
MOVING YOUR PRODUCT OVER THE BORDER

U.S. Standards and Labelling

Before you make your first shipment, check with commercial and governmental regulatory agencies to ensure that your products comply with U.S. standards. Compliance with such standards, whether they relate to product performance, product safety, consumer protection or environmental concerns, can be required under federal regulations or under standards agreed to within specific commercial sectors.

In checking the requirements, also ensure that, in the case of governmental regulations, you find out from the responsible U.S. agency(ies) the type of proof of product compliance needed.

General information on U.S. standards can be obtained from the Standards Council of Canada at (613) 238-3222, or toll-free 1-800-267-8220. Refer to pages 9-13 of this document for a list of organizations that can provide more specific detail on U.S. regulatory agencies.

Under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), almost all goods must be marked to indicate the country of origin, i.e. "Made in Canada." Marking rules apply to Canadian and Mexican goods entering the U.S., regardless of whether or not they are eligible for preferential tariff treatment. For many of these goods, there are specific requirements regarding how and where the marking is applied. If these requirements are not met, your shipment may be refused entry. If you are supplying a private label product, you will need to provide documentation from the catalogue house indicating that you are entitled to use its private label.

Shipping and Customs Procedures

Before shipping a product to the U.S., you should ensure that the merchandise has been properly packed, labelled and documented. It should also be insured against damage, loss or theft.

As a first step toward fulfilling U.S. customs requirements, you need to establish the tariff classification of the product you intend to export. Product classification can be performed by a U.S. customs broker or by a U.S. customs import specialist at a port of entry. It is also possible to seek a binding classification from U.S. customs. The tariff classification determines the rate of duty that applies, and, in some cases, other import requirements such as product quotas (see page 13 for locations of U.S. customs offices).