

Canada

Overview

Products shipped to Canada must conform to the relevant Canadian standard. In most instances, Canadian and U.S. standards are very similar. As a result, products designed to conform to U.S. standards will often meet Canadian standards with little or no modification. Similarities between U.S. and Canadian standards, however, do not relieve the U.S. exporter of the obligation to meet the Canadian standard.

Standards regulations in Canada seek to follow the basic principle of the WTO and NAFTA and, as such, must not create unnecessary barriers to trade. To reduce such barriers, NAFTA applies three basic principles to bilateral trade:

- Testing facilities and certification bodies are treated in a nondiscriminatory manner.
- Federal standards-related measures will be harmonized to the greatest extent possible.
- Greater openness will be provided in the regulatory process.

National Standards System

[Canada's National Standards System](#) (NSS) develops, promotes, and implements standards in Canada. The NSS includes more than 400 organizations accredited by the Standards Council of Canada. These organizations are involved in several activities, such as: standards development, product testing and quality (conformity assessment), product or service certification, and environmental management and production systems registration.

Standards Council of Canada

As a federal Crown corporation, the [Standards Council of Canada](#) (SCC) coordinates standardization activities in Canada. The organization reports to Parliament through the Minister of Industry and oversees Canada's National Standards System. The SCC is comprised of representatives from both the federal and provincial governments as well as from a wide range of public and private interests. It prescribes policies and procedures for developing National Standards of Canada, coordinates Canada's participation in the international standards system, and accredits more than 400 organizations involved in standards development, product or service certification, testing and management systems registration activities in Canada. The SCC is independent of government, although it remains partially financed by public funds. The SCC does not develop standards itself, nor does it conduct any conformity assessments. Rather, under its mandate to coordinate and oversee the efforts of the National Standards System, the SCC accredits testing and certification organizations to conduct conformity assessments and reviews of the standards submitted by standards development organizations for approval as National Standards of Canada.

Standards Organizations

There are four accredited standards development organizations (SDOs) in Canada: the [Canadian Standards Association \(CSA\)](#), [Underwriters Laboratories of Canada \(ULC\)](#), the [Canadian General Standards Board \(CGSB\)](#), and the [Bureau de Normalisation du Québec \(BNQ\)](#). The CSA and ULC are private sector organizations covering a wide variety of commercial goods and services. The CGSB and BNQ cover areas related to the activities of the Canadian federal and Quebec provincial government respectively. Each of these organizations develops standards through committees representing various interests. SDOs may submit standards to the SCC to be recognized as National Standards of Canada.

The websites of these four organizations, listed in the product and service certification section of this document, provide information to assist companies looking to keep up with current developments. Companies should become familiar with the development process, especially the proposal stage. Most importantly, interested companies should become familiar with the members of the specific committees and the experts responsible for the relevant product or industry sector. This will enable them to learn of new standards at the earliest time possible. Standards organizations in the United States and Canada continue to work cooperatively in the development of joint standards and have made progress in several areas. For example, the Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Institute and the CSA have harmonized performance standards into a single North American standard for air conditioners and heat pumps, packaged water chillers, and water-source heat pumps. Similarly, UL and CSA have established common electrical safety standards for air conditioners, heat pumps, and refrigerant motor-compressors.

NIST Notify U.S. Service

Member countries of the World Trade Organization (WTO) are required under the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT Agreement) to report to the WTO all proposed technical regulations that could affect trade with other Member countries. **Notify U.S.** is a free, web-based e-mail subscription service that offers an opportunity to review and comment on proposed foreign technical regulations that can affect your access to international markets. Register online at Internet URL: <https://tsapps.nist.gov/notifyus/data/index/index.cfm>.

Conformity Assessment

Product testing, known as *conformity assessment*, is usually carried out by a testing and certification organization or laboratory that has been accredited to conduct the test that certifies the product's conformity with the applicable standard. All regulated products must be tested and certified. The Standards Council accredits six types of conformity assessment organizations:

- testing and calibration laboratories;
- management system certification bodies;
- personnel certification bodies;
- product and service certification bodies;
- inspection bodies; and
- greenhouse gas validation and verification bodies.

