



Information compliments of the Canada/Nova Scotia Business Service Centre 1-800-668-1010

Ask an Information Officer

I want to start a home-based catering business and sell muffins to local coffee shops...Can I pre-prepare food for my clients in my own kitchen?

In the province of Nova Scotia, you cannot prepare food for the purposes of sale to retail outlets in your own kitchen. The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries requires that kitchen space used for business purposes be separated from the rest of household activities, including regular meal preparation. This allows for a more sanitary environment, free from visitors, pets and other events that may have an impact on the site's compliance with provincial food safety regulations.

The department will assist entrepreneurs in finding suitable work space should it be required. Venues that may be appropriate for the needs of a small bakery or catering business include community halls and churches.

Non-perishable foods, such as jellies, cookies or squares can be prepared in your own kitchen if you are selling them at a local general market (i.e. farmer's market). However, if you will be selling meat, fish, poultry, dairy products or other perishable products, your work space must be inspected and be kept separate from regular household activities.

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Business Article

How real are your profits? Get to know your bank notes...

Julie Penwarden

When you're handling money and counting change on a regular basis, you get a "feel" for what a bank note (AKA paper money) should look like. Have you ever seen one that didn't quite seem right? Maybe its colour was off, or the numbers looked too small. Was it counterfeit? How could you be sure? No one wants to accuse a client wrongfully.

In 2004, just over 6,000 counterfeit bills were passed and seized in Nova Scotia and 648,330 were seized nation-wide. Twenty dollar bills tend to be the most popular counterfeit denomination and in 2004, they made up 65 percent of total bills recovered. To protect your business, train your employees to check two or three security features each time a cash transaction is made.

Here is a brief sampling of the security features and advice the Bank of Canada provides to entrepreneurs who wish to identify counterfeit twenty dollar bills. For a complete list, or to access their training materials, please visit their web site or call the C/NSBSC at 1-800-668-1010.

The holographic stripe - Tilt the note, and watch the brightly coloured numerals (20) and maple leaves "move" within the shiny metallic stripe on the front of the note. Colours will change through the various shades of

the rainbow. There is a colour-split within each maple leaf. If you look carefully, smaller numerals (20) appear in the background of the three-dimensional stripe. The stripe has curved edges.

The watermark portrait - Hold the note to the light and a small, ghost-like image of the portrait appears to the left of the large numeral (20). A smaller numeral (20) is also evident. This watermark is embedded in the paper and can be seen from both sides of the note. In the absence of light, the watermark is not visible.

Windowed colour-shifting thread - Hold the note to the Business page 2

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Business Article

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light and a continuous solid vertical line appears. From the back of the note, this security feature resembles a series of exposed metallic dashes (windows) that shift from gold to green when the note is tilted. Small characters (CAN20) are printed on this security thread, which is woven into the paper.

See-through number - Hold the note to the light. Look for this feature between the watermark and the large numeral (20). The irregular marks on the front and back will form a complete and perfectly aligned numeral 20.

If you detect a counterfeit bank note, follow these steps:

- Keep the bank note
- Record the denomination and serial number
- Record any physical detail you can remember about the person who used it
- Contact the RCMP
- Write the date and your initials on the note, it will be returned if the RCMP determines it is genuine

Remember that counterfeiting is a crime and it costs businesses like yours every year. Take the time to make use of the resources provided to you, free of charge, by the Bank of Canada and help protect commerce in your neighbourhood.

Featured Website

Keeping Canadians Safe: Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada

(PSEPC) - <http://www.psepc-sppcc.gc.ca/prg/em/gds/bcp-en.asp>

Christine Thériault

Do you have a plan in place to keep your business running after a disaster? Developing a business continuity plan allows entrepreneurs to continue offering their products and services in the event of an interruption caused by:

- natural disasters such as tornadoes, floods, blizzards, earthquakes and fire;
- accidents;
- sabotage;
- power and energy disruptions;
- communications, transportation, safety and service sector failure;
- environmental disasters such as pollution and hazardous materials spills; and
- cyber attacks and hacker activity.

