

Canadian Grade Compendium: Volume 8 - Fish

Although the [*Safe Food for Canadians Regulations*](#) (SFCR) came into force on January 15, 2019, certain requirements may apply in 2020 and 2021 based on food commodity, type of activity and business size. For more information, refer to the [SFCR timelines](#).

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Fish Grade Requirements

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Interpretation

1. The following definitions apply in this volume.

"bloaters" means salted, smoked, round herring. (bouffis)

"bloater fillets" means fillets of salted, smoked, round herring. (filets de bouffis)

"herring" means fish of the species *Clupea harengus* or *Clupea pallasii*. (hareng)

"tainted", with respect to fish, means that the fish is rancid or has an abnormal odour or flavour. (gâté)

"unwholesome", with respect to fish, means that the fish has in or upon it bacteria of public health significance or substances toxic or aesthetically offensive to humans. (malsain)

Grades and Grade Names

2. The grades and grade names of fish are set out in [Part 1 Fresh or Frozen Fish](#), [Part 2 Pickled Fish](#), [Part 3 Bloaters and Bloater Fillets](#) and [Part 4 Dried Squid](#) (see [Volume 9, Import Grade Requirements](#) for grade names used for imported fish).

Part 1 Fresh or Frozen Fish

- [Atlantic Oysters](#)
- [Pacific Salmon](#)
- [Atlantic Smelts](#)
- [Whitefish](#)

Atlantic Oysters

3. The grades and grade names for Atlantic oysters in the shell are "Fancy Shape", "Choice Shape", "Standard Shape" and "Commercial Shape".

4. (1) Atlantic oysters in the shell must be graded as

- (a) "Fancy Shape", if the length of each of the oysters does not exceed one and one-half times its greatest width and they are not abnormally flat, thin-lipped or malformed, and if prepackaged, do not vary by more than 25 mm in length;
- (b) "Choice Shape", if the length of each of the oysters does not exceed one and three-quarters times its greatest width and they are not abnormally flat, thin-lipped or malformed, and if prepackaged, do not vary by more than 25 mm in length;

- (c) "Standard Shape", if the length of each of the oysters does not exceed twice its greatest width and they are not abnormally flat, thin-lipped or malformed; or
- (d) "Commercial Shape", if the oysters do not meet the requirements of paragraph (a), (b) or (c).

(2) Containers of prepackaged Atlantic oysters in the shell that are graded "Fancy Shape" and "Choice Shape" must be packed with oysters varying not more than 25 mm in length and labelled to show the minimum count of oysters contained in them.

Pacific Salmon

5. The grades and grade names for Pacific salmon are "Grade A", "Standard", and "Utility".

6. Frozen gutted Pacific Salmon that is graded

- (a) "Grade A" must be whole, head on or head off, properly cut and cleaned, and free from all entrails, physical damage, bellyburn and signs of advanced sexual maturity;
- (b) "Standard" must be whole, head on or head off, properly cut and cleaned and reasonably free from entrails, physical damage, bellyburn and signs of advanced sexual maturity; or
- (c) "Utility" must be whole, head on or head off, eviscerated and not tainted, decomposed or unwholesome.

Atlantic Smelts

7. The grades and grade names for Frozen Atlantic smelts are "Small Size", "Medium Size", "No. 1 Size", and "Extra Size".

8. Frozen Atlantic smelts, having a grade name set out in column 1 of an item of the [Table of Smelt Grading by Length](#), must be packaged according to the length of the fish, measured from the tip of the nose to the round of the tail of the smelt, set out in column 2 of the item.

Table of Smelt Grading by Length

Item	Column 1 Grade Name	Column 2 Length of Smelts in Containers
1.	Small size	Under 100 mm
2.	Medium size	100 mm or longer but less than 140 mm
3.	No. 1 size	140 mm or longer but less than 180 mm

Table of Smelt Grading by Length

Item	Column 1 Grade Name	Column 2 Length of Smelts in Containers
4.	Extra size	180 mm and longer

Whitefish

9. The grades and grade names for Whitefish are "Small", "Medium", "Large", and "Jumbo".

10. Whitefish, having a grade name set out in column 1 of an item of the [Table of Whitefish Grading by Weight](#), must be packaged according to the weight of the Whitefish, set out in column 2 of the item.

