

# COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus) Ontario Farmers' Markets

## Guidance for Ontario Farmers' Markets during COVID-19

May 8, 2020

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Coronaviruses are spread mainly from person to person through respiratory droplets. This can occur through coughing and/or sneezing, close contact, and touching contaminated surfaces. Currently there is no vaccine available to protect against the 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19). Therefore, members of the environmental health team at Southwestern Public Health are working closely with farmers market owners and operators to ensure that markets are operating safely.

There are two different ways that Farmers' Markets can operate during COVID-19. One of the two options must be followed to ensure the safety of vendors, customers, and the community. Note: COVID-19 policies and procedures must also coincide with food safety (i.e. proper food temperatures and food handling). Vendors and market managers/organizers must also keep up to date on the List of Essential Workplaces on the Government of Ontario website to avoid enforcement action.

### For both options, the following parameters must be met

Prior to entering the market, all vendors and employees must complete the [Ontario Health West COVID-19 Self-Assessment tool](#). This is to ensure that anyone who is ill or has been in close contact with a positive or probable case is excluded from the market.

**Signage** must be posted to remind staff and shoppers of signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if they begin to feel ill. If anyone fails the screening or begins to show signs/symptoms of COVID-19 while visiting the market, they are to leave the market immediately and call the Southwestern Public Health COVID-19 hotline at 1-800-022-0096 extension 9. Additional signage must also be posted to promote public health measures including physical distancing, respiratory etiquette, and hand hygiene in visible areas (see SWPH resources that are available on our website [here](#) for signs).

**Physical Distancing** (2 metres) must be maintained at all times. If physical distancing cannot be maintained, employers and customers may implement the use of face coverings as source

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control (*Non-medical masks and face coverings: About and how to make your own home made face covering*). Personal protective equipment (PPE) must be used where applicable and employers must provide education and training to staff on COVID-19 prevention measures, including the use PPE. PPE that could be used may include:

- Use of cloth masks; user must clean hands before putting on the mask, before and after adjusting the mask, and before and after taking off the mask.
- Glove use: the worker must wash their hands prior to putting on gloves and after removing gloves. Gloves must be replaced between tasks and/or after any suspected contamination such as sneezing, touching the face, or contact with frequently touched surfaces.

Options for **contactless payments** must be used where able.

## **OPTION ONE: Multi-Vendor and Multi-Stand Markets, FOOD SALES ONLY**

Market managers/organizers **must ensure that the following is met and provided to Southwestern Public Health for approval prior to operation** (a farmer's market plan template was created for managers/organizers to use as a guideline):

- Letter from landlord/property owner stating approval for market to continue
- Floor plan of the market layout to show the following:
  - Physical Distancing of 2 metres apart:
    - Stands must be spaced appropriately, and customer circulation must be controlled and in one direction with a clear entrance and exit to maintain distancing requirements between all shoppers and vendors
    - Markings for the 2 metre distancing need to be in place and clearly visible (i.e. spray paint, cones, chalk, etc.)
    - Admit fewer shoppers in the market at one time if needed to ensure that physical distancing can be maintained
    - Location of washroom(s) and/or hand washing station(s). These must be available for all shoppers/vendors to wash their hands as required, must remain properly stocked, and must be cleaned and disinfected frequently.
- Must complete a list of all vendors selling food for each market day and the records must be kept for the remainder of the season plus two weeks (14 days)
  - **Only food can be offered for sale**
  - Vendor list templates have been created by SWPH and will be provided to market owners/operators

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- No food sampling
- No use of reusable or customer supplied containers
- No communal tables/seating allowed

## Food Vendors must take the following measures to protect themselves and shoppers:

- **Stay home if feeling unwell or fail the screening tool**
  - Vendors must self-monitor for symptoms of COVID-19. If symptoms develop while at the market, they must leave immediately and contact their local health unit for further direction
    - [COVID-19 Reference Document for Symptoms](#)
    - [How to Self-Isolate](#)
- Wash hands regularly with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Clean and sanitize high touch surfaces regularly
  - use household cleaners or diluted bleach solution (1-part bleach to 9-parts water)
    - [Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings](#)
- Maintain social distancing: 2 meters or 6 feet away from others
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth
- Cover mouth and nose with sleeve or tissue when coughing or sneezing; dispose of tissue immediately and wash your hands
- Do not accept re-usable bags or containers that are to be handled by staff and ensure customers use new bags only or provide staff to bag items for customer using new bags
- Pre-package and box products at a fixed price to reduce shopper contact
- Consider only allowing the vendor to handle food

## OPTION TWO: E-Commerce/E-Markets

Individuals planning to operate an e-commerce/e-market with a drive/walk-through pick up of pre-ordered and prepaid foods, **must ensure that the following protocols are met and send a plan to Southwestern Public Health for approval [prior](#) to operation:**

- Letter of approval from landlord/property owner
- Plan for operation procedures on how the e-market will maintain social distancing, proper handwashing, and proper sanitizing protocols. This would include a written plan outlining:
  - Traffic circulation to meet social distancing

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- Delivery plan based on number of orders and drive-up customers (if parking lot, consider staggering pickup times)
  - Ensure all shoppers who drive stay in their vehicle at all times and order will be placed into their vehicles by vendors/volunteers
  - Ensure all shoppers who walk keep 2 metres apart at all times. Orders are to be placed on a table for shoppers to pick-up, and the table must be cleaned and disinfected between each customer. Markings for the 2 metre distancing need to be in place and clearly visible (i.e. spray paint, cones, chalk, etc.)
  - Vendors/volunteers must practice social distancing amongst each other
- Hand washing/alcohol-based hand sanitizing must be available for vendor/volunteer use

## Please Note That:

- **Vendors/volunteers must be screened for COVID-19 symptoms prior to commencing work**
- Food products must be packaged, and orders must be prepackaged in new, single use boxes or bags, and labelled with shopper information/order number