, which cover a wide range of topics.
4. as part of an analytical study.

Statistics Canada Publications

Publications are Statistics Canada's most widely distributed product: they are carried in libraries across the country as well as in 10 regional office locations. Publications can be ordered:

by subscription or individually
in writing or by telephone

through any of our regional offices or by calling our toll-free national order line 1 800 267-6677.

Access: Options for the Information Age

Publications are only one form in which Statistics Canada information is available. Here are some ways to access data from Canada's national statistical agency:

- paper
- microfiche
- diskette
- magnetic tape/cartridge
- CD-ROM
- online
- geographic files
- custom tabulations
- workshops
- consultation
- standing order service
- facsimile

Uncatalogued information

Statistics Canada produces uncatalogued information which often has the same content as a publication. Updated, detailed information from discontinued publications can be generated on request in this format. Some subject areas of Statistics Canada -- responding to expressed user preference -- publish the bulk of their material in this format. The Health Statistics Division is one such area.

Microfilm and microfiche

Microfilm and microfiche formats permit easier access, and in some instances, more detailed information than would be available through a publication. Although microform sources are available through regional offices, the complete set of Statistics Canada's catalogued publications is offered on microfiche by:

Micromedia Limited
20 Victoria Street
Toronto, Ontario
M5C 2N8

Telephone (416) 362-5211
Toll-free 1 800 387-2689
Facsimile (416) 362-6161

Standing Order Service

If you wish to receive selected data on a regular basis as soon as it is available, this can be arranged easily. Regional Reference Centres -- as well as many of Statistics Canada's subject matter divisions have set up Standing Order Services. Statistics Canada's data consultants monitor the wide variety of products and services available as a service to subscribers and provide them with information appropriate to their data needs -- by telephone, letter or facsimile.

About the CANSIM Time Series Database

The CANSIM -- Canadian Socio-Economic Information Management System -- Time Series Database is Statistics Canada's official vehicle for the online dissemination of up-to-date information. It comprises:

- over 550,000 time series of current and historical data on prices, labour, national accounts, manufacturing, population, finance, trade and much more
- key economic and social data
- data contributed by other federal government agencies and departments such as the Bank of Canada, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Natural Resources Canada and Human Resources Development Canada.

How Data are Organized and Classified

The Industrial Classification System

An industry is defined as a group of operating units engaged in the same or similar kind of economic activities -- logging camps, coal mines, department stores and laundries are examples.

SIC-E: Standard Industrial Classification (for establishments)

Based on the establishment, which is the smallest operating entity capable of reporting basic operating industrial statistics, the SIC-E classifies establishments according to their principal activities. The SIC-E was established in 1948, and is revised to reflect changes in the economy -- adding industries as they appear and deleting industries as they become obsolete.

SIC-C: Standard Industrial Classification (for companies and enterprises)

The SIC-C spans a greater number of industrial activities and classifies companies and enterprises that reflect the organization of production for the delivery of goods and services.

Commodity Classifications based on the Harmonized System

Statistics Canada uses the international six-digit Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding system, but has amended it for domestic purposes. Although the complete listing of import codes and descriptions can be obtained from Revenue Canada Customs and Excise, the Standards Division of Statistics Canada has produced the Standard Classification of Goods (SCG) which lists all the eight-digit codes employed for shipments commodity, as well as the detail used for imports and export.

How to compare commodity classifications

Statistics Canada has produced several concordances which show the relationships between old and new classifications systems and simplify comparison of data. International Trade Division, in conjunction with Standards Division, has created a number of these working documents to identify the differences and similarities between classification systems.

Standard Occupational Classification

The Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) identifies and categorizes the entire range of occupations in Canada. It consists of 23 major groups which are subdivided into minor groups and unit groups. Definitions are provided for each occupational group as are classified and alphabetical indices for some 15,000 occupational titles.

Geographic Classifications

The Standard Geographical Classification (SGC) is a system of names and codes representing and identifying geographical areas of Canada. It consists of a three-tiered hierarchy - province, Census Division (county) and Census Subdivision (municipality). Other geographic areas created from these components include Census Metropolitan Area and Census Agglomeration. The SGC is used to identify information for particular geographic areas and to tabulate statistics.

Street Network Files

The Street Network Files (formerly called Area Master Files) provide digital descriptions of the street networks for most large urban centres in Canada. They include streets, railroad tracks and other features such as street names and address ranges. In combination with a user's appropriate software, Street Network Files are useful for route planning, delivery services, graphically displaying local statistics and general urban mapping. The files can be used in conjunction with Digital Boundary Files as well.

For more information on this or any other Geographic Product, call your nearest [Regional Reference Centre](#).

Postal Code Conversion File

The Postal Code Conversion File (PCCF) links over 720,000 six-character postal codes with the standard Census geographic areas such as Enumeration Areas, municipalities and Census Tracts, and provides the x,y coordinates for representative points to support mapping applications. The PCCF can determine which postal codes are included within specific geographic areas of interest, or it can provide the corresponding standard census areas if postal codes are known. The PCCF can be used for direct marketing, calculating commuting distances and transportation routes, studying the catchment areas for banks, schools, hospitals and retail stores.

For more information on this or any other Geographic Product, call your nearest [Regional Reference Centre](#).

Digital Boundary Files

The Digital Boundary Files (DBF) comprise a library of geographic boundaries in digital form for eight different levels of geography, from enumeration areas (the smallest unit) up to provinces and territories.

With appropriate software DBFs provide the framework for computer analysis and mapping. These files can be manipulated to create new custom geographic areas by aggregating standard areas, and can be used in conjunction with Street Network Files in large urban centres.

