

COVID-19 Guidance for Farmers' and Fresh Food Markets

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The following recommendations are intended to help organizers, staff and vendors participating in farmers' and fresh food markets reduce the spread of COVID-19. These markets primarily sell fresh fruits, vegetables and food that do not require onsite food preparation.

Recommendations for market organizers to reduce the spread of COVID-19:

Screen market staff and vendors

- It is strongly recommended that market organizers have market staff and vendors complete a health-screening questionnaire before each work shift and prior to participating in the market.
 - Questions can be completed on a paper-based questionnaire, asked directly to employees with answers recorded, or be completed electronically.
 - Consider using the [Ontario Ministry of Health's self-assessment tool](#).

Implement attendance policies for farmer's market staff and vendors

- Maintain a list of the names and contact information of market staff, vendors, and their employees that attend the market.
- Ensure sick staff/vendors do not attend the farmers' market.
- Remind staff/vendors about the importance of reporting illness to their supervisor/manager.
 - If a staff/vendor becomes sick with COVID-19 symptoms while attending the market, they should go home immediately and [self-isolate](#).
 - Staff/vendors experiencing symptoms can call [Telehealth](#), their health care provider or go to an [assessment centre](#) for testing.
- Staff/vendors who have [travelled anywhere outside of Canada](#) must stay home and self-isolate for 14 days after returning to Canada.
- Establish criteria for staff/vendors to return to work:
 - In general, if a staff/vendor had COVID-19 they are able to resume working/attending the farmers' market following recommendations from public health which would include a 14-day isolation period from when symptoms began.
 - For other illnesses, or if the individual received a negative COVID-19 test, they should not attend the farmers' market until they are symptom-free for at least 24 hours.
 - Clearance tests are not required for return to work.

Implement measures to maintain physical distancing

Physical distancing refers to the practice of avoiding close contact by keeping a distance of two metres (six feet) from others. Plan and modify the layout of the farmers' market to ensure enough space is provided for customers, vendors and market staff to maintain physical distancing. Strategies to ensure physical distancing among customers and staff can include:

- Encourage “one person per family” shopping and shorter periods of shopping time
- Designate a single entry and exit point to control the number of customers entering the market.
 - Post signage at the entrance welcoming customers and indicating the conditions for entry. See the Farmers' Market Ontario's [COVID-Fact/Info Sheet](#) as an example.
- Close all other access points to the market:
 - Use existing barriers/structures. For example, position the market near an existing building so that the walls of the building enclose the market perimeter. If this is not possible, install barriers, fencing or other equipment to enclose the market perimeter.
- Monitor and manage customer lines:
 - Place visual markers/cues spaced two metres/six feet apart (e.g., tape on the floor, pylons, signs) to encourage physical distancing and guide customers waiting in line.
 - Assign staff to monitor the line and to make public announcements reminding customers to keep two metres/six feet apart.
- Limit the number of customers permitted into the market at any given time:
 - Position staff at the entrance to control customer entry.
 - Monitor the number of people entering and leaving the market.
 - Stagger/delay customer entry into the market.
 - If the maximum number of customers is reached, allow one person in for every person that leaves.
 - To calculate the maximum number of people that should be permitted in the market at any one time, apply the one person per four square metres of public/retail floor space rule.
- Encourage physical distancing between customers attending the market:
 - Design a shopping flow that encourages one-way movement with prominent signage and/or floor markings.
 - Do not provide communal tables, seating, or kids' play areas in the market.
- Arrange and modify vendors booths to maintain physical distancing and reduce contact:
 - Increase spacing to at least 3 metres (10 feet) between vendors booths (e.g., keep an empty area between each booth).

- Support vendors that are providing online and/or telephone ordering services:
 - Establish and clearly identify pick-up points for advance orders (e.g., drive-thru/pedestrian pick-up)
- Stagger load in and load out times, and designate locations for vendor areas prior to market opening.

Support hand hygiene

- Provide alcohol-based hand sanitizer stations for customer use (e.g., wall mounted/upright sanitizer stations) throughout the market including entrances and exits to indoor areas. Use sanitizers with 60-90% alcohol concentration.
- Designate washroom facilities for market staff and vendors/employee use only.
- Monitor and refill hand hygiene supplies such as hand sanitizer, soap and paper towels in public areas and washroom facilities.

