



Government
of Canada

Gouvernement
du Canada

IMPORTING ILLEGAL FOREST PRODUCTS

Know the rules, avoid the penalties



The Government of Canada is committed to combatting the illegal trade in forest products. The trade in illegally harvested timber is worth between US\$30 billion and \$100 billion, or 10 to 30 percent of global wood trade, according to INTERPOL and the United Nations Environment Programme. Illegal forest products also play a significant role in financing organized crime and contribute to the decline of endangered tree species and habitat for forest-dependent species.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW TO SOURCE FOREST PRODUCTS RESPONSIBLY

What are the risks to Canadian importers if they buy illegally harvested forest products?

Importing illegal forest products can mean substantial fines, up to the millions of dollars for the most serious cases. Importers also face severe risk to their reputation and may damage their brand with the public. Learn more about law enforcement and fines from Environment Canada by [consulting the legislation](#).

What impacts do imports of illegal forest products have on the Canadian market?

Legitimate Canadian producers are undercut by illegal timber operations. Illegal operators avoid taxes and ignore safety and environment regulations. This all adds up to cheaper products competing with our Canadian forest sector, which follows some of the most comprehensive and rigorous forest management laws and regulations in the world.

What laws apply to me as an importer?

Importing forest products is governed by three main pieces of legislation: the [Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act \(WAPPRITA\)](#), the [Plant Protection Act](#) and the [Customs Act](#).

Who administers the WAPPRITA, and what do I need to know about it?

Environment Canada administers the [WAPPRITA](#) and regulates the import, export and interprovincial transportation of species that are covered by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). The [CITES](#) is an international agreement between governments.

Canada 

Environment Canada also controls the importation of species that have been obtained illegally but are not covered by the CITES. It is important that, as an importer, you are aware of the permit requirements for the species of timber you import.

What species are listed under the CITES?

The CITES lists the protected species in a searchable [database](#). This tool will list the countries in which the species are found and typical common names, in three languages. Use the exact scientific name of a species to ensure accurate results or check the [CITES appendices](#).

What about species that are not protected under the CITES?

The WAPPRIITA is used both to implement the CITES in Canada and to control illegal imports of species that are not listed in the CITES.

Section 6 (1) of WAPPRIITA states “No person shall import into Canada any animal or plant that was taken, or any animal or plant, or any part or derivative of an animal or plant, that was possessed, distributed or transported in contravention of any law of any foreign state.”

Who administers the *Plant Protection Act*, and what do I need to know about it?

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) issues permits to import in accordance with national policy guidelines under provision of the [Plant Protection Act](#) and the [Plant Protection Regulations](#). As an importer, it is your responsibility to know the specific [import requirements](#) for the product you are bringing into Canada, which includes any materials used for transporting or packaging the product (e.g. dunnage or wooden crates). This may include requirements under more than one act or regulation.

The CFIA’s [Automated Import Reference System](#) (AIRS) provides accurate and timely information on import requirements. The application uses a question and answer approach to guide the user through questions about the Harmonized System (HS) Codes, origin, destination, end use and miscellaneous qualifiers of the product they want to import. To learn more about importing wood products, visit the [CFIA website](#) and search for plant protection.

Who administers the *Customs Act*, and what do I need to know about it?

The Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) administers the [Customs Act](#) and ensures the security and prosperity of Canada by managing the access of people and goods to and from Canada. The CBSA helps Environment Canada with the WAPPRIITA by enforcing controls at CBSA ports of entry. To learn more about what the CBSA’s position is on importing wood products, see [Memorandum D19-7-1](#).

YOUR OBLIGATIONS WHEN IMPORTING FOREST PRODUCTS INTO CANADA*

Using CFIA’s [Automated Import Reference System \(AIRS\)](#) and ECCC’s [CITES web page](#) are good first steps to determine import requirements for forest products.

- You need to know which species you are importing and their origin in order to verify if a CITES permit is required for your shipment as well as whether there are CFIA import requirements such as a phytosanitary certificate.
- You need to apply for and receive the required permits or other authorizations BEFORE you import your products.

- You are required to submit the necessary paperwork including permits or certificates when importing a [CITES-listed species](#). Electronic filing for imports of CITES-listed species is not yet allowed.
- You need to identify the commodities and the associated 10-digit tariff classifications from the [Customs Tariff](#) for the commodities you are importing to meet requirements of the [Customs Act](#), [Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act](#), and the [Plant Protection Act](#).
- You are obliged to submit documentation to the CBSA that is true, accurate and complete, to report goods to CBSA before or at the first point of arrival in Canada and to retain records for a specified period of time. Guidelines for reporting, release and accounting procedures can be found in the [D17 Memoranda series](#) on the CBSA website.
- In order to ensure the shipment of forest products that you intend to import is legal, you should verify:
 - where the forest product(s) is harvested;
 - that it is harvested legally; and
 - that all of the subsequent steps in the supply chain from transport to possession also meet the laws of the foreign state from which you are sourcing and importing the product(s).*

*This is not a complete summary of your obligations as an importer of forest products. This summary does not replace the wording of the Acts; for a full description of your obligations, please refer to the *Plant Protection Act*, the *Customs Act* and the *Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act*.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO SOURCE FOREST PRODUCTS RESPONSIBLY

Join the CBSA Partners in Protection program

As a member, your company can take advantage of numerous benefits, including:

- Access to CBSA security assessments, awareness sessions and CBSA expertise.
- Recognition as a Trusted Trader, which can save time at the border.
- Promoting your company as a secure, Trusted Trader that has been validated by the CBSA.

