



Safe Food for Canadians Regulations

Fact sheet: Fresh fruits and vegetables businesses

The *Safe Food for Canadians Regulations* (SFCR) apply to fresh fruits and vegetable businesses, including those that grow or harvest them. Key SFCR requirements related to licensing, preventive controls, traceability and the Dispute Resolution Corporation are outlined below.

Key requirements

1. Licensing

SFCR licensing requirements came into force on January 15, 2019 for businesses that import or manufacture, process, treat, preserve, grade, package or label [fresh fruits or vegetables](#) for interprovincial trade or export. While you do not need a licence to grow or harvest fresh fruits or vegetables, you may be conducting other activities which do require a licence.

Review the guidance titled [Food business activities that require a licence under the SFCR](#) and use the [Licensing interactive tool](#) to determine if any activities you conduct require a Safe Food for Canadians (SFC) licence.

The first step to obtaining an SFC licence is to sign up through the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's (CFIA) secure and convenient online service portal – [My CFIA](#). CFIA has developed a [video](#) to help business owners understand how to apply for a licence and guidance on [what to consider before applying for a licence](#).

2. Preventive control requirements

Licensed fresh fruit or vegetable businesses, as well as growers and harvesters of fresh fruit or vegetables for export or interprovincial trade, will need to meet preventive control requirements as of **January 15, 2020**. These requirements establish the expected food safety outcomes to prevent food safety [hazards](#) and help prevent [contaminated](#) and non-compliant food entering the Canadian market place. Businesses are encouraged to familiarize themselves and implement preventive control requirements now in order to comply with the new requirements by the effective date.

Licence holders whose gross annual food sales are more than \$100,000, and growers or harvesters whose gross annual sales from interprovincial sales are more than \$100,000, will also be required to have a written [preventive control plan](#) (PCP) effective January 15, 2020.

In all cases, if you would like to obtain an export certificate or other export permission from CFIA, you must have a PCP in place before the export certificate or other export permission can be issued.



Many fresh fruit or vegetable businesses in Canada have implemented voluntary food safety programs, such as CanadaGAP, which will help you demonstrate compliance with some of the preventive control and PCP requirements of the SFCR. However, you should review your food safety program to make sure that all the PCP requirements relating to your business, including, where applicable, [grade](#) and [labelling](#) PCP requirements, are part of your PCP.

The following documents outline specific criteria and provide examples of program components: [Regulatory requirements: Preventive controls](#) , [Regulatory requirements: Preventive control plan](#), and [Preventive control plan templates for domestic food businesses](#). For example, section [3.0 PCP content for consumer protection](#) provides examples of what you can do to demonstrate compliance with applicable grade and labelling requirements.

3. Traceability

Traceability requirements apply to licence holders, as well as businesses that grow or harvest fresh fruits or vegetables to be sent or conveyed interprovincially or exported, businesses that sell fresh fruits or vegetables at retail or that import, export or trade them interprovincially. To meet these requirements, businesses will need to prepare and keep traceability documents and ensure that a label, containing the required traceability information, is applied, attached, or accompanies the fresh fruits or vegetables when provided to another person, including a business.

The traceability requirements came into force on **January 15, 2019** for licence holders, retailers and businesses that export or trade interprovincially. However, businesses that grow or harvest fresh fruits or vegetables have until **January 15, 2020** to comply.

All labelling requirements, including the [lot code](#) labelling of [consumer prepackaged](#) fresh fruits or vegetables, will come into force on **January 15, 2020**. Lot code labelling is crucial to traceability during food safety investigations and helps consumers know if they have recalled food at home. It is the responsibility of each food business to use an appropriate lot code, keeping in mind that this code can be numeric, alphabetic or alphanumeric. Fresh fruit or vegetable businesses can consider using for example, their SFC licence number, production date, best before dates, harvest date, grower identification number, growing region, or any other code that identifies a lot that was manufactured, prepared, produced, stored, graded, packaged, or labelled, under the same conditions.

A more specific lot code – for example a harvest date – will help ensure a more timely removal of affected product during a food safety investigation or recall. This may limit the impact of a recall by excluding product not implicated in the event. Refer to the document titled [Regulatory requirements: Traceability](#) and the [Traceability interactive tool](#) for an explanation of the traceability requirements.



4. Dispute Resolution Corporation (DRC)

Produce licenses previously issued under the now-repealed *Licensing and Arbitration Regulations* are not relevant under the SFCR. Instead, a membership with the Fruit and Vegetable Dispute Resolution Corporation (DRC) is required. The purpose of a DRC membership is to promote fair and ethical trading practices by minimizing trade irritants and facilitating effective trade dispute resolution.

Some businesses in the fresh fruits and vegetables sector are required to obtain both a DRC membership as well as an SFC licence.

Refer to the document entitled [Regulatory requirements: Fresh fruits or vegetables](#) for information on the requirement for DRC membership.

You may also be interested in:

- [Preventive control plan interactive tool: Find out if and when you will need a Preventive Control Plan](#)
- [A guide for preparing a preventive control plan for importers](#)
- [The Guidance Finder](#)
- [Understanding the SFCR: A handbook for food businesses](#)
- [Getting started: Toolkit for businesses](#)
- [Questions and answers: Safe Food for Canadians Regulations](#)
- [Glossary of key terms](#)