Table of Whitefish Grading by Weight

Item	Column 1 Grade Name	Column 2 Weight of Whitefish in Containers
1.	Small	Under 680 g
2.	Medium	680 g or over but less than 1.35 kg
3.	Large	1.35 kg or over but less than 1.80 kg
4.	Jumbo	1.80 kg or over

Part 2 Pickled Fish

- [General](#)
- [Pickled Split Herring](#)
- [Pickled Headless Split Herring](#)
- [Pickled Dressed Herring](#)
- [Pickled Herring Fillets](#)
- [Scotch Cure](#)
- [Pickled Split Turbot](#)
- [Pickled Split Spring Mackerel](#)

- [Pickled Split Summer Mackerel](#)
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- [Sizes for Pickled Fish](#)

General

11. In addition to the grade requirement for pickled fish, pickled fish must be thoroughly cured and packaged according to its type and class as set out in sections 12 to 35.

Pickled Split Herring

12. (1) The grades and grade names for Class A Pickled Split Herring are "Fat", "Fat Tropic", and "No. 4 Fat".

(2) The grades and grade names for Class B Pickled Split Herring are "Bright", "Tropic", and "No. 4 Tropic".

(3) Despite subsections (1) and (2), the grade and grade name for a Pickled Split Herring may be "No. 1" and "Seconds", as set out in subsection 13(3).

13. (1) A Class A pickled split herring, must be a pickled split herring that contains a reasonable amount of fat and that is packaged and graded. If it is graded

- (a) "Fat", it must be a clean, properly split herring that has the blood removed from the backbone and is free from rust;
- (b) "Fat tropic", it must be a clean, properly split herring that is free from rust; or
- (c) "No. 4 Fat", it must be a split herring that does not meet the requirements of paragraph (a) or (b).

(2) A Class B pickled split herring, must be a pickled split herring that contains no fat, or only a small amount of fat, and that is packaged and graded. If it is graded

- (a) "Bright", it must be a clean, properly split herring that has the blood removed from the backbone, is free from rust and is reasonably white inside;
- (b) "Tropic", it must be a clean, properly split herring that is free from rust; or
- (c) "No. 4 Tropic", it must be a split herring that does not meet the requirements of paragraph (a) or (b).

(3) Despite subsections (1) and (2), a pickled split herring may be packaged and graded

- (a) "No. 1", if it is a clean firm, properly split herring that is bright in colour and that has the entrails removed and the blood removed from the backbone; or
- (b) "Seconds", if it is a split herring that does not meet the requirements of paragraph (a).

Pickled Headless Split Herring

14. The grades and grade names for Pickled Headless Split Herring are "Headless Split" and "Substandard Headless Split".

15. A pickled headless split herring packaged and graded

- (a) "Headless Split", must be a firm, white-bellied, properly split headless herring that is bright in colour and from which all entrails and the blood along the backbone have been removed; or
- (b) "Substandard Headless Split", must be a split headless herring that does not meet the requirements of paragraph (a).

Pickled Dressed Herring

16. The grades and grade names for Pickled Dressed Herring are "Dressed" and "Substandard".

17. A pickled dressed herring that is packaged and graded

- (a) "Dressed", must be a firm, headless herring that is bright in colour and from which the entrails and a strip of belly, extending from the neck to the anal fin, have been removed in such a manner that no bones protrude; or
- (b) "Substandard", must be a dressed, headless herring that does not meet the requirements of paragraph (a).

Pickled Herring Fillets

18. The grades and grade names for Pickled Herring Fillets are "No. 1" and "No. 2".

19. A pickled herring fillet that is packaged and graded

- (a) "No. 1", must be a clean, firm, bright herring fillet that is free from rust and discoloration and from which the backbone and fins have been removed; or
- (b) "No. 2", must be a herring fillet that does not meet the requirements of paragraph (a).

Scotch Cure

20. The grades and grade names for Scotch Cure are "Full" and "Fillings".

21. A scotch cure pickled herring packaged and graded

- (a) "Full", must be a properly gutted, firm herring that is bright in colour and shows the roe or the milt at the throat; or
- (b) "Fillings", must be a properly gutted, firm herring that is bright in colour and does not show the roe or the milt at the throat.

Pickled Split Turbot

22. The grades and grade names for Pickled Split Turbot are "No. 1" and "No. 2".

23. A pickled split turbot packaged and graded

- (a) "No. 1", must be a white, properly split turbot that is clean on the back and face and free from blood along the backbone; or
- (b) "No. 2", must be a split turbot that does not meet the requirements of paragraph (a) and is not sour, "pink" or "red", rusty or heavily sunburned.