To learn more, visit the [CBSA website](#) (search partners in protection).

Get answers to these important questions

Questions to ask your suppliers:

- Can you trace your supply chains all the way back to the forest?
- Can you provide the scientific names of the species you are supplying?
- What is the degree of illegal activity in that forest or region?
- Do you have proper and credible documentation?
- Do you use any chain-of-custody tools?
- Do you use third-party certification?

Develop a forest products purchasing policy

Preparing a forest products purchasing policy and sharing it with your suppliers and stakeholders is a key strategy to avoiding illegal forest product imports.

Forest certification

Certification complements comprehensive and rigorous forest management laws and regulations. It is also embraced by companies as a way of further improving their sustainable forest management practices.

When you import forest products, check if they are certified to one of the schemes recognized by the [Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification](#)™ (PEFC) or if they are certified to the [Forest Stewardship Council](#)®. For example, the recognized North American schemes under the PEFC are the [Canadian Standards Association](#) and the [Sustainable Forestry Initiative](#).

Questions to ask your company's leaders:

- Do we understand the Government of Canada rules and regulations?
- Do we understand the foreign laws from which we are importing?
- Are we incorporating forest products into our procurement policies?
- Do we use barcodes or other tracing systems?
- Are we using legally verifiable verification systems?
- Do we use third-party certification?

Questions to ask yourself

- Do I understand the Government of Canada rules and regulations?
- Do I understand the foreign laws from which we are importing?
- Have I done independent research on my suppliers?
- Do I establish long-term relationships instead of buying on spot markets?
- Do I question suppliers about the origin and genus/species contained in their products and document their answers?
- Do I know about the geographic distribution of the species I am importing?
- Am I able to make supplier and forest site visits?

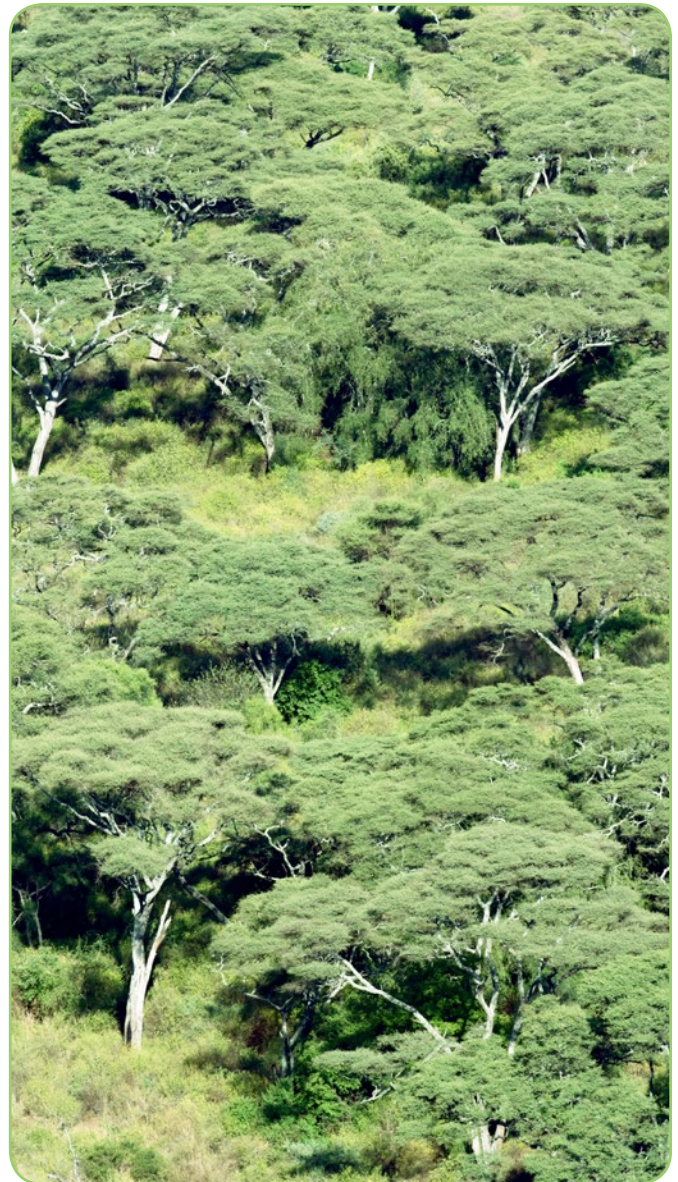


Harmful effects of illegally sourced forest products

Environmental: Illegal logging causes deforestation, landslides, degraded water supplies, loss of biodiversity and reductions in forest cover that increase global carbon emissions and lead to climate change.

Economic: Illegal logging undercuts the legitimate global timber industry, resulting in estimated annual losses of US\$10 billion, according to the World Bank. Canada's domestic forest products industry is being affected because illegal imports are cheaper and unfairly compete with legally produced Canadian products.

Social: United Nations research found that conflicts occur between illegal loggers and local communities in some countries. Illegal logging operations can force forest-dependent indigenous and local communities from their traditional lands, often violently.



Aussi disponible en français sous le titre : Importation de produits forestiers récoltés illégalement : connaître les règles pour éviter les sanctions.

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LEARN MORE

**I have some specific questions I need help with.
Who can I contact?**

We want to help. Contact:
Natural Resources Canada
[Canadian Forest Service](#)
Tel.: 343-292-6096

**For the most current version and links to
information contained, visit our website
at nrcan.gc.ca/forests.**