Product and Service Certification

U.S. manufacturers and exporters should determine what standards are applicable to their products and services. If certification is required, it generally must be obtained before the goods are imported into Canada. The process can be time-consuming and, therefore, certification should be one of the first steps taken to establish an export market in Canada.

For U.S. exporters unsure of Canadian certification requirements, the first step is to contact the SCC directly in order to determine: (1) what testing is required, and (2) what organizations are accredited to conduct that testing and certification. For many products, U.S. exporters will learn that a U.S. laboratory has been accredited (see next section below) and the manufacturer needs to only submit the product to one lab instead of spending the time and money to have the product tested by both a U.S. and a Canadian lab.

CSA International, the conformity assessment and product certification organization in the CSA Group, and the other three standards development organizations, ULC, CGSB, and BNQ, are engaged in conformity assessment and product certification.

CSA International – A database containing a complete list of products that CSA certifies for Canada can be accessed at the company's website: <http://www.csa.ca>

ULC – A database containing a complete list of products that ULC certifies for Canada can be accessed at the company's website: <http://www.ulc.ca/>

Underwriters Laboratories in the United States (UL) and CSA have a memorandum to accept each other's test results. However, each issues its own certification marks.

CGSB – A database containing a complete list of products that CGSB certifies for Canada can be accessed at the company's website: <http://www.ihs.com/products/industry-standards/organizations/cgsb/index.aspx>

BNQ – A database containing a complete list of products and services that BNQ certifies for Canada can be accessed at the company's website: <http://www.bnq.qc.ca/>

Accreditation

The relevant Canadian authority must accredit testing and certification organizations that conduct conformity assessment, which in most cases is the SCC. The Standards Council of Canada (SCC) offers accreditation to over 300 mostly Canadian laboratories that conduct scientific testing in a variety of subjects and program specialty areas.

The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) provides that testing facilities, inspection agencies, and certification bodies of the United States, Canada and Mexico may be accredited in another NAFTA country without obligation to establish facilities in the other country. Thus, NAFTA allows U.S. exporters to get "one-stop shopping" product approval for both the United States and Canada by submitting their product to only one organization in order to get product certification for both countries. This eliminates the time and expense of obtaining separate certifications for each market. Numerous U.S. testing and certification organizations have received accreditation from the SCC. A complete list of these organizations is available on the website of the Standards Council of Canada:

http://www.scc.ca/en/programs/product_cert/index.shtml.

Provincial regulations, however, do not fall under the NAFTA accreditation framework. U.S. companies faced with difficulties in obtaining provincial approvals should consult with the U.S. Commercial Service to determine the nature of the problem.

Publication of Technical Regulations

The Standards Council operates Canada's WTO standards Enquiry Point. The Enquiry Point provides a current database of all current Canadian standards and regulations and makes them available to Canada's trading partners. See

http://www.scc.ca/en/programs/information/standards_alert.shtml

as well, businesses can register for the [Standards Alert](#) program to receive updated information on regulatory changes in their business areas.

[NIST Notify U.S.](#) provides a similar function in the United States. It is a free web-based e-mail subscription service that offers an opportunity to review and comment on proposed foreign technical regulations that can affect your access to international markets.

Members of the World Trade Organization (WTO) including the United States and Canada are required under the [World Trade Organization Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade](#) to report proposed technical regulations that may affect trade to the WTO Secretariat, who in turn distributes them to all WTO Members. As well, any proposed regulatory change in Canada is listed in the [Canada Gazette](#). U.S. companies can submit comments to the Government of Canada on proposed changes, especially if they are likely to constitute a trade barrier. Persons who plan to comment on a Canadian (or any other foreign) regulation should contact the U.S. National Centre for Standards and Certification (NCSCI) for guidance. If there is insufficient time to review and comment on the regulation, NCSCI staff will request an extension of the comment period. For more information on NCSCI services for U.S. exporters to Canada, see the [NCSCI website](#).

The U.S. Department of Commerce's [Trade Compliance Center](#) also serves as a point of contact for U.S. companies to submit information on a foreign trade barrier or unfair trade practice they have encountered that is limiting their ability to export or compete internationally.

