

Factsheet Beer





FOOD SAFETY REGULATIONS

A standard of identity (or compositional standard) sets out what ingredients a product must contain, what ingredients it may contain, and any requirements of manufacturing.

Beer is a standardized product under the **Food and Drug Regulations (FDR) sections B.02.130 – B.02.135**. All standardized products labelled 'Beer' must meet the composition, manufacturing and labelling requirements described in these sections.

Beer products are also subject to traceability, packaging and labelling requirements described in the **Safe Food for Canadians Regulations (SFCR)**.

TRACEABILITY – DOCUMENTATION AND LABELLING

Documentation

As of July 15, 2020, traceability is required for alcoholic beverages if you conduct interprovincial trade of alcoholic beverages from one province to another, export, import, or sell to consumers at retail.

If you sell products at **retail**, you must have access to documents that enable you to:

- Identify the product by indicating the:
 - » Common name
 - » Name and principal place of business
 - » Lot code* or unique identifier**
- Trace the product one step back if someone else provided you with the product. This includes input materials such as ingredients, packaging, chemicals, etc. This documentation must have the name and address of the supplier, the date product was received and the amount of product received.

If you are selling product to **businesses other than retail**, you must have access to documents that enable you to:

- Identify the product by indicating the:
 - » Common name
 - » Name and principal place of business
 - » Lot code* or unique identifier**
- Trace the product one step back if someone else provided you with the product. This includes input materials such as ingredients, packaging, chemicals, etc. This documentation must have the name and address of the supplier, the date product was received and the amount of product received.
- Trace the product (i.e. finished product) one step forward. This documentation must have the name and address of the receiver, the date product was shipped and the amount of product shipped.

Labelling

The **label on the product** will need to have:

- Common name
- Name and principal place of business
- Lot code* (consumer prepackaged) or unique identifier** (prepackaged other than consumer prepackaged, e.g. shipping container)

* Lot Code: A code that can be used to identify a lot that was manufactured, prepared, produced, stored, graded, packaged or labelled, under the same conditions. A lot code can be numeric, alphabetic or alphanumeric. Examples include production date, best before date, establishment number, or SFC licence number.

** Unique Identifier: A code that can be used to identify a defined quantity of product. Examples include a lot code, purchase order number, or a bill of lading number.

PACKAGING – GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- Must be suitable for its intended use and appropriate for the product
- Must be capable of protecting the product against moisture, loss, damage, contamination and deterioration during normal handling, storing and conveying
- Must be clean and in a sanitary condition
- Must be of sound construction
- Must be free from odours that might affect the product
- Must not impart any undesirable substance to the product
- Must not have a design or mark, or be of a colour, that enhances the appearance of the product with respect to its quality or composition

LABELLING

- Product must not be labelled or advertised in a false, misleading or deceptive manner or that is likely to create the wrong impression.
- Alcoholic beverages sold intraprovincially (within the province) are subject to labelling requirements under the FDR and SFCR that apply to prepackaged products sold in Canada, regardless of trade level.

The labelling requirements below are specific to alcoholic beverages both with and without prescribed standards. Labels must contain the following:

Common Name

- The common name can be any of the following options:
 - » The standardized name of the product listed in the FDR or in the Canadian Standards of Identity that is incorporated by reference in the SFCR
 - » The unstandardized name by which the product is generally known or that identifies its function (e.g. Alcoholic beverage)
- Examples for beer include:
 - » Extra light beer (1.1. to 2.5% ABV); Light beer (2.6 to 4.0% ABV); Beer (4.1 to 5.5% ABV); Strong beer (5.6 to 8.5% ABV); Extra strong beer (8.6% or more ABV); Low alcohol beer; Ice beer; Beer with x flavour (where x = flavouring preparation e.g. lime, blueberry)

Name and Principal Place of Business

- Name and principal place of business of the person who has manufactured, prepared, produced, stored, packaged, or labelled the product, or the person for who the product was manufactured, prepared, produced, stored, packaged or labelled. This is the name of the holder or owner responsible for the prepackaged product and the physical location where the main activities occur.

Net Quantity

- The net quantity declaration must be on the principal display panel in millilitres or for amounts over 1000 ml, in litres.
- When two or more completely labelled products are sold together as a single unit, such as a case of beer, the following information must be shown in the net quantity:
 - » The number of products in each class and the common name of each class, e.g. 6 cans of beer
 - » The total net quantity of each class in the unit or the individual net quantity of each identical product in the unit, e.g. "6 cans of beer 2.13 L" or "beer - 6 cans × 355 ml"

Alcohol by Volume Declaration

- All alcoholic beverages containing 1.1% or more alcohol by volume must declare the percentage by volume of alcohol contained in the product. This can be shown as:
 - » "X % alcohol by volume" or be abbreviated "X % alc./vol." or "X% alc/vol"
 - » The percentage may be in the middle of the declaration "alc X% vol" or "alc. X% vol."
- Must be shown on the principal display panel and in both English and French.
- The French translation is "X % d'alcool par volume". When abbreviated, the statements "X % alc./vol.", "X% alc/vol", "alc X% vol" and "alc. X% vol." are fully bilingual.

