

# COVID-19: GUIDANCE FOR FARMERS' MARKETS

The provincial government is permitting outdoor Farmer's Markets to operate during the summer and fall months of 2020. The following recommendations are intended to help organizers and staff at Farmer's Markets to reduce the spread of COVID-19. As every market will be slightly different, it is ultimately the responsibility of organizers and operators to review their own policies, procedures and site-specific circumstances to assess their ability to operate the market while ensuring the appropriate infection prevention and control measures are implemented and maintained. More information about COVID-19 can be found at [york.ca/covid19](http://york.ca/covid19). Along with these recommendations, continue to:

- Ensure your business is compliant with the [Food Premises Regulation 493/17](#)
- Ensure organizer and vendor [application forms](#) are submitted prior to opening
- Ensure local bylaws are adhered to

To mitigate the spread of COVID-19 at Farmer's Markets, the following infection prevention and control measures should be implemented:

- Practice [physical distancing](#): keep staff and customers 2-metres apart
- Wear masks: if you cannot keep staff and customers 2-metres apart, encourage the wearing of 2-layer, non-medical masks or face coverings
- Encourage staff and customers 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 for use and lined garbage bins for 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 upon arrival by asking [screening questions](#)
- Strongly encourage all staff and customers to stay home if sick
- Staff/customers who become ill while at the market should be sent home immediately and asked to seek assessment at a [COVID-19 Assessment Centre](#)
- Use available [signage](#) to communicate infection prevention recommendations to staff and clients

## Physical distancing

- Plan and modify the layout of the market to ensure there is enough space for customers, vendors and market staff
  - Increase space between vendors to ensure a minimum of 2-metres is maintained
- Only have one way of entry and one way of exit. Consider bordering the perimeter of the market, to minimize people entering the market from any area. Post signage letting customers know where the entry and exits are
- Have staff monitor and control crowding, ensuring everyone is staying 2-metres apart and that customers are not congregating/loitering in the market
- Mark boundaries on the ground (e.g., with tape) and/or provide directional signage to indicate physical distance where lines are formed (entry to the market and lines to vendors) and to ensure one way movement throughout the market
- Limit the number of people entering the market

- Predetermine what is the maximum number of customers allowed into the market space. Remember to consider number of organizing staff, volunteers, vendors, vendor employees when calculating space required to properly physical distance
- Have staff stationed at the entrance and exit to monitor the number of customers in attendance
- Staggering and delaying entrance to the market will prevent overcrowding
- Develop a process of how transactions occur between vendors and customers. Consider how orders are placed, how money is exchanged for the items, how customers are given their purchase(s), etc.
- Remove any seating and communal tables to avoid people gathering
- Discourage forms of entertainment as this may encourage gatherings. This may also have patrons lean towards each other and raise their voices or shout, thus increasing the risk of transmission
- Remove any communal, self-serve stations, such as condiment tables
  - Use individual packets for condiments (e.g. ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise), where possible
  - Alternatively, employees can apply condiments as per the customer's order
- Provide individually wrapped/pre-packaged disposable utensils (i.e., forks, knives, spoons)
- Where possible, use technology to minimize staff and customer contact, e.g., online/telephone ordering, text on arrival for pick-up and/or contactless payment options
  - Consider separate pick-up areas for customers that have pre-ordered their items
- Stagger setup times for vendors prior to opening

### **For organizers and vendors**

- Organizers should maintain a list of names and contact information of market staff, vendors and their staff that attend the market
- If physical distance cannot be maintained, and if and where necessary, install barriers (e.g., plexiglas) to protect staff and customers and/or wear personal protective equipment (PPE) such as masks or face shields
- Have staff wear appropriate PPE if booths cannot be rearranged and/or processes in the space cannot be altered to reduce interaction and crossover within the booth
- Stagger staff shifts and breaks to minimize capacity in any shared space
- Limit time staff spend with customers
- Limit the number of staff working at a booth
  - Assign staff to specific tasks/work stations to minimize contact between them
- Have produce on display, such that customers are not able to touch/handle the food and food items
  - Customers point to what they want and have vendors package the items and process the sale
  - Where possible, have as much prepackaged food and food items at the market
- Do not provide food samples

