



Canadian Food
Inspection Agency

Agence canadienne
d'inspection des aliments

A CONSUMER'S GUIDE TO THE CANADIAN FOOD INSPECTION AGENCY

Rights and Responsibilities



Canada

Understanding Canadian Food Inspection Agency responsibilities

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is dedicated to safeguarding Canada's food supply and protecting animal health and plant health.

Through our core functions, we work with government, industry and public partners to

- protect Canadians from preventable health risks;
- implement food safety measures;
- manage risks and emergencies regarding food, animals and plants; and
- promote food safety and systems to maintain the safety and security of Canada's agriculture, aquaculture and fisheries sector.

What is the CFIA responsible for?

Our role falls into two broad categories

- for food, to set and enforce compositional, labelling and quality standards, as well as enforce the food safety and nutritional quality standards established by Health Canada

- for animal health and plant health, to set standards and enforce them.

The scope of our mandate is vast and complex. For example, our activities include

- inspecting federally registered meat processing facilities
- performing border inspections for foreign pests and diseases
- enforcing legislation related to labelling

We also

- verify the humane transportation of animals
- conduct food safety investigations and recalls
- perform laboratory testing and environmental assessments of seeds, plants, feeds and fertilizers
- regulate the import, export and domestic movement of horticulture, forestry and plant products
- work on preventing exotic pests from being introduced into Canada, and on controlling and eradicating quarantine pests

What are my rights as a consumer?

You have the right to the following:

- access to accurate and relevant information on food safety, animal health and plant health issues, on a timely basis;
- information on food safety issues, such as food-related outbreaks and recall actions; and
- information on animal disease outbreaks that may impact human health and plant pest problems that may impact your property.

What kind of information can I get from the CFIA?

The CFIA helps consumers by providing access to relevant information on food safety, animal health and plant health.

The CFIA uses tools such as web tools, videos, brochures and fact sheets to share information. The CFIA also helps consumers reduce risks that may impact their health or well-being. This is done by providing information regarding food-related outbreaks, recall actions, and animal disease outbreaks.

When should I contact the CFIA?

Consumers play an important role in maintaining the integrity of our food supply and in animal and plant health. You can do this by reporting any of the following:

- adverse reactions to a food product
- other food-related concerns*
- suspicions about the presence of an animal disease or a plant pest

What happens after I have contacted the CFIA?

The CFIA uses the information and details you provide to

- determine whether a product poses a risk, and
- identify if any follow-up action is necessary

After receiving a complaint about a food product or being notified about the possible presence of an animal disease or plant pest, the CFIA conducts an inspection. During the inspection, the CFIA works to determine if there is a food-related risk, animal disease or plant pest and determines the source and the extent of the problem.

* Residents of Quebec should contact the Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation du Québec at 1-800-463-5023.

Inspectors may contact various people involved and may use a wide range of tools to do their inspection. These tools include

- reviewing records,
- collecting samples,
- analysing products,
- taking photographs, and
- copying documents.

If we determine that there is a food risk, animal disease or plant pest, we do a risk assessment of the product. Based on the assessment, we decide on the most appropriate action to take to control the risk, disease or pest.

These actions may include

- issuing a food recall;
- seizing and detaining product;
- quarantining animals, plants, farms or places of business;
- ordering the destruction of the product; and
- referring the matter to Area CFIA Enforcement and Investigation Services for investigation and potential prosecution.

How am I informed of the results?

If you want to be informed of the results, please tell the CFIA inspector at the time you contact the CFIA. Arrangements will be made to contact you once the inspection has been completed.

In addition to the information regularly published for the public, such as food recall advisories and allergy alerts, you can request more information through the *Access to Information Act*. Under the *Access to Information Act*, you can request any material under the control of the CFIA, regardless of its medium or form.

To submit an official request for Government of Canada records, visit the CFIA's Access to Information web page.

Where do I go for more information?

The CFIA website is an important source for information related to food safety, animal health and plant health.

Information for consumers is available on the Consumer Centre section of the CFIA's website at www.inspection.gc.ca, including

- a link to the Food Safety Portal
- food recalls and notices
- allergy and health hazard alerts

On our “Have a Question?” page, you can do the following:

- report a specific food safety or labelling concern
- sign up to receive food recall and allergy alert email notifications
- sign up to receive animal health, plant or food email notifications

How do I contact the CFIA?

If you cannot find the web resources to answer your questions, please contact us using one of the following methods:

By phone

Our phone lines are open from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday to Friday.

Toll-free: 1-800-442-2342

Local: 613-225-2342

TTY: 1-800-465-7735

We will respond to you or arrange for the appropriate person to contact you within two business days, under normal operating circumstances.*

By email

You can email us at

www.inspection.gc.ca/english/util/contact/commene.shtml.

You will receive an immediate acknowledgement that your message has been received and we will contact you within two business days, under normal operating circumstances.*

To learn more about the CFIA’s Statement of Rights and Service, visit our website at www.inspection.gc.ca.

* Response times may be affected when the CFIA is involved in emergency management situations. We ask for your patience and understanding during these times.

If you have specific questions, contact one of our Area Offices:

Atlantic Area Office

1081 Main Street
P.O. Box 6088
Moncton, New Brunswick
E1C 8R2
Telephone: 506-851-7400
Fax: 506-851-2801

Quebec Area Office

2001 University Street
Room 746-C
Montreal, Quebec
H3A 3N2
Telephone: 514-283-8888
Fax: 514-283-3143

Ontario Area Office

174 Stone Road West
Guelph, Ontario
N1G 4S9
Telephone: 519-837-9400
Fax: 519-837-9766

Western Area Office

1115-57 Avenue NE
Calgary, Alberta
T2E 9B2
Telephone: 403-292-4301
Fax: 403-292-4551

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