Date Markings and Storage Instructions

- Required on prepackaged products with a durable life date (i.e. best before date) of 90 days or less and is voluntary for products with a durable life greater than 90 days.

List of Ingredients, Food Allergens, Gluten and Added Sulphites

- Standardized beer products, including beer made with flavouring preparations, are exempt from the requirement to declare a list of ingredients on the label. Unstandardized beer products require a complete list of ingredients and their components.
- As of April 15, 2019, prepackaged beers are required to declare food allergen sources (such as wheat), gluten sources (such as barley) and added sulphites at a level of 10 ppm or more (such as sulphurous acid). If ingredients on the label of a beer are voluntarily declared, then food allergen sources, gluten sources or added sulphites could be declared as part of that list. If not, then a “Contains” statement is required. Companies have until December 14, 2022, to meet the new requirements.

Food Additives & Sweeteners

- A food additive is any substance that may become a part of or affect the characteristics of a food. Examples include sweeteners, colouring agents, emulsifying agents, pH adjusting agents, starch modifying agents, etc.
 - » **Note:** Sweeteners are not the same as sweetening agents such as white and brown table sugar, molasses and honey.
 - » **Note:** Processing aids differ from food additives in that they do not become a part of or affect the characteristics of a food. Processing aids do not need to be declared in the list of ingredients. They may be listed at the end of the list of ingredients in any order.
- Only food additives and sweeteners that are permitted for use in Canada as outlined by [Health Canada](#) can be used, and they must only be used in certain foods and in accordance with maximum levels of use and other conditions.
- Food additives and sweeteners must be declared in the list of ingredients of a prepackaged product by an acceptable common name unless the product is exempt from including a list of ingredients. They may be listed at the end of the list of ingredients in any order.

Please note that there are only 3 sweeteners permitted in alcoholic beverage products. These are subject to [additional labelling requirements](#).

- Erythritol up to a maximum of 3.5% in unstandardized alcoholic beverages
- Sucralose up to a maximum of 0.07% in unstandardized alcoholic beverages
- Saccharin up to a maximum of 0.12% in unstandardized alcoholic liqueurs

Nutrition Labelling

- Beverages with an alcohol content of more than 0.5% are usually exempt from carrying a Nutrition Fact Table.
- This exemption is lost when nutrient content claims are made or an unstandardized alcoholic beverage contains added sucralose, aspartame, acesulfame-potassium and/or neotame.

Voluntary Claims and Statements

- [Age Claims](#)
- [Use of the Term “light”](#)
- [Low Alcohol](#)
- [Gluten-Free Claim](#)
- [Organic Claim](#)

Bilingual Labelling

Consumer prepackaged products

- Mandatory information on consumer prepackaged products must be shown in both official languages (English and French). Exemptions exist for [specialty foods, local foods and test market foods](#).
- The following are exceptions and can be labelled in one official language (English or French):
 - » Name and principal place of business
 - » The common name of certain alcoholic beverages, if they appear on the principal display panel exactly as shown in the FDR

RETAIL LABELLING REQUIREMENTS

Note that retailers may also have additional labelling requirements, such as the UPC.

ADULTERATION OF FOOD

Division 15 of the FDR outlines a [list of contaminants and other adulterating substances permitted in food](#) as well as the [maximum level of chemical contaminants in food](#). Maximum residue limits (MRL) for pesticides is regulated under the Pest Control Products Act and the limits for each product can be found in the [MRL database](#).

RESOURCES

[Food and Drug Regulations \(FDR\)](#)

[Safe Food for Canadians Regulation \(SFCR\)](#)

[SFCR Traceability](#)

[SFCR General Labelling Requirements / Beer Specific](#)

[Canadian Craft Brewers Association](#)

[Beer Canada](#)

[Brewers Association – For Small & Independent Craft Brewers](#)

FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you have questions about the information found in this factsheet, please contact one of Perennia's specialist at:

Quality and Food Safety

Phone: **902-896-0277**

Email: foodsafety@perennia.ca

or

Food and Beverage Innovation Centre

Phone: **902-896-8782**

Email: innovation@perennia.ca

If you have questions regarding the established limits or product testing, please contact the NSLC at product.testing@mynslc.com