### **For customers**

- Post signage promoting [physical distancing](#), [passive screening](#) and any policies that impact customers while waiting in line and waiting for an order
- The use of 2-layer, non-medical masks or face coverings is strongly encouraged in public spaces where physical distancing is difficult to maintain
- Customers to bag their own purchases if they are bringing their own reusable bags

## Cleaning, Sanitizing and Disinfecting

- Clean and sanitize all food contact surfaces
- Increase the frequency of cleaning and disinfecting of high-touch surfaces such as door handles, hand rails, tables, keyboards, phones, sneeze guards, common areas, appliances, cash registers, etc.
- Use approved sanitizers as per the [Food Premises Regulation 493/17](#)
- Use approved disinfectants as per the [Government of Canada](#). Note: all disinfectants approved for use in Canada have a [Drug Identification Number \(DIN\)](#). 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 customers, at the entrance, the exit and throughout the market
- All vendors should have hand wash stations, equipped with soap, paper towels and water
  - Hand washing sinks should be accessible and fully stocked at all times
  - Staff should be provided with alcohol-based hand sanitizer when they are unable to wash their hands
- Clean and disinfect self-service units between uses (e.g., mobile tablets, self-checkout touch screens, smart kiosks, pin pads)
- Designate washroom facilities for market staff and vendors/employee use only
  - Ensure hand sanitizer, soap, paper towels and hot and cold water is always available
- Provide additional garbage bins for customers to dispose of their gloves and masks, including at all entrances, exits and throughout the market

## Protocols and Training

- Communicate any new COVID-19 protocols to customers where applicable, e.g., pre-ordering is preferred, credit/debit preferred, orders not taken for those exhibiting symptoms, etc.
- Ensure staff are trained on new protocols, e.g., absence policies, cleaning and disinfecting, physical distance between customers and staff, when and how to properly wear PPE, how to take off PPE, updated shifts, how to process orders for customers 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
- Train staff on how best to serve sold items, maintain safe physical distancing and avoid unnecessary handling
- Ensure staff have been properly trained on glove and [mask](#) etiquette. Gloves are not essential, but, if used, must be changed frequently and hands washed between uses
  - Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before putting on and after taking off gloves
  - When gloves are removed, new gloves must be used each time
- Encourage frequent handwashing, with soap and water, using the correct technique, and avoid touching the face

## Communication and signage

- Conduct [active screening](#) of staff
- Staff must report any signs or [symptoms](#) of COVID-19 to their supervisor
- Post [signage](#) for customers: [practice physical distancing](#), [wash hands](#) frequently and avoid touching your face with unwashed hands

- Post signage to encourage [hand sanitizing](#)
- Customers who exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 should be refused entry. Display posters telling customers [if they have symptoms they cannot enter](#)
- Post [signage](#) demonstrating the disposal of gloves and masks

## **Additional Resources**

- [A Framework for Reopening our Province Stage 2](#)
- [COVID-19 & Re-Opening York Region: Public Health Resources and Guidance for Businesses](#)
- [Farmers Market of Ontario: COVID-19 Public Safety Protocols](#)
- [Province of Ontario Restaurant and Food Services Health and Safety during COVID-19](#)
- [Province of Ontario Guidance on Health and Safety for Restaurant Servers, Cooks and Dishwashers during COVID-19](#)
- [York Region: Resources, Fact Sheets and Videos](#)

## **More information**

Visit [york.ca/COVID19](http://york.ca/COVID19), email [HealthInspectors@york.ca](mailto:HealthInspectors@york.ca), or call 1-800-361-5653 or TTY 1-866-512-6228.

*Adapted with permission from Toronto Public Health. Current as of June 25, 2020.*