Support proper use of non-medical face masks and face coverings

- Ensure **indoor vendors/customers** adhere to [Section 22 of the Health Protection and Promotion Act Class Order](#) requiring vendors and customers to wear face coverings and alcohol-based hand rub to be available for use at all entrances and exits
- Train staff/vendors on the [proper use of masks](#), and how to safely put on and take off a mask.
- [People who are exempt](#) from wearing a face covering are:
 - Children under the age of two years
 - Children under the age of five years (either chronologically or developmentally) who refuse to wear a face covering and cannot be persuaded to do so by their caregiver
 - People whose ability to breathe in any way is inhibited by the face covering
 - People that have any other medical reason they cannot wear a face covering safely, such as, but not limited to, respiratory disease, cognitive difficulties or difficulties in hearing or processing information
- [Proof of exemption from mandatory face mask order not required](#)
- Masks do not replace the need for physical distancing, hand washing, and staying home when sick.

Increase communication with customers and vendors

- Communicate COVID-19 preparations and market expectations with all vendors prior to attending the market.
- Provide information to customers about market operations (e.g., public health measures, advance order options, curbside pickup) through different

- communication platforms (e.g., market webpage, email, social media accounts).
- Post signs at the entrance instructing customers and staff not to visit the farmers' market if they are sick.
- Post educational materials to encourage healthy behaviours that reduce the spread of COVID-19:
 - [Section 22 Order for Entrances to Indoor Areas](#)
 - [Physical Distancing](#)
 - [How to Safely Use a Non-Medical Mask or Face Covering](#)
 - [Wash Your Hands](#)
 - [Screening Sign](#)

Enhance environmental cleaning and disinfection

- Assign dedicated market staff to complete environmental cleaning and disinfection duties.
- Ensure frequent cleaning and disinfecting of high-touch surfaces and objects in public areas (e.g., handrails, doorknobs, tabletops) at least twice a day and when visibly dirty.
 - Review Public Health Ontario's [Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings](#) fact sheet.
 - Refer to Health Canada's [list of hard surface disinfectants for use against coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#).
- Educate market staff on how to use cleaning agents and disinfectants, and ensure:
 - Required disinfectant contact times are followed (i.e., amount of time that the product will need to remain wet on a surface to achieve disinfection).
 - Use of safety precautions and required personal protective equipment (PPE).
 - Directions for where and how to securely store cleaning and disinfectant supplies.
- Maintain cleanliness of staff/vendor washrooms and other areas as necessary.
- Provide waste receptacles lined with a plastic bag, and empty as often as necessary.

Recommendations for Vendors to Reduce the Spread of COVID-19

Conduct screening of employees prior to attending the market

- It is strongly recommended that vendors ask their employees to complete a health-screening questionnaire before attending the market.
 - Questions can be completed on a paper-based questionnaire, asked directly to employees with answers recorded, or be completed electronically.

- Consider using the [Ontario Ministry of Health's self-assessment tool](#).

Implement attendance policies for employees

- Ensure sick employees do not attend the farmers' market.
- Remind employees about the importance of reporting illness to their supervisor/manager.
 - If an employee becomes sick with COVID-19 symptoms while attending the market, they should go home immediately and [self-isolate](#).
 - Employees experiencing symptoms can call [Telehealth](#), their health care provider or an [assessment centre](#) for testing.
- Employees who have [travelled anywhere outside of Canada](#) must stay home and self-isolate for 14 days after returning to Canada.
- Establish criteria for employees to return to work:
 - In general, if an employee had COVID-19 they are able to resume working/attending the farmers' market following recommendations from public health which would include a 14-day isolation period from when symptoms began.
 - For other illnesses, or if the individual received a negative COVID-19 test, they should not attend the market until they are symptom-free for at least 24 hours.
 - Clearance tests are not required for return to work.

