



Fact Sheet: Exporting food

Safe Food for Canadians Regulations

Under the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations (SFCR), new food safety requirements will apply to businesses that prepare food to be exported outside of Canada.

Would your business be ready?

As an exporter, the food you export will generally need to meet Canadian requirements, as well as those of the importing country, before you can export your food. When there are no requirements in the foreign country, you still need to comply with applicable Canadian law.

Key requirements

1. Licensing

In most cases, exporters will need to ensure that:

- the food they export has been manufactured, processed, treated, preserved, graded, packaged, or labelled by a business holding a licence for any of these activities
- if the food is a meat product, the food animal from which the meat product is derived would have to be slaughtered by a business holding a licence

As import requirements for certificates vary from one importing country to another, please verify the need for a certificate before you ship. Exporters will need a licence in order to request an export certificate.

Find out if and when you need a licence by using the licensing interactive tool. It only takes 5 minutes.

2. Preventive controls

As an exporter, you would be required to keep food safe by:

Knowing your food

- be certain that your food meets applicable requirements, including those for safety, grading, standards, labelling, and net quantity
- verify that the food product you will be shipping matches information provided on the export certificate and other shipping documents
- have contact information for the persons who prepared the food, and the persons who are importing your food products

Knowing your foreign market

- be aware of the importing country's requirements
- ensure that you are eligible for specific markets and have obtained required inspection or certification services from the CFIA while your food is still in Canada

In addition, you may be required to keep food safe by:

Writing a Preventive Control Plan – Write down and review regularly that:

- all certificates and shipping documents are on file
- food safety controls are in place
- procedures are established for handling complaints and recalls
- you have verified that your plan is working as expected

A Preventive Control Plan (PCP) demonstrates that, as an exporter, you understand the risks associated with the food you export. It sets out the applicable preventive controls to the food you export and describes the measures you are taking to control those risks.

The SFCR will require that food to be exported be prepared by a licence holder. If you need to obtain an export certificate from the CFIA, you will require a licence and a written PCP.

Find out if and when you need a PCP by using the preventive control plan interactive tool. It only takes 5 minutes.

3. Traceability

Under the SFCR, you will need to keep clear and readable records that trace where you sourced your food and to whom you provided it. This can significantly reduce the time it takes to notify foreign counterparts in the event that a product needs to be recalled.

Find out what traceability requirements apply to you and when by using the traceability interactive tool. It only takes 5 minutes.

Why it matters

The SFCR will require that food exported from Canada is prepared under internationally recognized food safety controls. This will enhance market access for Canadian exports.

Learn more at www.inspection.gc.ca/safefood and access tools including:

- Video: Get ready for the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations
- Video: SFCR – Exporting Food
- Understanding the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations: A handbook for food businesses

- A guide for preparing a preventive control plan — For domestic food businesses
- Infographic: 3 Key Principles for Exporters
- Exporting food: A step-by-step guide
- Fact Sheet: Exporting Food (available in English, French, and 10 other languages)
- Exporting to the US: Foreign Supplier Verification Program.