It is important for you to protect your key infrastructures against criminal activities and natural disasters—after all, you need to deliver your products and services to keep your shareholders happy and to survive financially.

Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada (PSEPC) provides national leadership and implements a comprehensive approach to enhancing Canada's emergency management framework. Visit their web site on business continuity planning to learn about the proactive planning process that will help you

ensure your business stands the tests of time.

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From Information to Business is a monthly publication of the Canada/Nova Scotia Business Service Centre.

Our Mission

To improve the start-up, survival and growth rates of small- and medium-sized enterprises by giving business people in every part of Nova Scotia access to accurate, timely and relevant information and referrals

Call: 1-800-668-1010

Click: www.cbcs.org/ns/

Visit: 1575 Brunswick St
Halifax, Nova Scotia

Editor-in-Chief:
Shirley Steller

Contributors:
Christine Therault
Julie Penwarden

Center Manager:
Ann MacLean Young

Ask an Information Officer

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For further information, please contact the Regional Manager, Food Safety at the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture and Fisheries at (902) 424-1173, or send an e-mail via grandyvk@gov.ns.ca.

My sales are dropping and I need to understand my competition better. Where can I find this information?

Understanding your competition is important for business success. You can get information about your competitors and sector from databases and directories. While you are researching your competition, it's also a good idea to research your market – things may have changed since you first opened the doors to your business.

Here are a few databases that are useful for market and statistical research that can be accessed on the Public Computer Terminals available for use within the C/NSBSC Reference Library. For a more complete list of databases available for use, see the Centre's Library Guide.

Canadian Business Disc: To find information on a specific company, companies in a type of business, or companies in a geographic area, to locate suppliers or generate leads.

PCensus: PCensus provides you with market data and statistics that can be used to determine target markets and evaluate market potential, through the analysis of Canadian population and consumer spending statistics attained from the 2001 Census. C/NSBSC staff will use this program on your behalf.

RDS Business Reference Suite¹: Use this tool to locate

statistics such as market size, market share, sales, and industry trends.

For FREE answers to your Business Questions call 1-800-668-1010 or email your questions to halifax@cbsc.ic.gc.ca

¹ Responsive Database Services Reference Suite.

Hot Picks

The following books are available from the Canada/Nova Scotia Business Service Centre Library. These books may also be available in our resource centres, located throughout the province.

Your Internet Business: Earning Consumer Trust – A Guide to Consumer Protection for On-line Merchants

This is a guide designed to help on-line merchants protect consumers and earn their trust. The principles presented in this publication cover the details of what Internet merchants should do to provide their customers reasonable protection in the areas of information provision, contract formation, privacy, security of transaction and personal information, redress, liability, unsolicited commercial E-mail, and consumer awareness. It contains the example of a fictitious company that demonstrates how a company's business practices can follow the consumer protection principles.

Start and Run a Profitable Retail Business: A step-by-step business plan

Jim Dion and Ted Topping

Taking you through the process of starting and running a small business, this easy-to-read guide covers off the details on understanding the risks involved, selecting the best location, hiring

employees, advertising, controlling inventory, and recordkeeping. By becoming aware of common mistakes of other small businesses and learning to avoid them, your new store is guaranteed to succeed.

How to Run a Catering Business From Home

Christopher Egerton-Thomas

If you're thinking about starting up your own home catering venture, this is the book for you. Combining the author's detailed, step-by-step advice with instructive anecdotes of both triumphs and failures, this practical guide supplies you with all the key ingredients you need to transform your catering ambitions into reality.

This book will give you a full overview of the ins and outs of running a catering business out of your own home. Beginning with a chapter on who employs caterers and what people will expect of you, Egerton-Thomas offers up advice on how much to charge, how to staff your business and setting up a room or bar. You will also learn about different kinds of parties (including wedding receptions), as well as food safety and health. Don't miss out on this comprehensive overview!

CLICK

www.cbsc.org/ns

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VISIT

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Halifax, N.S.