

Canada

Contacts

Toronto

EY
EY Tower
222 Bay Street
Toronto, ON
M5K 1J7
Canada

Teresa Gombita
teresa.gombita@ca.ey.com
+1 416 943 3272

1. Types of tax

While there are no estate taxes in Canada, there is a deemed disposition of all capital property owned by an individual at the time of death. In general, this disposition is deemed to take place at the fair market value (FMV) immediately prior to death. It usually results in the recognition of some amount of gain or loss and is included in computing income in the year of death. In all cases, the estate or the beneficiaries, as the case may be, will acquire the property at a cost equal to the deceased's proceeds from the deemed disposition. Additionally, the FMV of any registered retirement savings plan (RRSP) or registered retirement income fund (RRIF) is fully taxable in the year of death unless it is bequeathed to the individual's spouse or a dependent minor child.

Because the deemed disposition of capital property can result in significant tax liabilities, the Canadian Tax Act provides relief in some circumstances. For example, there are exceptions for transfers to spouses and certain transfers of farm and/or fishing property to children. These are discussed below.

1.1 Inheritance tax

There are no inheritance taxes in Canada.

1.2 Gift and endowment tax

Neither Canada nor its provinces have a separate gift or endowment tax regime. However, under the Canadian Tax Act, a disposition at FMV will arise when property is gifted to any person, trust, foundation or charity, depending on whether that person deals at arms' length with the donor. In the case of Canadian residents, the deemed disposition rules apply to any property that is gifted. There are exceptions for transfers during their lifetimes to qualified spouse trusts, as discussed below, and special trusts created by an individual who is more than 65 years old for the benefit of themselves (an alter ego trust), or themselves and their spouse (a joint partner trust). For nonresidents, the rules will apply to gifts of taxable Canadian property, as defined in the next section.



1.3 Real estate transfer tax

Several provinces levy a tax on the transfer of real property, referred to as either a land transfer tax or real property transfer tax. For tax purposes, real property generally includes land, buildings or structures on land and any rights or interests in land. As a general rule, the tax applies to the property's FMV, which is normally based on the value of the consideration or sale price. Tax is paid when a person registers a transfer of land at a provincial land title office.

Provinces levying the tax generally exempt certain transactions from the tax. Some of the more commonly exempted transactions include:

- ▶ Transfers where the value of the land does not exceed a minimum threshold
- ▶ Transfers for nominal consideration
- ▶ Transfers between family members
- ▶ Transfers of farmland

In addition, many provinces provide an exemption for first-time home buyers.

The table below summarizes the land transfer tax rates by province and territory.

Province or territory	Tax or duty	Statute
Alberta	No land transfer tax; however, registration fees may apply.	N/A
British Columbia	Total of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 1% of the first C\$200,000 of the taxable transaction's FMV ▶ 2% of the remaining taxable transaction's FMV 	Property Transfer Tax Act
Manitoba	Total of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 0.5% of the excess of the land's FMV over C\$30,000 ▶ 0.5% of the excess of the land's FMV over C\$90,000 ▶ 0.5% of the excess of the land's FMV over C\$150,000 ▶ 0.5% of the excess of the land's FMV over C\$200,000 	Part III (Land Transfer Tax) of The Tax Administration and Miscellaneous Taxes Act
New Brunswick	0.5% of the greater of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Consideration for the transfer ▶ Real property's assessed value 	Real Property Transfer Tax Act
Newfoundland and Labrador	No land transfer tax; however, registration fees may apply.	N/A
Northwest Territories	No land transfer tax; however, registration fees may apply.	N/A
Nova Scotia	Determined by each municipality and applied to the sale price of every property that is transferred by deed. Maximum being 1.5% of the value of the property transferred.	Part V (Deed Transfers) of the Municipal Government Act



1.4 Transfer duty

1.5 Net wealth tax

50



2. Who is liable?

The taxation of individuals in Canada is determined by residence. The deemed disposition at death applies to the worldwide assets of all Canadian residents at the time of death. Nonresidents may also be liable for tax at the time of death if they own taxable Canadian property.

2.1 Residency

Canadian residents

The Canadian courts have developed various principles to determine whether a person is a Canadian resident. The following considerations are used for determination:

- ▶ The amount of time spent by a person in Canada
- ▶ The motives or reasons for a person being present in or absent from Canada during the year
- ▶ Whether the person maintains a dwelling in Canada
- ▶ The person's origin and background
- ▶ The person's general mode or routine of life
- ▶ Other connections that the person has with Canada, such as ownership of property, membership in clubs and presence of relatives

A person may be a resident of more than one country during the same period of time. Where an individual is considered to be a resident of Canada and also a resident of a treaty country, the applicable treaty will normally determine the country of residence under the "tiebreaker" rules.

