

"Schedule B" Products at Public Markets

Fact Sheet / March 2018

WHAT IS A SCHEDULE B PRODUCT?

Foods that are not considered to be potentially hazardous fall into the category of Schedule B foods for sale at public markets as referred to in the *Nova Scotia Food Safety Guidelines for Public Markets*.

A food that is not potentially hazardous has barriers to microbial growth or microbial toxin production. This means the food has one or more of the following food safety parameters: low nutrient content, acidic with a pH lower than 4.6, water activity lower than 0.85, a high sugar or salt content, and/or an appropriate exposure to oxygen.

DO I REQUIRE A VENDOR PERMIT?

No, Schedule B vendors do not require a permit.

NOTE: Raw fruit and vegetables (whole, cut necessary for harvesting purposes only) are exempt from Schedule B requirements.

Products that fall under Schedule B are shelf stable and do not require external controls, such as refrigeration, to keep the food safe and stable. Some examples include:

- Bread and baked goods
- Chocolate and candies
- Honey
- Traditional jams, jellies, and pickles

SCHEDULE B FOODS REQUIRING LETTERS

There are certain conditions where testing of Schedule B food is required. This is due to spoilage or contamination from bacteria associated with these food types, and the possibility for seasonal variation in the food characteristics. Contact a Public Health Officer if you plan on selling a Schedule B product which could fall under the criteria of requiring a letter.

Products often requiring letters include:

- Salsa
- Canned/pickled beans, cucumber, tomatoes, eggs, mushrooms
- Pesto
- Sauces



IF YOUR SCHEDULE B PRODUCT REQUIRES A LETTER

You will need to submit your food product to a lab that is nationally accredited by the Canadian Association for Laboratory Accreditation. The lab will check for various parameters (pH, Aw, salt/ sugar levels) of the product.



A consultant must be hired to instruct you as to what alterations to make to your product so that it will be safe and shelf stable. The consultant reviews the pH, water activity, salt and/or sugar, and packaging, if applicable. You would then relay this information to the Public Health Officer, who will issue you a Schedule B letter. This now provides you with evidence that your product is safe for consumption and is shelf stable.

Upon completion of this third party consultation process, you may be requested to complete an additional step.

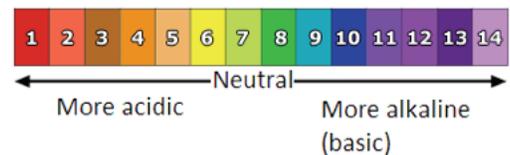
If the testing has been shown to meet the food safety parameters mentioned earlier in the factsheet (pH, Aw, salt/ sugar levels), but is very close to the required food safety value, you will need to purchase testing equipment, which will be indicated in your Schedule B letter. Every batch of the Schedule B product will require testing and a log book of your results must be on hand at the market for review by your Public Health Officer. This is necessary to maintain the food safety values for items where any small change in ingredient type or quality may remove the food safety barriers from the product. If this should happen, the product could lose its shelf stability and may allow bacteria to grow and/or produce toxins.

The content of the Schedule B letter will vary depending on how close in value these parameters are to designated food safety values.

PH – A COMMON MICROBIAL BARRIER

The pH scale measures how acidic or basic a product is. It ranges from 1 to 14. A pH of 7 is neutral. A pH less than 7 is acidic, and a pH greater than 7 is basic.

Pure water is neutral, with a pH of 7.0. Vinegar and lemon juice are acidic substances, while soup crackers are basic.



For more information on food safety, contact your local Public Health Officer, or visit NS Environment's website at:

<https://novascotia.ca/nse/food-protection/>