

COVID-19

Guidelines for fresh food and farmers' markets



Operator Information: Reopening

July 27, 2020

Peel Public Health is committed to supporting organizers, staff and vendors participating in farmers' and fresh food markets to have an enjoyable experience and in reducing the spread of COVID-19.

The first step to control risks in a workplace is to identify them. For COVID-19, the risks are related to how the virus spreads. COVID-19 can be spread at the workplace in two main ways:

- person to person, especially by people who are in close contact
- by surfaces or objects that are contaminated and then people touch their face with contaminated hands

Note: It is possible for COVID-19 to be spread by people who do not appear to have symptoms. It is best to assume that everyone who comes on the premises potentially may have COVID-19 and set up public health measures accordingly.

The Ontario government has provided a [Framework for Reopening our Province](#). These guidelines will help prevent the transmission of COVID-19.

[Regulation 493 \(Food Premises\)](#) under the Ontario Health Protection and Promotion Act (HPPA) exempt farmers' market food vendors from the Food Premises Regulation if the following condition is met:

- The majority of vendors operating the stalls at the market are producers of farm products who are primarily selling or offering for sale their own products. Farmers' market operators may be asked to provide evidence of their market's exemption status to Peel Public Health staff.

The Region of Peel [Food Safety Guidelines for Special Events](#) provides food vendors with safe food handling practices at special events and farmers markets.

In addition, the [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#) states that all employers must take every reasonable precaution to protect the health and safety of workers which includes protecting workers from hazards posed by infectious diseases such as COVID-19. To do so, create a plan for the safe re-opening of your farmers' market. Ontario has developed a tool (including a Word template) for your [COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan](#).

To reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19, we are recommending farmers’ markets implement the following recommendations below:

To reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19, we are recommending these premises to implement the following recommendations:

<p>Entry and Physical Distancing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post screening <u>signage</u> at the entrance reminding patrons that they should not enter if they have any symptoms of COVID-19. • <u>Physical distancing</u> refers to the practice of avoiding close contact by keeping a distance of two metres (six feet) from others. • Strategies to ensure physical distancing among customers and staff can include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Designating a single entry and exit point to control the number of customers entering the market. o Posting signage at the entrance welcoming customers and indicating the conditions for entry. • Close all other access points to the market: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Use existing barriers/structures. For example, position the market near an existing building so that the walls of the building enclose the market perimeter. o If this is not possible, install barriers, fencing or other equipment to enclose the market perimeter. • 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. • Encourage physical distancing between customers attending the market: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Design a shopping flow that encourages one-way movement with prominent signage and/or floor markings. o Do not provide communal tables or seating in the market. • Arrange and modify vendors booths to maintain physical distancing and reduce contact: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Increase spacing between vendors booths (e.g. keep an empty area between each booth). • Encourage patrons to wash their hands or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol content when entering and leaving. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Organizers are encouraged to have a hand sanitizer dispenser at the entrance and ensuring all patrons to use it upon entry. • Non-medical or cloth masks are strongly recommended when physical distancing cannot be maintained.
<p>Entry and waiting area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Masks do not replace the need for physical distancing, hand washing, and staying home when sick. Remind staff and patrons to use <u>proper mask use procedures</u>. • Monitor and manage customer lines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o 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.

<p>Entry and waiting area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assign staff to monitor the line and to make public announcements reminding customers to keep two metres/six feet apart: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ 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 • Support vendors that are providing online and/or telephone ordering services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Establish and clearly identify pick-up points for advance orders (e.g. drive-through/pedestrian pick-up) ◦ Stagger load in and load out times, and designate locations for vendor areas prior to market opening.
<p>Facility</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notify attendees of the steps being taken to prevent the risk of transmission and the importance of their roles in these measures. • COVID-19 signage should be posted in highly visible locations. • Washroom capacity should allow for distancing between guests. For example, consider closing alternate urinals. • Operators should increase the frequency of environmental cleaning and disinfection for all common areas like kitchens and washrooms. Regular checks (every 3-4 hours) with top up of soap in the washrooms and elsewhere is encouraged. • Follow manufacturer instructions and train staff on use of cleaners and disinfectants. Ensure adequate contact time of the chemical is achieved. • Update protocols for cleaning/disinfecting surfaces and equipment, and clean thoroughly at specific intervals throughout the day: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Give attention to key touch points and objects (e.g. food contact surfaces, hand contact areas, door handles, switches, tabletops, chairs) ◦ Ensure shared equipment such as credit card machines and cash registers are cleaned and sanitized between uses. • Maintain cleaning and sanitation logs. • Supply dispensers for alcohol-based hand sanitizer to staff and customers. • Monitor and refill hand hygiene supplies such as hand sanitizer, soap and paper towels in public areas and washroom facilities. • Only use disinfectants with a Drug Identification Number (DIN) and labelled as a broad-spectrum viricide. Check expiry dates and always follow the manufacturer's instructions for use. Particular attention should be paid to contact time, dilution, material compatibility, shelf-life, storage, first aid, and use of personal protective equipment. Health Canada has developed the following list of hard surface disinfectants for use against COVID-19.

Facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No food samples can be distributed to customers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Limit on-site food preparation. Foods should be packaged and prepared ahead of time. ◦ Provide single use condiments for public use OR keep all condiments behind the counter and allow only staff to do food/drink preparation, e.g., coffees • No seating areas or 'play areas' can be set-up. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Vendors should minimize displays and offer pre-packaged foods at rounded prices, to reduce cash handling. • Include a list of vendors and food products that the vendors will be selling. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ ensure that food products are packaged and not loose. ◦ ensure that refrigerated and frozen products are maintained at proper temperatures. ◦ Get confirmation from each vendor that the food is obtained from an approved source, that is, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ meat ONLY from an approved slaughterhouse and processed at approved facilities, ◆ dairy products ONLY from pasteurized milk ◆ perishable food requiring refrigeration during transport and distribution is maintained out of the danger zone (refrigerated). ◆ vendors can offer for sale only non-hazardous home-prepared products such as baked goods and fruit jams/jellies. • Artisan/non-food items are permitted for sale but ensure all products are kept behind your table to ensure customers will not handle your products before they have been purchased.
Employee Wellness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post COVID-19 <u>screening signage</u> in prominent areas of the market for employees. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Market organizers should encourage staff and vendors to complete <u>active screening</u> before each work shift and prior to participating in the market. • Organizer must maintain a list of the names and contact information of market staff, vendors, and their employees that attend the market. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ 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 should be advised to complete the <u>COVID-19 self-assessment tool</u> and/or contact their primary health-care provider and get tested. • Peel Public Health recommends all workplaces to conduct <u>Passive Screening</u>. • Owner/Operator or employees must not work if they are ill or have travelled outside of Canada in the past 14 days. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Staff/vendors who have travelled anywhere outside of Canada must stay home and self-isolate for 14 days after returning to Canada.

Employee Wellness

- 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 14 days after their 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.
 - ◆ Contact Peel Public Health for more information
- All staff and customers should practice hand hygiene.
- Provision must be made for an adequate hand washing station for food vendors. Where a sink with plumbing is not available, a large container of warm water (e.g., a coffee urn with a spigot), a soap dispenser, a roll of paper towels and a bucket to collect wastewater may be adequate.
- Ensure that all handwashing stations and washrooms are all adequately supplied with liquid soap in a dispenser and paper towels.
- Post signage in washrooms to outline proper handwashing steps.
- Provide alcohol-based hand sanitizer for customers especially in high traffic areas such as entrances and check-out counters.
- Provide cashiers, drive-through and curbside pick up operators, delivery staff and other customer-facing staff with hand sanitizer for their use only.
- Non-food handlers can use alcohol-based hand sanitizer, if their hands aren't visibly soiled.
- If glove use is chosen, proper glove use must be practiced. It is important to change them every hour or more often as necessary and hands are to be washed and/or sanitized between changes. Remember to remove gloves when changing tasks (i.e. handling raw food vs. ready to eat/cooked foods or moving from cash register to food handling, gloves must be changed to prevent cross contamination and foodborne illness). When gloves are removed, new gloves must be used each time.
- Discard all mask and gloves into a lined garbage bin.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then immediately throw the tissue in the garbage and wash your hands.
- If you don't have a tissue, sneeze or cough into your sleeve or arm. In order to enable your staff to physically distance, consider implementing the following:
 - Offer flexible schedules to stagger the working hours and days employees work.
 - Assign staff to specific tasks and minimize contact between them.
 - Reconfigure break rooms/areas and eating areas for staff to physically distance.
- Use tables and other barriers to ensure customers keep a safe distance from you and your products. For example, a double table setup (a table in front of the table you store your products on) is effective in achieving physical distancing between vendors and customers.

Employee Wellness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider alternatives to cash, such as online pre-order/pre-pay, or portable debit/credit systems. • If using cash, it is recommended that, you keep the cash you receive separate from the cash you use to make change. Viruses can live on surfaces for up to 72 hours. If the cash you are using to make change has been isolated for this length of time, you will be handing clean cash back to your customers, stopping potentially infected cash from circulating throughout the Market. • Avoid lengthy conversations with your customers. The goal is to have customers get in and get out, so please encourage this in your own interactions as well. • Sanitize your hands after every customer interaction. • If customers touch your product without purchasing it, sanitize that item, if applicable, or remove it from your stock, or require the customer to purchase it.
Communication with Market Vendors and Customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 information online 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.
Entertainment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No live music, dancing, singing, and karaoke • Facilities are open for in-person shopping and curbside pick up.

Resources

Visit our [website](#) for up to date COVID-19 information.

We've created COVID-19 related documents, posters and other resources that you can share with vendors and customers. [Access our resources](#).

We also have [translated resources](#) in different languages.

If you have any additional questions about these recommendations and what is required of you, please contact the Region of Peel – Public Health at: 905-799-7700 or by email at: peelhealth@peelregion.ca

For more information, please refer to the following resources:

- peelregion.ca/health/enviroNew/pdf/GuidelinesSpecialEvents.pdf
- sustainontario.com/custom/uploads/2020/06/OMAFRA-letter-on-markets-June-5-2020.pdf
- <https://www.farmersmarketsontario.com/>
- [COVID-19 Guidance for Food Premises Best Practices Summary Sheet](#)
- ontario.ca/laws/regulation/200263
- [Ontario Ministry of Health – Covid19 Guidance document for Food Premises](#)
- [Ontario Ministry of Health – Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings](#)
- [Ministry of Health COVID-19 Guidance: Essential Workplaces](#)
- [Province of Ontario Guidance to Prevent COVID-19 in the Workplace](#)
- [A Framework for Reopening our Province](#)
- [Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development: List of COVID-19 Guidance for Sectors: Restaurant and Food Services.](#)

The information in this document is current as of July 27, 2020

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For more information visit peelregion.ca/coronavirus

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