

OUTDOOR & GARDEN

PRODUCT SOURCING

CANADA · SUPPLIER VETTING FILE

OUTDOOR FURNITURE & GARDEN PRODUCTS

The Canada Supplier Vetting Checklist

Six gates to run before you accept a "Canadian manufacturer" claim — or price an imported container against a domestic quote.

51%

MADE IN CANADA FLOOR

98%

PRODUCT OF CANADA FLOOR

CSA / ULC

CANADA COMPLIANCE

THE SIX CANADA GATES

- | | | | |
|-----------|-------------------------------------|-----------|---------------------------------|
| 01 | Separate the claim from the factory | 02 | Verify the entity and the plant |
| 03 | Test for the Canadian climate | 04 | Demand the compliance file |
| 05 | Lock the commercial terms | 06 | Price the landed cost |

Print it. Run it before you accept the origin claim.

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The six Canada gates at a glance

"Canadian company" and "Canadian factory" are not the same claim.

Run these gates in order. Gate 01 removes the companies that only sell in Canada from the ones that make here. The rest test whether what is left can survive a Canadian winter, carry Canadian compliance, and land at a cost you can defend.

Gate	What it decides	The cost of skipping it
01 Origin claim	Whether the word "Canadian" means a plant or a postcode.	You pay domestic pricing for an imported container.
02 Entity + plant	Who is legally accountable, and where the plant is.	No recourse when the product fails.
03 Climate	Whether the finish survives freeze-thaw and road salt.	Frame corrosion and fade in season two.
04 Compliance	Whether the file stands up in Canada.	Delisted, fined or recalled stock.
05 Commercials	Warranty, spares and lead time in writing.	A five-year promise with no spares behind it.
06 Landed cost	Duty treatment and true delivered cost.	Margin disappears after the quote is signed.

HOW TO USE THIS

Print the checklist pages, hand them to your sourcing or QA lead, and treat every unticked box as an open risk until it is closed in writing. Where a supplier refuses to provide a document, that refusal is itself the finding.

An origin claim is a legal statement, not a marketing line.

Canadian origin labelling is governed by defined cost thresholds. A supplier that cannot show you the numbers behind the claim has not substantiated it.

Claim	What it requires	What to ask for
Made in Canada	Last substantial transformation in Canada, and at least 51% of direct production costs incurred here.	Cost breakdown by line, plant address, production records.
Product of Canada	Last substantial transformation in Canada, and at least 98% of direct production costs incurred here.	Full cost substantiation file, not a summary.
Assembled in Canada	Imported components assembled here. Not a Canadian-origin claim.	Country of origin per component, plus customs entry data.

- ☐ The exact wording the supplier uses in writing, quoted back to you on their letterhead.
- ☐ Country of origin per SKU — not per catalogue, and not per brand.
- ☐ The plant address where your product is actually made, not the showroom or head office.
- ☐ A named contact at that plant who can answer technical questions without a sales person on the line.
- ☐ Whether any part of the build is subcontracted, and to whom.

WHY THIS GATE EXISTS

The Canadian origin test is published by the Competition Bureau and is based on where costs are incurred, not on where a company is incorporated. A brand can be fully Canadian and still import 100% of its product. Verify the claim before you price against it.

Red flags: "Canadian-owned" offered as an answer to a manufacturing question, origin described only in marketing copy, no plant address given, origin varies by collection but not by SKU.

A company profile is not evidence of a production line.

- ☐ Legal entity name matched against the federal or provincial corporate register.
- ☐ The plant address visited or verified independently — not taken from a catalogue.
- ☐ Production capacity checked against your peak month, not the annual average.
- ☐ Whether the line you need actually runs in-house, or is outsourced to a third plant.
- ☐ In-house capability confirmed for the specific processes that decide quality — welding, powder coating, foam cutting.
- ☐ Reference customers contacted without the supplier in the room.
- ☐ Any change of ownership or plant relocation in the last 24 months disclosed.

WHY THIS GATE EXISTS

The company with the best website is not always the company with the plant. Asking who physically transforms the product is the single question that separates a manufacturer from a distributor with good branding.

Red flags: no plant address, capacity answers only in container counts, visits limited to the showroom, references never called, recent ownership change undisclosed.

A finish approved for a European summer is not approved for a Canadian winter.

Freeze-thaw cycling, road salt and low-angle winter sun attack outdoor furniture in ways a coastal or Mediterranean spec never captures. Ask for the numbers, per component, before the sample is approved.

What you are testing	Ask for	Why it matters in Canada
Corrosion	Salt-spray hours to ASTM B117, per coated component.	Road salt and coastal air are the main cause of frame failure.
Coating integrity	Powder-coat thickness in microns, plus the pre-treatment stages used.	Thin coat on a weak pre-treatment blisters after freeze-thaw.
Colour stability	UV exposure hours, tested on the actual resin and pigment used.	Low winter sun plus snow reflection fades dark colours fastest.
Freeze-thaw	Cycle testing of joints, welds and any bonded or timber element.	Water ingress then freezing splits joints that passed warm-weather tests.
Structure	Snow-load rating where the product is load-bearing.	Pergolas and gazebos carry snow loads, not just wind.

