



Fact Sheet: Importing Food Safe Food for Canadians Regulations

Under the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations (SFCR), new food safety requirements apply to businesses that import food into Canada.

Is your business ready?

As an importer, you need to ensure that the food you import is safe to consume and meets Canadian requirements. The new consolidated regulations include a requirement that imported food be prepared with the same level of food safety controls as food prepared in Canada.

Key requirements

1. Licensing

Importers, in most cases, require a licence to import food into Canada. Find out if and when you need a licence by using the [licencing interactive tool](#). It only takes 5 minutes.

2. Preventive Controls

As an importer, you are required to keep food safe by:

Knowing your food – Be aware of potential risks of contamination and describe how biological, chemical, or physical hazards to the food you import are controlled.

Knowing your supplier – Be certain that your foreign supplier meets the same level of safety standards as domestic suppliers in preparing, storing, and transporting your food product.

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

Writing a preventive control plan (PCP) – Be sure to write down and review regularly

- how you monitor and verify that your import process is working well
- how the food you import meets requirements for safety, grading, standards, labelling, and net quantity
- that you have procedures to handle complaints and recalls

A written preventive control plan demonstrates that you understand the risks associated with the food you import. It sets out the applicable preventive controls to the food you import and describes the measures you and the foreign business preparing the food are taking to control those risks.



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 need to keep clear and readable records that trace where you sourced your food and to whom you provided it. This significantly reduces the time it takes to recall a product if necessary.

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

Why it matters

All imported food now must meet applicable Canadian import requirements. Previously, only importers of some foods were required to be licensed and have preventive food safety controls in place. The SFCR provides for a consistent approach across all types of imported foods.

[Learn more](#) at www.inspection.gc.ca/safefood and access tools including:

- Video: [Get ready for the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations](#)
- Video: [SFCR – Importing Food](#)
- Understanding the SFCR: [A handbook for food businesses](#)
- [A guide for preparing a PCP – for importers](#)
- Infographic: [3 Key Principles for Importers](#)
- [Automated Import Reference System \(AIRS\)](#)
- [Importing food: A step-by-step guide](#)
- [Getting started: Toolkit for businesses](#)