Pickled Split Spring Mackerel

24. The grades and grade names for Pickled Split Spring Mackerel are "Bright Spring", "Spring" and "No. 4 Spring".

25. A pickled split spring mackerel, which is a pickled split mackerel that has no fat or only a small amount of fat, that is packaged and graded

- (a) "Bright Spring", must be a clean, smooth-faced, properly split mackerel that has the blood removed from the backbone, is reasonably bright in colour, and is free from rust;
- (b) "Spring", must be a clean, reasonably smooth-faced, properly split mackerel that is free from rust; or
- (c) "No. 4 Spring", must be a split mackerel that does not meet the requirements of paragraph (a) or (b).

Pickled Split Summer Mackerel

26. The grades and grade names for Pickled Split Summer Mackerel are "Choice", "Summer", "Dark Summer" and "No. 4 Summer".

27. A pickled split summer mackerel, which is a pickled split mackerel that contains a reasonable amount of fat, that is packaged and graded

- (a) "Choice", must be a clean, smooth-faced, properly split mackerel that has the blood removed from the backbone, is white in colour and is free from rust and blood stains;
- (b) "Summer", must be a clean, well split mackerel that has the blood removed from the backbone, is of good colour and is free from rust and blood stains, whether or not it is slightly rough in appearance;
- (c) "Dark Summer", must be a clean, fairly well split mackerel that is of good colour and is free from rust, whether or not it is slightly rough in appearance; or
- (d) "No. 4 Summer", must be a split mackerel that does not meet the requirements of paragraph (a), (b) or (c).

Pickled Split Fall Mackerel

28. The grades and grade names for Pickled Split Fall Mackerel are "Choice Fall", "Fall", "Dark Fall" and "No. 4 Fall".

29. A pickled split fall mackerel, which is a pickled split mackerel that contains a substantial amount of fat, that is packaged and graded

- (a) "Choice Fall", must be a clean, smooth-faced, properly split mackerel that has the blood removed from the backbone, is white in colour and is free from rust and blood stains;
- (b) "Fall", must be a clean, well split mackerel that has the blood removed from the backbone, is of good colour and is free from rust and blood stains, whether or not it is slightly rough in appearance;
- (c) "Dark Fall", must be a clean, fairly well split mackerel that is of good colour and is free from rust, whether or not it is slightly rough in appearance; or
- (d) "No. 4 Fall", must be a split mackerel that does not meet the requirements of paragraph (a), (b) or (c).

Pickled Mackerel Fillets

30. The types and grades for Pickled Mackerel Fillets are those types and grades set out in sections 24 to 29 for Pickled Split Mackerel except that, where reference is made to the removal of blood from the backbone, the reference does not apply.

Pickled Headless or Pickled Trimmed Mackerel

31. The types and grades for Pickled Headless and Pickled Trimmed Mackerel are those types and grades set out in sections 24 to 29 for Pickled Split Mackerel.

Pickled Split Arctic Char

32. The grades and grade names for Pickled Split Arctic Char are "Choice Red", "Choice Pink", "Prime Mixed" and "Commercial".

33. A pickled split Arctic char that is packaged and graded

- (a) "Choice Red", must be a red fleshed, clean, firm, properly split Arctic char that has the blood removed from the backbone and is free from rust, blood stains and other discolorations;
- (b) "Choice Pink", must be a pink fleshed, clean, firm, properly split Arctic char that has the blood removed from the backbone and is free from rust, blood stains and other discolorations;
- (c) "Prime Mixed", must be a red or pink fleshed, clean, firm, fairly well split Arctic char that has the blood removed from the backbone and is free from rust, whether or not it shows slight blood stains or is slightly rough in appearance; or
- (d) "Commercial", must be a red, pink or white fleshed split Arctic char that does not meet the requirements of paragraph (a), (b) or (c).

Pickled Split Atlantic Salmon

34. The grades and grade names for Pickled Split Atlantic Salmon are "Choice", "Prime" and "Commercial".

35. A pickled split Atlantic salmon that is packaged and graded

- (a) "Choice", must be a red or pink fleshed, clean, firm, smooth-faced, properly split Atlantic salmon that has the blood removed from the backbone and is free from rust, blood stains and other discolorations;
- (b) "Prime", must be a red or pink fleshed, clean, firm, fairly well split Atlantic salmon that has the blood removed from the backbone and is free from rust, whether or not it shows slight blood stains or is slightly rough in appearance; or
- (c) "Commercial", must be a red or pink or white fleshed split Atlantic salmon that does not meet the requirements of paragraph (a) or (b).