Implement measures to maintain physical distancing

- Limit the number of employees working within the booth at any one time:
 - Employees should maintain physical distancing from each other and customers, where possible.
 - Assign each employee a specific workstation and task to reduce overlap.
- Offer an online and/or telephone ordering service that allow customers to order items in advance.
- Use tables and other barriers to ensure customers keep a safe distance from you and your products (including the sides of your booth)
- If possible, equip physical barriers at the point of sale (e.g., plexiglass).
- Encourage electronic payment by debit or credit card, and to tap instead of using the PIN pad, and assign one employee to process all transactions.
- Place visual markers/cues (e.g., pylons, signs) two metres/six feet apart to direct line-ups at vendor's booths.
- Ensure there is ample space for lines to form in front of your booth, with customers keeping a two metre/six foot distance from each other.
- Leave the customers purchases on the counter or set-up a side table for the customer to pick it up while maintaining a two metre/six foot distance from

employees.

- Avoid lengthy conversations with customers and remind customers not to congregate near the booth once they have completed their purchase.
- Post [physical distancing](#) signs in highly visible areas.

Encourage and practice proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette

- Educate employees on proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette:
 - [Wash your hands](#) with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (60-90% alcohol concentration), provided hands are not visibly soiled.
 - [Cover your cough or sneeze](#) with your elbow or a tissue. Immediately throw the tissue in the garbage and wash your hands.
- Provide alcohol-based hand sanitizer in dispensers within the booth for employee use. Monitor and refill as needed.
- Remind employees to avoid touching their face, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Sanitize your hands after every customer interaction

Practice proper glove use

- Glove use is not mandatory and gloves are not a substitute for proper hand hygiene.
- If vendors/employees use gloves they should be changed every hour, or more often as necessary.
- Hands should be washed with soap and water for 15 seconds before putting on and after taking off gloves.
- Change gloves when changing tasks, after touching your face, or coming in contact with an item that may have germs.
- When gloves are removed, new gloves must be used each time.

Implement measures to protect food from contamination

- Practice proper hand hygiene often.
- Offer prepackaged foods for sale to reduce handling and direct contact.
- Minimize food displays and keep food out of the customer's reach to discourage handling.
- Do not provide samples.
- Do not handle reusable containers/bags supplied by the customer.
- Suspend accepting product returns.

- Encourage customers to take their purchased foods home and wash thoroughly before eating.

Practice proper use of cloth and non-medical face masks

- **Indoor vendors** must ensure [Section 22 of the Health Protection and Promotion Act Class Order](#) is implemented requiring vendors/staff and customers to wear face coverings and alcohol-based hand rub to be available at all entrances and exits
- Non-medical/cloth masks are required for all members of the **public** in the **indoor** areas of the market and are strongly recommended in any other areas of the market when physical distancing cannot be maintained.
- Train employees on the [proper use of masks](#), and how to safely put on and take off a mask.
- [People who are exempt](#) from wearing a face covering under the Section 22 Order are:
 - Children under the age of two years
 - Children under the age of five years (either chronologically or developmentally) who refuse to wear a face covering and cannot be persuaded to do so by their caregiver
 - People whose ability to breathe in any way is inhibited by the face covering
 - People that have any other medical reason they cannot wear a face covering safely, such as, but not limited to, respiratory disease, cognitive difficulties or difficulties in hearing or processing information
 - [Proof of exemption not required](#)
- Masks do not replace the need for physical distancing, hand washing, and staying home when sick.

Enhance environmental cleaning and disinfection protocols

- Ensure frequent cleaning and disinfecting of high-touch surfaces and objects within the booth (e.g., tabletops, stands, mobile payment terminals) at least twice a day and when visibly dirty.
- Ensure frequent cleaning and disinfecting of high-touch surfaces in the delivery vehicle (e.g., steering wheel, door handles, controls, knobs/dials) at the beginning and end of the day/shift.
 - Review Public Health Ontario's [Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings](#) fact sheet.
 - Refer to Health Canada's [list of hard surface disinfectants for use against coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#).
- Educate market staff on how to use cleaning agents and disinfectants to ensure:

- Required disinfectant contact times are followed (i.e., amount of time that the product will need to remain wet on a surface to achieve disinfection).
- Use of safety precautions and required personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Directions for where and how to securely store cleaning and disinfectant supplies.
- Ensure waste receptacles are available within the booth.

More information

For more information, visit our website at wdgpublichealth.ca or call us at 519-822-2715 or 1-800-265-7293.

References

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