



Importing food into Canada with a Safe Food for Canadians licence

Importers of meat, fish, dairy, eggs, processed eggs, processed fruits or vegetables, honey, maple and fresh fruits or vegetables are required to correctly declare their valid SFC licence to import food into Canada.

As of March 15, 2021, the following criteria must be met or food import transactions will be rejected:

- ✓ the importer's Safe Food for Canadians (SFC) licence number must be correctly declared, without mistakes or typos
- ✓ the importer's SFC licence must cover the activity of "Importing Food"
- ✓ the importer's SFC licence must cover the food commodity or commodities you intend to import

If a transaction is rejected, the SFC licence holder may experience delays and have their related food shipment(s) held at the border until the error is addressed and the import transaction is resubmitted.

This change will **not** affect the import of food categorized as manufactured foods such as confectionary, snack foods, beverages, coffee and tea, oils, dried herbs and spices, nuts and seeds, processed grain-based foods such as baked goods, cereals and pasta.

Importing food using an SFC licence

DO:

- ✓ Enter the importer's SFC licence number in the Registration Number field of the import declaration **exactly as it was issued by the CFIA**
 - SFC licence numbers issued by the CFIA consist of a combination of eight (8) numbers and letters
- ✓ If your client has multiple licences, ensure you are entering the correct licence number on the import declaration.
 - The importer's licence number must cover the activity of "Importing Food" as well as the food commodity or commodities they are importing.

DON'T:

- ✗ Enter a "Y" in the Registration Number field of the import declaration
 - A "Y" can no longer be used to indicate that the importer has a licence. The Registration Number field must include the importer's 8-digit SFC licence number.
- ✗ Enter a previous licence or registration number in the Registration Number field of the import declaration
 - A previous licence or registration number is no longer accepted. The Registration Number field must include the importer's 8-digit SFC licence number.
- ✗ Leave the Registration Number field blank
 - This field must include the importer's 8-digit SFC licence number



Import declaration reject messages

If the importer's SFC licence is invalid, or if their licence number is entered incorrectly on their import declaration, the integrated import declaration (IID) will automatically send 1 or more of the following reject messages:

Reject message	Reason for reject	Corrective actions
AIRS registration number is required (893 - Safe Food Licence).	When the registration number field is left blank.	Enter the importer's SFC licence number in the registration number field.
Licence number must be 8 digit alpha numeric. (A12B3CD4). Verify licence in My CFIA.	When a Y or N is entered or the number provided is not in the CFIA database. (Check for typos).	Ensure that you have entered in the licence number correctly. Verify the licence number that was provided to you by your client. If your client does not have a SFC licence they will have to apply for one through the My CFIA portal .
Licence number is either suspended, cancelled, or expired. Verify status in My CFIA.	When the licence number entered has been suspended, cancelled or expired.	If your client's licence is suspended or cancelled they will have to contact their local CFIA office . If their licence is expired they will have to apply for a new one using the My CFIA portal .
Licence number is not valid for importing. Verify activity in My CFIA.	When the licence number entered is not issued for importing food.	Your client can amend their licence in their My CFIA portal to include "importing food" to their licence permissions.
Licence number entered does not cover food being imported. Verify licence in My CFIA.	When the licence number entered does not cover the food commodity that is being declared.	Your client can amend their licence in their My CFIA portal to include the commodity in their licence profile. Refer to Annex A for descriptions of the commodities and examples of food included in each sub-commodity.

Once the error has been corrected you can re-submit the import declaration.

Information for non-resident importers

A [non-resident importer](#) must have the activity of "Importing Food" identified on their licence as well as the food commodity or commodities they are importing. They should not select "Exporting Food".

Amending the SFC licence

There is no fee to amend or update an SFC licence. Food importers must use the [My CFIA portal](#) to make any necessary [amendments](#) to their licence information.

Food importers must obtain their SFC licence **before** presenting their shipment at the border. They will not be able to obtain an SFC licence at the border. An SFC licence application normally



takes up to 15 business days to process but can take longer if a pre-licence inspection is required.

References for food importers:

[Importing food to Canada: a step-by-step guide](#)

[Food licences](#)

[What to consider before applying for a Safe Food for Canadians licence](#). Refer to [Annex A](#) for more information on food commodities, including examples of the types of food included in each commodity.

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