



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 1st. 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.

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.

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).

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?

A score of 85% with no autofail items is required to pass the audit. If you fail the audit, you will have an opportunity to correct the problems. You will need to start filling in a Corrective Actions Report, which is available on the CanadaGAP website or may have been provided by your Certification Body and return it to the auditor before the deadline. You must always correct all autofail items first. Other than these, the auditor may have identified some of the higher priority action items on the audit report Executive Summary under “Other findings”. This provides a summary only and may not be an inclusive list. Refer to the full audit report to review all items where points were deducted and determine your corrective actions. You can check with your Certification Body to make sure it is not too late in the season to take certain corrective actions. Fill in the corrective actions you have taken, along with evidence of their completion, and send the report to your auditor or Certification Body to review. 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 before the end of the production year. A failed operation can enrol again and attempt certification the next year.

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