In addition to the judicially developed tests, the Canadian Tax Act has provided statutory tests that may deem a person to be a Canadian resident. In the case of an individual, the key rule is that a person is deemed to be a resident for any tax year in which he or she spends 183 or more days in Canada.

Nonresidents who hold taxable Canadian property

The Canadian Tax Act establishes procedures for collecting tax from nonresidents on the disposition of taxable Canadian property as defined in the Canadian Tax Act.

In general, the definition of taxable Canadian property will limit the taxation of capital gains realized by nonresidents to direct and indirect interests in Canadian real estate, Canadian resource properties or timber resource properties (the specified assets). It should be noted that while the rules are very similar to the rules in the United States, there is a significant difference, such that any corporation, even if it is nonresident, that holds more than 50% of the specified assets at any time during the prior 60 months will be considered taxable Canadian property.

A nonresident must obtain a certificate of compliance and furnish acceptable security (normally 25% of the expected gain on account of any potential Canadian income tax liability arising on the disposition of a taxable Canadian property). These rules do not apply to a deemed disposition on death. However, the executor acting on behalf of a nonresident decedent must file an income tax return for the year of death and pay any tax that may be necessary on the deemed disposition.

2.2 Domicile

Canada only taxes individuals based on residency and does not consider the domicile of taxpayers for the calculation of tax.



Canadian maximum personal marginal income tax rates – 2015 ¹				
	Ordinary income ² %	Eligible dividends ³ %	Ordinary dividends ³ %	Capital gains %
Alberta	39.00	19.29	29.36	19.50
British Columbia	45.80	28.68	37.98	22.90
Manitoba	46.40	32.26	40.77	23.20
New Brunswick	46.84	27.35	36.02	23.42
Newfoundland and Labrador	42.30	30.19	32.08	21.15
Northwest Territories	43.05	22.81	30.72	21.53
Nova Scotia	50.00	36.06	39.07	25.00
Nunavut	40.50	27.56	31.19	20.25
Ontario	49.53	33.82	40.13	24.76
Prince Edward Island	47.37	28.70	38.74	23.69
Quebec	49.97	35.22	39.78	24.98
Saskatchewan	44.00	24.81	34.91	22.00
Yukon	42.40	19.29	32.04	21.20

³ The rates apply to the actual amount of taxable dividends received in the year. Eligible dividends are those paid by public corporations and private companies out of earnings that have been taxed at the general corporate tax rate (the dividend must be designated by the payor corporation as an eligible dividend).



	Rate	Bracket	
Nonresidents	22.20%	C\$0	
	32.56%	C\$43,954	
	38.48%	C\$87,908	
	42.92%	C\$136,271	

4. Exemptions and reliefs

Transfers to a spouse or qualifying spouse trust

In certain family situations, taxation resulting from the deemed disposition at death can be deferred either totally or partially. If the property is transferred to the Canadian resident spouse of the testator or to a qualifying spouse trust, there is total deferral. For purposes of the Canadian Tax Act and many other statutes, a spouse includes a common law partner of either the opposite or same sex. The spouse or spouse trust, as the case may be, acquires the property at the deceased's cost, and any gain is deferred until the spouse or spouse trust disposes of it. Any income from the property or any gain upon its ultimate disposition will be taxed in the hands of the transferee. In order for a trust to be considered a qualifying spouse trust, and be eligible for the deferral of capital gains tax (CGT), the following criteria must be met:

- ▶ The deceased transferor must have been a resident in Canada at the time of death.
- ▶ The trust must be a resident in Canada when the property vests in the trust (spouse could be nonresident).
- ▶ The trust must be created in the deceased's will.
- ▶ The terms of the trust must note that the spouse of the deceased is exclusively entitled to all of the income generated by the property in the trust during the spouse's lifetime.
- ▶ The terms of the trust must note that no one other than the spouse is entitled to either income or capital of the trust while the spouse beneficiary is alive.