WHY THIS GATE EXISTS

Warranty claims in Canada cluster in the second and third winters, after the coating has cycled through freeze-thaw a few times. If the supplier cannot produce the test data at specification stage, it will not exist at claim stage.

Red flags: "suitable for all climates", salt-spray results quoted for a different product, thickness given as "standard powder coat", no UV data on dark colours, no snow-load figure for a structure.

Compliance is a file you can hand to a regulator, not a logo on a box.

- ☐ Certification marks on the finished unit verified in the issuing body's own database — CSA, ULC or an accepted equivalent.
- ☐ Certification held by the correct legal entity — not borrowed from a component supplier.
- ☐ Any gas appliance certified to the applicable CSA gas-appliance standard.
- ☐ Any electrical element certified for Canadian use, with the certificate number recorded.
- ☐ French-language labelling and documentation confirmed for any product sold at retail in Quebec.
- ☐ Cushions, foams and textiles checked against Canadian flammability and consumer-product safety requirements.
- ☐ A current compliance file per SKU, reviewed when components change — not once at launch.

WHY THIS GATE EXISTS

Canadian certification is held per product, not per factory. A component that is certified does not certify the assembly around it. Ask for the certificate number, then check it at source rather than accepting a scanned logo.

Red flags: certificate number not provided, mark present but held by a third party, no French labelling for Quebec retail, compliance file never updated after a component swap.

A warranty is only worth the parts behind it.

- ☐ Warranty length stated by component — frame, finish, cushions, hardware — not one headline number.
- ☐ Spare-parts availability and lead time confirmed in writing for the expected service life.
- ☐ Service network named for your provinces, with the response times that apply.
- ☐ Lead time quoted for your peak month, and the trigger for any change to it.
- ☐ MOQ and project minimums confirmed for commercial work, not only for consumer orders.
- ☐ Payment terms, currency and Incoterms agreed before tooling or sampling starts.
- ☐ Change-control clause: any component substitution after approval triggers re-approval.

WHY THIS GATE EXISTS

The gap between a five-year warranty and a five-year warranty you can actually claim is spare parts and a named service route. Lock both, per component, before the order is placed.

Red flags: single warranty number for every component, no spares commitment, service described as "through your dealer", lead time quoted for a quiet month, currency left open.

Compare delivered and duty-paid, or you are comparing two different numbers.

A domestic quote and an imported container are only comparable once duty, freight, brokerage and damage risk are on the same line. Build the comparison before you choose a channel.

Line	What to establish
Origin status	Whether the goods qualify under CUSMA / USMCA for preferential duty treatment, and the supporting origin declaration.
Duty and taxes	Applicable duty rate and GST/HST treatment on the landed value, confirmed by a broker rather than assumed.
Freight and brokerage	Ocean or road freight, terminal handling, customs brokerage and any provincial delivery leg.
Damage and returns	Historic damage rate, who carries the claim, and where returned stock is processed.
Working capital	Payment terms versus transit time — the cost of capital tied up between PO and shelf.

WHY THIS GATE EXISTS

Imported furniture is often cheaper at the unit price and more expensive at the landed cost. Until both channels are priced to the shelf, the comparison is a quote against a guess.

Red flags: FOB price compared against a delivered domestic price, duty assumed rather than confirmed, damage rate described as "very low", no returns route for the Canadian market.

Canada compliance quick reference

Name the market before you name the product.

Put these on the specification sheet, not on the packing list. Each one is a question to ask your supplier, with the answer recorded in writing.

Area	Ask your supplier for
Gas appliances	Certification to the applicable CSA gas-appliance standard, held by the manufacturing entity.
Electrical	A CSA or ULC mark on the finished unit, with a certificate number you can verify at source.
Quebec retail	French-language product labelling and documentation, per Quebec's language requirements.
Origin claims	The cost substantiation behind any Made in Canada or Product of Canada claim.
Duty treatment	A CUSMA / USMCA origin declaration where preferential treatment is claimed.
Contract furniture	Test evidence to the standard your client's specification names — BIFMA, ASTM or equivalent.
Cushions and textiles	Flammability and consumer-product safety documentation for the Canadian market.

ONE TRAP WORTH NAMING

A component certified for Canada does not certify the product built around it. Host integration — wiring, thermal behaviour, enclosure — has to be assessed on the finished unit, and the certificate has to name the correct legal entity.

OUTDOOR & GARDEN

PRODUCT SOURCING

NEXT STEP

Run these six gates before you accept the origin claim.

If you would rather have a partner run them with you, we verify the entity, test the finish for Canadian conditions, assemble the compliance file and price the landed cost both ways. Tell us your category, province and annual volume and we will map where your risk actually sits.

Talk to a sourcing specialist

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