Labeling and Marking

The Canadian federal [Consumer Packaging and Labeling Act](#) requires that all labels be bilingual in English and French and that the following information appear on the package/label of consumer goods sold in Canada:

- Product Identity Declaration:** describes a product's common or generic name, or its function. The declaration must be in both English and French.
- Net Quantity Declaration:** must be expressed in metric units of volume when the product is a liquid or a gas, or is viscous; or in metric units of weight when the product is solid or by numerical count. Net quantity may also be expressed in other established trade terms.
- Dealer's Name and Principal Place of Business:** where the prepackaged product was manufactured or produced for resale. In general, a name and address sufficient for postal delivery is acceptable. This information can be in either English or French.

The agency responsible for inspection of imports, the [Canada Border Services Agency](#), also requires an indication of the country of origin, such as "Made in the USA," on several classes of imported goods. Goods not properly marked cannot be released from Canada Customs until suitably marked.

The Province of Quebec requires that all products sold in that province be labeled in French and that the use of French be given equal prominence with other languages on any packages or containers. The Charter of the French Language requires the use of French on product labeling, warranty certificates, product manuals, and instructions for use, public signs and written advertising. The [Office Québécois de la langue Française](#) (Quebec Office of the French Language) website provides guidance on these requirements.

U.S. exporters of textile and apparel should check the website of [Industry Canada](#) for specific labeling requirements. Food exporters should check the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's [Guide to Food Labeling and Advertising](#).

Exporters should also be aware that Canada's Processed Products Regulations prescribe standard container sizes for a wide range of processed fruit and vegetable products. Finally, Industry Canada is charged with ensuring that any claims about a product being "environmentally-friendly" are accurate and in compliance with relevant legislation. In general, environmental claims that are ambiguous, misleading or irrelevant, or that cannot be substantiated, should not be used. In all cases, environmental claims should indicate whether they are related to the product itself or to the product's packaging materials. The Canadian government has issued a set of [guiding principles](#) governing the use of environmental labeling and advertising, which may be obtained by contacting Industry Canada.

Contacts

The U.S. Commercial Service Canada point of contact on standards matters is:

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Trade Agreements

Canada's main trade agreement of significance to U.S. exporters is the North American Free Trade Agreement. On January 1, 1994, the North American Free Trade Agreement entered into force among the United States, Canada and Mexico. All remaining duties and quantitative restrictions were eliminated, as scheduled, on January 1, 2008. NAFTA has created the world's largest free trade area, which now links 453 million people producing \$17 trillion worth of goods & services and accounts for approximately 26 percent of the world's total GDP.

NAFTA has become one of the leading international trade agreements, resulting in significant increases in trade and investment among the United States, Canada and Mexico. Each day, the NAFTA countries conduct nearly \$1.9 billion in trilateral trade. The United States had \$918 billion in total two-way goods trade with NAFTA countries during 2010. Goods exports totaled \$412 billion; Goods imports totaled \$506 billion.

For further information, please refer to the “North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)” at the Office of the United States Trade Representative Webpage: <http://www.ustr.gov/trade-agreements/free-trade-agreements/north-american-free-trade-agreement-nafta>

Web Resources

[Canada Border Services Agency](#)
[Form B3 – Customs Coding Form](#)
[NAFTA Certificate of Origin Interactive Tool](#)
[Non-Resident Importer Program](#)
[U.S. Department of Commerce’s Bureau of Industry & Security Export License Automated Export System](#)
[Canada Border Services Agency Memorandum D8-1-1 Temporary Import Regulations](#)
[The Canada Border Services Agency Importer step-by-step guide](#)
[The Export and Import Control Bureau](#)
[The Canada Border Services Agency Import Control List](#)
[Tips for Travelers to Canada](#)
[Canada Border Services Agency](#)
[Canadian Standards Association](#)
[Underwriters Laboratories of Canada](#)
[Canada General Standards Board](#)
[Bureau de Normalisation du Québec](#)
[NIST Notify U.S.](#)
[Standards Council of Canada](#)
[SCC Standards Alerts](#)
[World Trade Organization Agreement Technical Barriers to Trade](#)
[Canada Gazette](#)
[U.S. National Centre for Standards and Certification](#)