



## **The Safe Food for Canadians Regulations are here**

On January 15, 2019, a new era of food safety in Canada began when the *Safe Food for Canadians Regulations* (SFCR) came into force. The SFCR make Canada's food system even safer by focusing on prevention and allowing for faster removal of unsafe food from the marketplace.

For the food industry, the SFCR reduces administrative burden on businesses by replacing 14 sets of regulations with one. In addition, the SFCR are consistent with international standards and helps to maintain and grow market access for Canada's agri-food and agricultural sector by aligning Canadian food safety regulations with those of key trading partners, including the United States, European Union, Australia and New Zealand.

### **What food businesses need to know**

On January 15, 2019, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) began to enforce the SFCR. With the modernized regulations, CFIA is better able to identify food safety risks to target inspections and take enforcement actions when industry does not meet regulatory requirements.

The regulations include new requirements related to licensing, traceability, and preventive controls, which apply to businesses that import or prepare food for export or to be sent across provincial or territorial boundaries.

Most businesses with \$100,000 or more in gross annual food sales are required to prepare and maintain a written preventive control plan.

Some requirements had to be met immediately as of January 15, 2019, while others will be introduced in 2020 and 2021 based on food commodity, type of activity and business size.

If a business has a previous food registration or licence with CFIA and it expired after January 15, 2019, it will remain valid as a Safe Food for Canadians (SFC) licence until its expiry date, provided there is a statement on it indicating that it is also a licence issued under the Safe Food for Canadians Act. As expiration approaches, the business will be required to apply for an SFC licence.

### **Some businesses are affected immediately**

In general, new requirements apply to sectors previously required to be registered or licensed with CFIA if they conduct any of the following activities:



- Import food
- Export any food that requires an export certificate or Certificate of Free Sale
- Manufacture, process, treat, preserve, grade, package or label food to be exported or sent across provincial or territorial boundaries
- Slaughter food animals from which meat products are derived for export or to be sent across provincial or territorial boundaries
- Store and handle a meat product in its imported condition for inspection by CFIA.

By consulting the table below, such businesses can determine whether the requirements related to licensing, preventive control plans and traceability now apply to them:

<b>Commodity</b>	<b>Licence</b>	<b>Preventive Control Plan</b>	<b>Traceability records</b>
Meat products and food animals	✓	✓	✓
Fish	✓	✓	✓
Dairy products	✓	✓	✓
Eggs and processed egg products	✓	✓	✓
Processed fruit or vegetable products	✓	✓	✓
Honey and maple products	✓	✓ (not required if annual food sales are \$100K or less)	✓
Fresh fruit or vegetables	✓ (N/A for growing and harvesting)		✓ (except growing and harvesting)



Businesses should consult CFIA's [interactive tools and sector-specific timelines](#) for more detailed information on which requirements apply to them and when, based on the activities they conduct.

### **Some businesses have more time to meet the new requirements**

Certain food sectors that were not required to be registered or licensed with CFIA in the past will only need to meet new licensing, preventive control and traceability requirements in 2020 or 2021, unless they require an export certificate or Certificate of Free Sale for food that they export. This includes businesses in the following sectors, among others:

- confectionary
- snack foods
- beverages
- oils
- dried herbs and spices
- nuts and seeds
- coffee and tea
- baked goods, cereals and pasta.

For more information, consult the [timeline that applies to these businesses](#).

### **What businesses need to do if affected immediately**

Businesses affected by new licensing requirements as of January 15, 2019, should immediately enrol in [My CFIA](#) and apply for one or more licences. Each SFC licence costs \$250 and is valid for two years.

When applying for a licence, businesses need to declare that they have the necessary preventive controls and preventive control plans in place, where required.

CFIA has interactive tools and plain language resources in the [Toolkit for food businesses](#).

### **Requirements for Canadian food exporters**



Businesses that require an export certificate including a Certificate of Free Sale from CFIA in order to export products, need to apply for and obtain an SFC licence. These businesses will then be included on the Safe Food for Canadians Licence Registry, which will confirm that they are operating in good standing and will help them maintain access to key markets, including the United States.

The United States recently made it a requirement for all Canadian businesses that export food to the U.S. to meet new U.S. food safety standards. By acquiring an SFC licence, Canadian food businesses will demonstrate that they meet the requirements under the U.S. Foreign Supplier Verification Program so that they can continue trading with the United States.

By 2022, the licence requirements will apply to all food businesses that manufacture, process, treat, preserve, grade, package or label a food in Canada for export. Businesses that export food but do not produce the food, such as export brokers, will only need a licence if they require an export certificate. More information is available in CFIA's guidance on food exports.

### **Approach to enforcing the new regulations**

CFIA recognizes that the SFCR introduce a number of new requirements for food businesses.

To balance the need to protect Canada's food safety system while supporting food businesses in their efforts to comply with the new regulations, CFIA's enforcement approach will emphasize working with businesses to help them understand the new requirements.

Enforcement actions, where applicable, will be proportionate to the food safety risk and the seriousness of the non-compliance. Factors such as potential or actual harm, compliance history and intent will also be taken into consideration.

More information on enforcement is available at [inspection.gc.ca/safefood](https://inspection.gc.ca/safefood).