

COVID-19 Guidance for Farmers' and Fresh Food Markets

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.

Owners, operators and vendors are responsible for ensuring that their market is in compliance with these public health guidelines, and all emergency orders made under the [Reopening Ontario \(A Flexible Response to COVID-19\) Act, 2020](#). As every market will be different, it is the responsibility of owners/operators and vendors to review their own policies, procedures, and site-specific operations, while ensuring that the appropriate infection prevention and control measures are implemented and maintained. More information about COVID-19 can be found in the Toronto Public Health [COVID-19 Fact Sheet](#).

Markets that host performances and other attractions must comply with the [COVID-19 Guidance for Indoor & Outdoor Events & Gatherings](#). Gathering limits as per current emergency orders must be followed.

Protective Measures to Keep Everyone Safe

- Stay home when you are sick.
- Keep a two metre/six feet distance from others, when possible.
- Wash your hands often, and avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow.
- Wear a face mask or covering when you are in indoor public spaces, as per the City [bylaw](#), and when you cannot maintain a two metre/six foot distance outdoors.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

Increase public awareness

- 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).
- Encourage staff and customers to download the [COVID Alert app](#) so they can be notified directly if they have been in close contact with someone who was contagious with COVID-19.
- Post signs at the entrance instructing customers and staff not to visit the farmers' market if they are sick.

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- Post educational materials to encourage healthy behaviours that reduce the spread of COVID-19:
 - [Physical Distancing](#)
 - [Protect Yourself](#)
 - [Face & Mask Coverings](#)
 - [Information about COVID-19](#)
 - [Wash your Hands](#)
 - [Cover your Cough](#)
 - [Posters for Entrances](#)

Practice proper use of cloth and non-medical face masks

- The use of non-medical masks or face coverings is required in all indoor public spaces, as per a new City of Toronto [bylaw](#). Operators are required to develop a policy and protocols on the wearing of masks. More information is available [here](#).
- Non-medical/cloth masks are strongly recommended when physical distancing cannot be maintained in outdoor settings.
- Train staff/vendors on the [proper use](#) of masks, and how to safely put on and take off a mask.
- Masks do not replace the need for physical distancing, hand washing, and staying home when sick.

Control and monitor entry

- Designate a single entry and exit point to control the number of customers entering the market.
 - Post signage at the entrance indicating the conditions for entry. See the Farmers' Market Ontario's [COVID-19 Fact Sheet](#) as an example.
- Close all other access points to the market using existing barriers/structures.
- Limit the number of customers permitted into the market at any given time:
 - Position staff at the entrance to control customer entry and monitor the number of people entering and leaving.
 - 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.

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:

- Design a shopping flow that encourages one-way movement with prominent signage and/or floor markings.
- Do not provide communal tables or seating in the market.

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- Arrange and modify vendors booths to maintain physical distancing and reduce contact:
 - Increase spacing between vendors booths (e.g. keep an empty area between each booth).
- 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.
- 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.
- Remind customers not to congregate near the booth once they have completed their purchase.
- Post [physical distancing](#) signs in highly visible areas.
- Stagger load in and load out times, and designate locations for vendor areas prior to market opening.

Reduce contact during purchases

- Offer online and/or telephone ordering services that allow customers to order items in advance.
 - Establish and clearly identify pick-up points for advance orders (e.g. drive-thru/pedestrian pick-up).
- Install [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.
- 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.

Support hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette

- Download and post [Wash your Hands](#), [Cover your Cough](#), [Protect Yourself](#) signs in high-traffic areas.
- Provide hand sanitizer dispensers (70-90% alcohol concentration) by entrances and throughout the market for staff and customers use.
- Ensure an adequate supply of liquid soap, paper towel, hand sanitizer, tissues, and waste receptacles throughout the venue and in washrooms.

Workplace Health & Safety for Market Organizers and Vendors

Implement health and safety protocols for staff

- Review the [COVID-19 Guidance for Employers, Workplaces and Businesses](#) to plan and implement protocols to keep staff safe.
- [Actively screen staff](#) before each work shift and prior to participating the event.

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- Implement attendance policies for staff, including maintaining a list of the names, contact information and attendance records of all staff.
- Train staff on all new policies and protocols related to COVID-19 practices, including physical distancing, hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, and the City of Toronto mask by-law.

Implement measures to protect food from contamination

- Educate employees on proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette:
 - [Wash your hands](#) with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (70-90% 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.
- Prepackage foods offered for sale to reduce handling and direct contact.
- 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 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.

Enhance environmental cleaning and disinfection

- Assign 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.

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- 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.

More information

For more information, visit our website at www.toronto.ca/COVID19 or call us at 416-338-7600.

References

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