



Fact Sheet: Traceability Safe Food for Canadians Regulations

Traceability is the ability to track the movement of a food or a food commodity, one step back and one step forward.

Under the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations (SFCR), traceability requirements apply to most food businesses that:

- import food
- export food
- distribute or send food products across provincial or territorial borders
- manufacture, process, treat, preserve, grade, store, package or label food to be exported or sent across provincial or territorial borders
- grow and harvest fresh fruits or vegetables to be exported or sent across provincial or territorial borders
- slaughter food animals from which meat products are derived, where the meat product is exported or sent across provincial or territorial borders
- store and handle edible meat products in their imported condition for inspection by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA)
- sell food to consumers at retail, which would need to be traced one step back but not forward to the consumer

The traceability requirements do not apply to [restaurants and other similar enterprises](#).

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

How does it work?

The traceability documents must:

- **identify the food:** the common name of the food, the name and address of the person who manufactured, prepared, produced, stored, packaged or labelled the food, and a lot code¹ or other unique identifier² to trace the food
- **trace the food one step back** to the person who provided you with the food, including the date on which the food was provided to you
- **trace the food one step forward** to the person to whom you provided the food, including the date on which you provided the food
- if applicable, identify and trace back the ingredients you use to make the food, including the date on which they were provided to you



- if applicable, identify and trace back the food animals you slaughter

Clear and readable records are to be maintained for two years, be accessible in Canada, and provided to the CFIA upon request. Where electronic records are used, they need to be provided in a single file and in a format that can easily be opened and used in standard commercial software.

Why it matters

While many businesses in Canada have simple traceability records in place, others do not. This can impact the effectiveness and timeliness of food safety investigations and recalls.

Businesses that trace the source of each food supplied to them (one step back) and its next destination (one step forward) can access timely and precise information as needed. This can significantly reduce the time it takes businesses to remove unsafe food from the market. This better protects Canadians and increases confidence in Canada's food safety system.

[Learn more](http://www.inspection.gc.ca/safefood) at www.inspection.gc.ca/safefood.

You may also be interested in:

- [Video: Get Ready for the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations](#)
- [Traceability interactive tool](#)
- [Regulatory requirements: Traceability](#)
- [Understanding the Safe Food for Canadians Regulations: A handbook for food businesses](#)
- [Questions and Answers: Traceability](#)
- [Getting started: Toolkit for businesses](#)

¹ **lot code** refers to a code that can be used to identify a lot that was manufactured, prepared, produced, stored, graded, packaged or labeled, under the same conditions. A lot code can be numeric, alphabetic or alphanumeric.

² **unique identifier** refers to a code that can be used to identify a defined quantity of food. This may include a lot code, purchase order number, or a bill of lading number.