

# Glossary

**Divorce.** Divorce is the legal dissolution of a legal marriage. Divorce data are presented here on the basis of the province or territory where the decree was granted. From 2006 to 2008, same-sex divorces are included in the total counts of divorces.

## Divorce rates

- **Crude divorce rate.** The number of divorces per 100,000 population.
- **Duration-specific divorce rate.** The divorce rate in a particular year for a specific marriage cohort. For example, the 2008 divorce rate for persons married in 2008 (i.e. the 2008 marriage cohort) is calculated by dividing the number of 2008 divorces granted to persons married in 2008 by the number of marriages performed in 2008. When multiplied by 1,000, the result is expressed as the number of 2008 divorces per 1,000 marriages from 2008. (This rate incorporates a bias of unknown magnitude due to the death of some spouses during the period as well as in- and out-migration, that is, persons moving from one province or territory to another, or to or from Canada. Divorce records with an unknown year of marriage were distributed on the basis of divorces with known years of marriage.)
- **Total divorce rate (TDR).** The sum of duration-specific divorce rates. In this publication, the summation goes back 50 years, that is, it accumulates divorce rates pertaining to marriages having taken place between 1956/1958 and 2006/2008. This measure is expressed as the proportion of married couples who are expected to divorce before their 50th anniversary, given the duration-specific divorce rates for 2008. For example, the 2008 Canada TDR of 431 per 1,000 marriages indicates that 43.1% of marriages celebrated in Canada in 2008 are expected to end in divorce before the 50th anniversary, if the conditions observed from 1958 to 2008 remain stable.
- **Age-specific divorce rate.** Number of divorces per 1,000 legally married men or women of the same age.

**Duration of marriage.** The duration of marriage is the amount of time elapsed (in years) between the marriage date (day, month and year) and the date the divorce decree was granted.

**Marital status just prior to marriage.** Used in the context of divorce statistics, marital status just prior to marriage is the marital status of the individual immediately before the marriage to which the divorce decree relates. Persons entering into a marriage may be single (never married), divorced or widowed.

**Marriage.** Prior to 2003, marriage was defined as the legal conjugal union of two persons of the opposite sex. Since 2003, the definition of marriage has been changed in

some provinces and territories to include the legal conjugal union of two persons of the same sex. Common-law relationships are excluded.

- **Opposite-sex marriage.** The legal conjugal union of two persons of the opposite sex. All marriages occurring in Canada prior to 2003 were opposite-sex marriages.
- **Same-sex marriage.** The legal conjugal union of two persons of the same sex, i.e. two men or two women. There were no same-sex marriages in Canada prior to 2003.

The marriage data in this publication are presented by place of occurrence, that is, the province or territory where the marriage took place.

**Mean age at divorce (or marriage).** The mean (average) age at divorce (or marriage) in a province or territory was calculated by adding a half year to a spouse's age at his or her last birthday and multiplying the result by the number of divorces (or marriages) of persons having that spouse's age, summing those values, and then dividing the sum by the total number of divorces (or marriages) in that jurisdiction.

**Median age at divorce (or marriage).** The median is a measure of central tendency. It is the middle value in a set of ordered numbers (e.g. divorcing wives' ages ranked from youngest to oldest). In the case of an even number of observations, the median is the average of the two middle values.

**Population.** Persons whose usual place of residence is somewhere in Canada, including Canadian government employees stationed abroad and their families, members of the Canadian forces stationed abroad and their families, crews of Canadian merchant vessels, and non-permanent residents of Canada.

Mid-year (July 1) population estimates are used to calculate the rates.

**Provinces and territories.** The geographic distribution of divorces in the tables of this publication is based on place of occurrence, that is, the province or territory where the marriage took place. Nunavut came into being officially as a Territory of Canada on April 1, 1999. The name Northwest Territories applies to a Territory with different geographic boundaries before and after April 1, 1999.