

COVID-19: GUIDANCE FOR PICK YOUR OWN FARM OPERATIONS

York Region continues to support efforts to protect residents, businesses and staff from COVID-19. York Region is in constant collaboration with provincial and national health agencies and our local partners, receiving regular updates as the COVID-19 pandemic evolves.

Please take the time to review the latest provincial updates on amendments to requirements and restrictions to the public under the [Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act](#).

This checklist is meant to be used as guide to assist owner/operators with COVID-19 prevention measures. Along with these guidelines, continue to ensure your business follows all local municipal bylaws.

To mitigate the spread of COVID-19 at pick your own farm operations (PYO), the following infection prevention and control measures should be implemented:

- Practice [physical distancing](#): Keep staff and patrons two metres (six feet) apart
- Wear a [face mask or covering](#): If you cannot keep staff and patrons two metres apart (six feet), encourage the wearing of two-layer non-medical masks or face coverings
- Encourage staff and patrons to practice good hand hygiene and respiratory practices
 - Make soap and water and/or alcohol-based hand sanitizer available for all to use
 - Provide paper towels and lined garbage bins for their disposal
- Frequently clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces like door knobs and handles, counter tops, payment terminals
- Owner/operator should conduct active screening of staff when they arrive by asking [screening questions](#)
- Strongly encourage all staff and patrons to stay home if sick:
 - If you or your employees become symptomatic with a fever, new or worsening cough, or difficulty breathing while working, notify your supervisor and immediately return home
 - Anyone with symptoms of COVID-19 should seek assessment at a COVID-19 Assessment Centre, located at the three York Region hospitals:
 - [Mackenzie Health](#)
 - [Markham-Stouffville Hospital](#)
 - [Southlake Regional Health Centre](#)
- Use available signage to communicate infection prevention recommendations to staff and clients

[It is important to monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 and seek assessment and testing if necessary.](#)

Physical distancing

- Consider booking appointments for patrons to reduce volume at one time
- Limit the number of patrons on your farm based on space
- Consider offering specific hours for those most vulnerable to COVID-19 infection
- Encourage patrons to come on their own

- If a family arrives in one vehicle together, they can pick in the same row. Emphasize the importance of the family staying in their row and staying close together
- Eliminate all seating areas, tables and entertainment
- Create a flow of patrons to maintain 2-metres at all times upon arrival, in the field, when paying and when exiting
- Demarcate ground (e.g., with spray paint) and/or provide directional signage to indicate physical distance where lines are formed
- Assign a row to each individual patron or family
- Provide one-direction foot paths for patrons to go to and return from the field
- Clearly number all rows and assign specific rows to each patron/family
- Have staff direct, monitor and control for crowding, ensuring everyone is staying 2-metres apart
- Where possible, the use of technology may minimize staff and patron contact: mobile ordering, text on arrival for pick-up or contactless payment option

For PYO operators

- Train employees on new practices and policies
- Ensure employees wash their hands before beginning work, when changing activities, before and after eating, after using the bathroom, when changing gloves etc.
- Set up payment stations so employees do not have to handle produce
 - Consider charging by volume versus by weight (reduces lines into farm and during payments) and provide new, standard containers to patrons (avoid patrons bringing their own containers)
 - Containers should either be single-use or be able to be cleaned and disinfected between uses
- Assign staff to specific tasks/work stations to minimize contact between themselves
- If physical distance cannot be maintained, and if and where necessary, install barriers to protect staff and patrons and/or wear PPE such as masks and/or face shields
- Clearly communicate flow/direction of the rows to patrons
- Have staff available in the field for patron management
- Employees are not able to work if they have symptoms or were exposed to COVID-19. Encourage employees to routinely do a [self-assessment](#) prior to coming to work
- Every effort should be made to reduce the number of interactions between patrons and employees

