



Food Safety for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables



# What to Expect From Your Audit



## What you need to know

Now that you are enrolled in the CanadaGAP® Program, you may have some questions about what happens next. Please take a few minutes to read this brochure. We have provided answers to some commonly asked questions. This will help you prepare for your upcoming audit.

If you haven't already, please read the fine print in the enrolment form you sent to CanadaGAP. It contains important information you need to know about your obligations, rights and responsibilities as a CanadaGAP-certified business.

*CanadaGAP® is a program developed in Canada to promote Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) for fruit and vegetable suppliers.*

## Preparing for your audit

Please ensure that you are using the most recent CanadaGAP manual. Check the CanadaGAP website for the most recent version. Version updates are normally published by early February and then come into effect April 1<sup>st</sup>. If you find that you need to update your manual to a newer version, the revisions document will show you what has changed. You also need to be keeping records on your food safety program for at least three months prior to your audit.

## How do I schedule an audit?

The auditor will contact you to arrange a suitable date for your audit. When you are setting up your audit date, keep in mind that you or your representative must be available to accompany the auditor.

Audits must be scheduled to occur when the activities relevant to your certification are happening – during harvest, product handling, packing/repacking season, shipping, storage period, etc. This is important for the auditor to properly assess the implementation of your food safety program. Activities that are not occurring cannot be included in the scope of your audit. Multi-commodity operations may find, depending on the activities and crops involved, that a number of audits over several years are required before certification reflects the full scope of your business. More information about planning audits for complex operations is available on the CanadaGAP website.

The Certification Body has committed to making every effort to schedule audits regionally and assign auditors to locations in close proximity, in order to minimize travel expenses.

## How long will my audit take?

The length of time for an audit varies with the size of your operation. The majority of on-farm audits can be completed in a half day. Packing and repacking facilities and more complex operations usually take longer (e.g., minimum 1 day).

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## What can I expect during my audit?

The auditor will tour your operation, review your manuals and records for compliance with the requirements of the CanadaGAP Program, and talk to your employees to ensure that necessary training has been carried out. If there are non-conformances identified within your operation, the auditor will deduct points from the applicable questions on the audit checklist and note major deficiencies (e.g., autofail items) and some of the “other” findings in the executive summary of the report.

These will be reviewed with you. You will both sign the executive summary and the auditor will leave a copy with you. The full audit report will be sent by the Certification Body after they have reviewed the auditor's findings.

## When will I get my results?

The Certification Body will return your final audit report within 30 business days of the audit along with your CanadaGAP certificate if you have passed the audit. Information about your certification (including the name of your operation, scope of the audit, etc.) will be posted on the Certification Body and CanadaGAP websites. If you wish to display your compliance with CanadaGAP on signs, banners, or similar advertisements on your buildings or signs, please review the instructions and restrictions on use of program logos.

## What happens if I fail the audit?

The score to pass the audit will depend on your certification option. Generally, if you fail the audit, you will still have an opportunity to achieve certification through the corrective action process.

**For Options B, C, and D:** You must comply 100% with the CanadaGAP audit checklist to pass the audit. Items that receive less than full points must be addressed through corrective actions, or if corrective actions are not possible in the current year, you must submit a corrective actions plan for approval by the Certification Body.

**For Options E and F:** A score of 95% is required to pass the audit. You must always correct all autofail items first. Those scoring below 95% must implement corrective actions to obtain a passing score of 95%. If corrective actions are not possible in the current year, you must submit a corrective actions plan for approval by the Certification Body.

**For Options A1 and A2:** A score of 85% with no autofail items is required to pass the audit. You must always correct all autofail items first. Those scoring below 85% must implement corrective actions to obtain a passing score of 85%.

The Corrective Action Report is available on the CanadaGAP website or may have been provided by your Certification Body. Follow the instructions carefully and submit to your auditor or Certification Body. You can check with your Certification Body to make sure it is not too late in the season to take certain corrective actions. The auditor may not need to return to your operation if you are able to provide satisfactory photos, copies of records, etc. In some cases, a follow-up visit will be required. The auditors' follow-up time and any charges for extra travel will be billed to you after the audit by the Certification Body.

If you are unsuccessful in implementing corrective actions to pass the audit, you can request a refund of the CanadaGAP Annual Program Fee, minus an administrative charge of \$100, or apply your payment as a credit to the following year. Requests must be made in writing to the CanadaGAP office, and requests for refunds must be within nine months of the date of receipt of payment. A failed operation can enrol again and attempt certification the next year.

## Contact Us

CanadaGAP Program • 245 Menten Place, Suite 312 • Ottawa, ON K2H 9E8 • Tel: 613-829-4711 •  
Fax: 613-829-9379 • info@canadagap.ca • www.canadagap.ca