For more information on this or any other Geographic Product, call your nearest [Regional Reference Centre](#).

Geographic Attribute File

This file links each of the 45,995 Enumeration Areas (EA), the basic geographical unit of census data collection, to higher geographic levels by codes and names. The file also presents population and private occupied dwelling counts for each EA, and the x,y coordinates for representative points in three different systems. The same information is available with software in GEO-REF, a software and data product which is described later in this module.

For more information on this or any other Geographic Product, call your nearest [Regional Reference Centre](#).

Place Name Master File (PNMF)

This file contains the "master" list of place names with Standard Geographical Classification codes, and Enumeration Area codes. The file includes the place names published in the Standard Geographical Classification as well as names of Unincorporated Places encountered by the census representatives during 1991 Census collection. ("Unincorporated Places" refers to a cluster of five or more permanently occupied dwellings in a rural area.) The population counts of all Unincorporated Places for which a population was reported in the 1991 Census, as well as Census Subdivisions, are also included.

For more information on this or any other Geographic Product, call your nearest [Regional Reference Centre](#).

Street Index

The Street Index is an alphabetical listing of street and address ranges from the Street Network Files, linked to specific standard geographic areas. Linkages are available for Enumeration Areas, Census Divisions (counties), Census Subdivisions (municipalities) and Census Tracts (neighbourhoods). The listings show street name, type, odd and even address ranges, abbreviated municipality name and the code for the geographic area requested.

For more information on this or any other Geographic Product, call your nearest [Regional Reference Centre](#).

Block-face Data File

The information in this file uses the smallest geographical unit available from Statistics Canada, namely the block-face in urban centres covered by Street Network Files. A block-face is one side of a city street between two consecutive intersections. This file contains census population and dwelling counts, linkages to all higher levels of geography (Enumeration Areas and above), address ranges as well as x,y coordinates of block-face representative points.

For more information on this or any other Geographic Product, call your nearest [Regional Reference Centre](#).

Complete Online Guide to Geography

This electronic product is an interactive text document that runs as a WINDOWS application. It provides quick and easy access to a number of spatial concepts of census geography. It contains explanations of census geography basics, products and services, case studies, learning activities, definitions, illustrations, rules and user issues. Educators have found the guide useful since it quickly illustrates specialized geographic concepts.

For more information on this or any other Geographic Product, call your nearest [Regional Reference Centre](#).

GEO-REF (Geographic Information Reference System)

This is a powerful and user-friendly software and data product designed to provide users with a wide selection of geographic information. It is based on the Enumeration Area, and contains population and dwelling counts, geographic codes and names that apply to all higher levels of geography. Users can browse through, make tailored searches or create customized databases for further investigation. The data portion is also available in the Geographic Attribute File (GAF).

For more information on this or any other Geographic Product, call your nearest [Regional Reference Centre](#).

Regional Reference Centres

Atlantic Region

Serving the provinces of
Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia,
Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick.

Advisory Services
Statistics Canada
North American Life Centre
1770 Market Street
HALIFAX, Nova Scotia
B3J 3M3

Local calls: (902) 426-5331
Toll Free: 1-800-565-7192
Fax number: (902) 426-9538

Québec

Advisory Services
Statistics Canada
200 René Lévesque Blvd. W.
Guy Favreau Complex
4th Floor, East Tower
MONTREAL, Québec
H2Z 1X4

Local calls: (514) 283-5725
Toll Free: 1-800-565-7192
Fax number: (514) 283-9350

National Capital Region

Statistical Reference Centre (NCR)
Statistics Canada
R.H. Coats Building Lobby
Holland Avenue
OTTAWA, Ontario
K1A 0T6

If you live outside the local phone service region,
please dial the toll free number for your region.

Local calls: (613) 951-8116
Fax number: (613) 951-0581

Ontario

Advisory Services
Statistics Canada
Arthur Meighen Building, 10th Floor
25 St. Clair Avenue East
TORONTO, Ontario
M4T 1M4

Local calls: (416) 973-6586
Toll Free: 1-800-565-7192
Fax number: (416) 973-7475

Manitoba

Advisory Services
Statistics Canada
MacDonald Building, Suite 300
344 Edmonton Street
WINNIPEG, Manitoba
R3B 3L9

Local calls: (204) 983-4020
Toll Free: 1-800-565-7192
Fax number: (204)983-7543

Saskatchewan

Advisory Services
Statistics Canada
Avord Tower, 9th Floor
2002 Victoria Avenue
REGINA, Saskatchewan
S4P 0R7

Local Calls: (306) 780-5405
Toll Free: 1-800-565-7192
Fax Number: (306) 780-5403

Southern Alberta

Advisory Services
Statistics Canada
First Street Plaza, Room 401
138 - 4th Avenue South East
CALGARY, Alberta
T2G 4Z6

Local Calls: (403) 292-6717
Toll Free: 1-800-565-7192
Fax Number: (403) 292-4958

British Columbia and the Yukon Territory

Advisory Services
Statistics Canada,
Library Square Tower
#600 - 300 West Georgia Street
VANCOUVER, B.C.
V6B 6C7

Local calls: (604) 666-3691
Toll Free: 1-800-565-7192
Fax number: (604) 666-4863

Northern Alberta and Northwest Territories

Advisory Services
Statistics Canada
Park Square, 9th Floor
10001 Bellamy Hill
EDMONTON, Alberta
T5J 3B6

Local Calls: (403) 495-3027
Toll Free: 1-800-565-7192
Fax Number: (403) 495-5318