Capital gains exemption

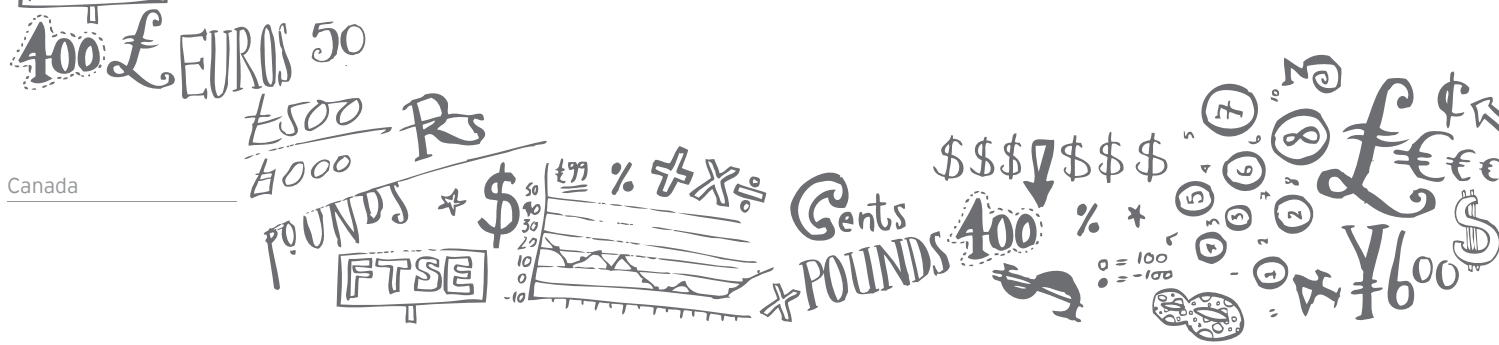
Where the deceased owns shares of a qualifying small business corporation (QSBC) or qualified farm and/or fishing property, CGT will be minimized if the deceased's C\$813,600 lifetime capital gains exemption can be claimed on the terminal return. This will depend on whether all or a portion of this exemption remains unclaimed at death and whether the shares or farm and/or fishing property qualify for the exemption. Where shares of a QSBC or farm and/or fishing property are left to a surviving spouse, the personal representative may choose to elect out of the automatic rollover to trigger a portion of the capital gain that can be sheltered by the deceased's available exemption.

Note that the application of this exemption is fairly limited in scope:

- ▶ It is not available to nonresidents.
- ▶ To qualify for QSBC, the corporation must be a Canadian-controlled private corporation and must meet certain tests with respect to the use of its assets in Canada, and the shareholder has to meet a holding period test.

Utilizing capital losses

In most cases, net capital losses can be used to offset net capital gains only. However, the Canadian Tax Act includes a relieving provision whereby net capital losses incurred on a deemed disposition at death can be applied to reduce income from any source in the year of death or the preceding year. This provision also applies to any net capital losses carried forward from previous years (to the extent that they exceed amounts previously claimed as capital gains exemption by the deceased) and net capital gains realized in the year of death.



In addition to a capital gain or loss, the disposition of depreciable property on the death of the testator may give rise to recapture of depreciation or terminal losses. For each item of depreciable property, the testator is deemed on death to receive proceeds equal to FMV. When the deemed proceeds exceed the appreciated capital cost of the property, there will generally be a recapture of depreciation. This recapture must be included as part of the income of the testator in his or her terminal year's return. On the other hand, when the appreciated capital cost of the property exceeds the deemed proceeds, a terminal loss will occur. In this case, the terminal loss can be deducted from income in the terminal year's return.



Date for payment of tax

Generally, tax is due when the relevant returns are required to be filed. However, where the deceased individual is deemed to have disposed of capital property, resource property, land inventory or was entitled to a right or thing at death, the executor can elect to defer payment of a portion of the tax arising on such deemed dispositions or rights or things. Provided that acceptable security is posted with the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), the tax may be paid in as many as 10 equal annual installments, with the first payment due on the balance due date for the return. Each subsequent payment is due on the anniversary of the balance due date. Interest, calculated using the prescribed rate in effect plus 4%, will apply to the outstanding amount, commencing at the balance due date until the full amount of the tax is paid. The accrued interest must also be paid at the due date for each installment.

6. Assessments and valuations

The CRA has not altered its official policy with respect to valuation issues since the issuance of IC 89-3 Policy Statement of Business Equity Valuations in 1989, which defines FMV as:

“The highest price, expressed in terms of money or money’s worth, obtainable in an open market between knowledgeable, informed and prudent parties acting at arm’s length, neither party being under any compulsion to transact.”

7. Trusts, foundations and private purpose funds

From an estate planning point of view, trusts are often used as a means of making lifetime gifts to enable the donor to place constraints on the donee. Property will normally be gifted at a time when it does not attract a tax liability, and any growth in value of assets held by the trust is outside of the donor’s estate.

