

CUSTOMS BROKERS

United States customs brokers can provide Canadian fish and seafood exporters with a range of services related to the entry and clearance of goods into the United States. They specialize in customs documentation requirements and are familiar with all laws, regulations and procedures affecting the importation of goods. They can, for example, assist with country of origin markings, the labelling of food, consumer products safety standards, and matters that concern environmental protection. They are also up-to-date on customs requirements relating to the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Although a company can perform the same tasks as the customs broker, Canadian consulates in the United States unanimously recommend that their services be used so as to avoid the problems and ensure that all procedures are followed.

DOCUMENTATION

Canadian fish and seafood exporters considering the massive U.S. market should remember, it is important to ensure that all import and export documents are completed correctly. The following documents may be required for fish and seafood:

1. Bill of Lading
2. Commercial Invoice
3. Packing Slip
4. Export Declaration (B-13)
5. Inspection Certificate (QMP)
6. Canada/U.S. Free Trade Certificate of Origin

UNIVERSAL PRODUCT CODE

With new electronic scanning systems, most major retail grocers require that packaged fish and seafood products exhibit a UPC symbol. It is recommended that manufacturers obtain UPC numbers for their company and products prior to exporting to the United States. Although membership in the Uniform Code Council is voluntary, it is a requirement if you wish to obtain a manufacturer's number assignment. The cost of membership is a function of sales volume. For further information concerning UPC, contact the following organization:

Uniform Code Council, Inc.
8163 Old Yankee Road, Suite J,
Dayton, Ohio 45458
Tel:(513) 435-3870

TRADEMARKS

The rights to a trademark can result either from usage or filing an application with the U.S. Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks. Canadian fish and seafood companies wanting to register a trademark must designate some person residing in the U.S. to receive all official communications. For further information concerning trademarks, contact the following:

Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks
Washington, DC 20231
Tel:(703) 557-4636