
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. For specific questions on U.S. regulatory agencies, see the assistance section of this guide for addresses.

Under U.S. law, almost all goods are required to be marked to indicate the country of origin, i.e. "Made in Canada". For many of these goods, specific requirements exist regarding how and where the marking is put on the item. 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 approval to use their private label.

Shipping and Customs Procedures

Before shipping a product to the U.S., you should make sure 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. It is the tariff classification that will determine the rate of duty that applies, as well as, in some cases, other import requirements such as product quotas (see page 14 for locations of U.S. Customs Offices).

The Free Trade Agreement (FTA) has already eliminated many tariffs on goods of Canadian or U.S. origin. The FTA ensures that by 1998 all tariffs will be eliminated. In order to benefit from the preferential duty rate under the Free Trade Agreement, a Certificate of Origin needs to be issued for each product. The certificate is a statement issued by U.S. Customs in which the exporter confirms that the goods originate in Canada or the U.S. in compliance with the rules of origin as outlined in Chapter 3 of the FTA.