For example, *inter vivos* trusts are commonly used to hold participating shares of a holding company established as part of an estate freezing plan so that the growth in the value of the business or investments transferred to the company will accrue to the next generation. The transferor may be one of the trustees, and, consequently, will be in a position to influence if and when distributions from the trust will be made.

The Canadian Tax Act deems trusts to dispose of capital properties at FMV at certain specified times. In most cases, a trust will be deemed to dispose of its capital properties on the 21st anniversary of the date on which the trust was originally settled.

Generally, in situations in which the beneficiaries of a trust are residents of Canada, planning can be implemented that results in a deferral of CGT that the trust would otherwise pay as a result of the application of the 21-year rule. That planning often involves transferring the assets of the trust to its beneficiaries at the adjusted cost base amounts of the assets. The beneficiaries then pay CGT when they ultimately dispose of the assets that they have acquired from the trust.

Capital properties cannot be distributed by a trust to beneficiaries on a tax-deferred basis if the beneficiaries are nonresidents of Canada.

8. Grants

If an individual has paid into the Canada Pension Plan during their lifetime, their estate may file a claim to recover up to C\$2,500 of the cost of the funeral. This “death benefit” is taxable to the recipient, not reported on the final tax return of the decedent.



A will is a legal document that regulates an individual's estate after death. Canadian provinces will normally accept the formal validity of a will drawn under the laws of the deceased's place of residence at the time of making the will or at death. Whether the deceased had the personal legal capacity to make the dispositions in the will is generally governed by the law of the deceased's residence.

The intestacy rules are different depending on the province or territory in which the person was resident at his or her death. Generally, the laws of intestacy for the province of Ontario state that if the deceased had a spouse and no children, the spouse is entitled to receive the entire estate. The following table summarizes the intestacy rules for the province of Ontario. Other provinces have similar, but not identical, rules.

Generally, all of the Canadian provinces levy some form of probate fees/taxes based on the gross value of the estate. These fees/taxes are generally payable by the estate of a decedent immediately upon issuance of an estate certificate (or letters of probate). These documents generally authenticate the appointment of the personal representatives of an estate for third parties.



Province/territory	Fee/tax
Alberta	\$400, where property's net value exceeds \$250,000
British Columbia	\$150 + \$14 for every \$1,000 or portion thereof by which estate's value exceeds \$50,000
Manitoba	\$70 + \$7 for every additional \$1,000 or portion thereof by which value exceeds \$10,000
New Brunswick	\$5 per \$1,000 or portion thereof, where value exceeds \$20,000
Newfoundland	\$60 + \$0.50 for every additional \$100 of estate's value over \$1,000
Northwest Territories	\$400, where property's value exceeds \$250,000
Nova Scotia	\$973.45 + \$16.45 for every \$1,000 or portion thereof by which estate's assets exceed \$100,000
Nunavut	\$400, where property's value exceeds \$250,000
Ontario	\$250 + \$15 per \$1,000 or portion thereof by which estate's value exceeds \$50,000
Prince Edward Island	\$400 + \$4 per \$1,000 or portion thereof by which estate's value exceeds \$100,000
Quebec	No probate
Saskatchewan	\$7 per \$1,000 of the estate's value or portion thereof
Yukon	\$140, where estate's value exceeds \$25,000



11. Estate tax treaties

Canada does not have any tax treaties dealing only with the taxation of estates. However, many provisions of its treaties will have an impact on estate planning. For example, most of Canada's international tax treaties prevent Canada from taxing gains on any property other than immovable property or property associated with a permanent establishment in Canada. For these purposes, immovable property is typically defined as real property or an interest therein, although particular tax treaties may provide expanded definitions. In addition, most tax treaties allow a country to tax gains on the disposition of an indirect interest in immovable property located in its jurisdiction. For example, under most treaties, the shares of a company or an interest in a partnership, trust or estate whose value is derived principally from immovable property will be exposed to tax in the jurisdiction in which that property is located. For these purposes, an entity is considered to derive its value principally from immovable property if that property represents more than 50% of the total FMV of the enterprise.

While Canada has no estate tax and no separate estate tax treaty with the United States, the Canada-US income tax treaty includes provisions for the application of the US estate tax to estates of Canadian citizens who are not US residents at death.

Additional reading materials

"2014-15 Managing Your Personal Taxes – A Canadian Perspective," EY website
ey.com/CA/en/Services/Tax/Managing-Your-Personal-Taxes.

EY's Guide to Preparing 2014 Personal Tax Returns
castore.ca/product/eys-guide-to-preparing-personal-tax-returns/496