For patrons

- Post signage promoting [physical distancing](#), [passive screening](#) and any policies that impact patrons and guests
- The use of two layer non-medical masks or face coverings is strongly encouraged in public spaces where physical distancing is difficult to maintain. Operators may require patrons to wear them
- Encourage patrons to
 - stay at home if experiencing symptoms of COVID-19
 - wash or sanitize hands before and after leaving the field
 - stay in their assigned row
- Children must remain with the family unit. Failure to do so may result in a family being asked to leave
- Maintain 2-metre distance from other patrons and staff
- No sampling
- Anyone not respecting physical distancing may be asked to leave the property
- Leave pets at home

- Use farm signage to communicate the patron flow, so physical distancing is always maintained
- Ensure a 2-metre distance is maintained among guests if not within same social circle and/or household

Cleaning, Sanitizing and Disinfecting

- Increase the frequency of cleaning and disinfecting of high-touch surfaces such as door handles, hand rails, desks, phones, trays, tables, chairs, sneeze guards, common room amenities, cash registers, etc.
- Use approved disinfectants as per the [Government of Canada](#). Note: all disinfectants approved for use in Canada have a [drug identification number](#). The products listed on the Government of Canada website are supported by evidence to likely be effective and may be used against COVID-19
- Have alcohol-based hand sanitizer accessible for patrons
- Temporary hand wash stations available, equipped with soap, paper towels and hot and cold water
- Monitor and refill hand hygiene supplies (hand sanitizers, soap and paper towels)
- Staff should be provided with alcohol-based hand sanitizer when they are unable to wash their hands frequently with soap and water
- Washroom facilities and hand sinks are cleaned and disinfected at least twice per day, or as frequently as necessary
- Provide additional lined garbage bins for staff and patrons to easily dispose of their gloves and masks

Protocols and Training

- Where necessary, develop and implement protocols for patrons and guests and ensure the information is communicated (e.g., [physical distancing](#) measures, do not attend if you are ill, stay with their social circle/household, refrain from loitering/congregating, tap payment preferred, etc.)
- Ensure staff are trained on new protocols (e.g., absence policies, cleaning and disinfecting, physical distance between patrons and staff, when and how to properly wear PPE, how to take off PPE, updated shifts and schedules, how event is being run, etc.)
- Train staff on cleaning and sanitizing for food contact surfaces and cleaning and disinfecting of non-food contact surfaces and highly touched surfaces. Implement logs for both actions
- Ensure staff have been properly trained on gloves and [mask](#) etiquette. Gloves are not essential, but, if used, must be changed frequently and hands washed between uses
 - Hands should be washed with soap and water for 20 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
- Encourage frequent handwashing, with soap and water, using the [correct technique](#) and to avoid touching face

Communication and signage

- Have an ill staff policy:
 - Conduct [active screening](#)
 - Notify York Region Public Health at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 77280 between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. (seven days a week) and 905-953-6478 (after hours) of staff that have tested positive for COVID-19
- Staff must report any symptoms developed while working to their supervisor
- Have changes in operation and policies communicated to staff

- Have clear signage for patrons before they enter the field to emphasize the importance of staying in their row and maintaining physical distancing
- Post [signage](#) for patrons: stay home as much as possible, [practice physical distancing](#), wash your hands frequently and avoid touching your face with unwashed hands
- Post [signage](#) that patrons are to hand sanitize before entering the premises
- Patrons who exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 should be refused entry. Display [posters](#) telling patrons if they have symptoms they cannot enter
- Post [signage](#) on disposal of gloves and masks

Additional Resources

- [A Framework for Reopening our Province Stage 2](#)
- [COVID-19 and Re-Opening York Region: Public Health Resources and Guidance for Businesses](#)
- [COVID-19 & Re-Opening York Region: Public Health Resources and Guidance for Businesses](#)
- [COVID-19: Guidance for Farmers' Markets](#)
- [York Region: Resources, Fact Sheets and Videos](#)

More information

For more information, visit our website at york.ca/COVID19 , email HealthInspectors@york.ca, or call us at 1-800-361-5653 or TTY 1-866-512-6228.

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