Sizes for Pickled Fish

36. There are six size designations of pickled fish with the size designations "Small", "Matt", "Medium", "Large", "Mixed" and "No. 4".

37. Containers of pickled fish, having a size designation set out in column 1 of an item of the [Table of Size Designations of Pickled Fish by Length](#), for the pickled fish specified in the heading of columns 2 to 5 of the table, must be packaged according to the length of the fish, measured from tip of nose to round of tail, set out in columns 2 to 5 of the item, as applicable.

Table of Size Designations of Pickled Fish by Length

Item	Column 1 Size designation	Column 2 Scotch Cure Herring	Column 3 Herring and Split Herring	Column 4 Alewives	Column 5 Spring Mackerel
1.	Small	230 mm or longer but under 255 mm	180 mm or longer but under 230 mm		255 mm or longer but under 330 mm
2.	Matt	255 mm or longer but under 280 mm			
3.	Medium	280 mm or longer but under 305 mm	230 mm or longer but under 280 mm	200 mm or longer but under 255 mm	330 mm or longer but under 380 mm
4.	Large	305 mm or over	280 mm or over	255 mm or over	
5.	Mixed			200 mm or over	
6.	No. 4			Ungraded for size	

38. There are six size designations by count of pickled fish with the size designations "Extra Small", "Small", "Small Medium", "Medium", "Large" and "Extra Large".

39. (1) Containers that are 90.7 kg barrels of pickled fish, having a size designation set out in column 1 of an item of the Table of Size Designations of Pickled Fish by Count per 90.7 kg Barrel for pickled fish specified in the heading of columns 2 to 4 of the table, must be packaged according to the count of the fish, set out in columns 2 to 4 of the item, as applicable.

(2) The longest fish in any container labelled "Extra Small", "Small" or "Small Medium" in accordance with the Table of Size Designations of Pickled Fish by Count per 90.7 kg Barrel must not be more than 25 mm longer than the shortest fish in that container.

(3) The longest fish in any container labelled "Medium", "Large" or "Extra Large" in accordance with the Table of Size Designations of Pickled Fish by Count per 90.7 kg Barrel must not be more than 51 mm longer than the shortest fish in that container.

Table of Size Designations of Pickled Fish by Count per 90.7 kg Barrel				
Item	Column 1 Size designation	Column 2 Summer Mackerel	Column 3 Fall Mackerel	Column 4 Mackerel Fillets
1.	Extra Small	Over 400		
2.	Small	Over 270 but under 401		Over 750
3.	Small Medium	Over 225 but under 271	Over 200 but under 401	
4.	Medium	Over 160 but under 226	Over 150 but under 201	Over 550 but under 751
5.	Large	Under 161	Over 115 but under 151	Under 551
6.	Extra Large		Under 115	

Part 3 Bloaters and Bloater Fillets

- [Bloater](#)
- [Bloater Fillet](#)

Bloater

40. The grades and grade names for bloaters are "Choice" and "Standard".

41. A bloater, which is a properly cured herring, that is packaged and graded

- (a) "Choice", must have been smoked to a golden colour; or
- (b) "Standard", whether or not it has taken the smoke properly, must be broken at the throat or belly or has other slight defects.

Bloater Fillet

42. The grades and grade names for bloater fillets are "Choice" and "Standard".

43. A bloater fillet, which is a properly cured herring fillet, that is packaged and graded

- (a) "Choice", must have been well smoked and show considerable fat; or
- (b) "Standard", must not meet the requirements of paragraph (a).

Part 4 Dried Squid

44. The grades and grade names for dried squid for export are "Grade A", "Standard" and "Utility".

45. Dried squid for export that is graded

- (a) "Grade A", must be dried to a moisture content not exceeding 22%, whole, properly split, clean, uniformly shaped and free from all entrails, physical damage, foreign matter, slime, dun, mold and pink, but excluding squid from which pink or dun has been removed;
- (b) "Standard", must be dried to a moisture content not exceeding 22%, whole, split, reasonably clean, free from foreign matter, slime, dun, and mold, whether or not it has traces of pink when the traces are not associated with spoilage and whether or not it is irregularly shaped with slight physical damage, but must not be squid from which dun has been removed;
- (c) "Utility", must be dried to a moisture content not exceeding 22%, free from foreign matter or mold and have no detectable odour associated with spoilage, whether or not it shows pink discoloration or slight slime, whether or not it is skin-heated, and must be squid from which dun has been removed or in bits and pieces.