

COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus) Guidance for Ontario Farmers Markets

Guidance for Ontario Farmers' Markets In Step 3

August 27, 2021

Version 15.0

Key Points

- Farmers' markets are able to operate as per Ontario's [Roadmap to Reopen](#).
- Staff and vendors must be **screened** for symptoms of COVID-19 before each shift and reminded to stay home and get tested if they are sick or experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.
- All staff and patrons must wear a face covering when in the indoor area of a business or organization. In addition, face coverings are **strongly recommended** in outdoor farmer's markets.
- Physical distancing of two metres must be maintained at all times and should be encouraged through limiting capacity, one-way traffic flow/directional arrows, and signage.
- Clean and sanitize high-touch surfaces at least twice a day (door handles, countertops).

The COVID-19 pandemic is evolving rapidly. Therefore, this guidance is subject to change. Please visit the Southwestern Public Health website (<https://www.swpublichealth.ca/>) regularly for updates and announcements. This guidance supports owners/operators on keeping farmers' markets operating safely and includes mandated restrictions and capacity limits in place in Ontario's [Roadmap to Reopen](#).

COVID-19 Roadmap to Reopen

Farmers' markets must follow the requirements outlined in Ontario's [Roadmap to Reopen](#) and the food safety requirements outlined in the [Food Premises Regulation](#). The below chart provides an overview of restrictions in place in Step 3 of the Roadmap.

Step Level	Requirements
General Public Health Measures (all colour levels)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Workplaces must screen all workers and essential visitors entering the work environment. See the COVID-19 Screening Tool for Workplaces for more information.✓ Face coverings are required to be worn by members of the public and workers in indoor public places and workplaces, with limited exceptions.✓ Personal Protective Equipment that protects the eyes, nose and mouth is required if a worker is required to come within 2 metres of someone who is not wearing a face covering and is not separated by plexiglass or some other impermeable barrier.✓ All businesses must ensure that every person who performs work for the business or organization and whose mask or face covering is temporarily removed to consume food or

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	<p>drink (i.e. at break time) is separated from every other person by a distance of at least 2 metres or an plexiglass or other impermeable barrier.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ All businesses or facilities must limit capacity so that every member of the public can maintain 2 metres of physical distance from every other person. ✓ All businesses or organizations must post signs at all entrances to the premises in a conspicuous location visible to the public that informs individuals on how to screen themselves for COVID-19 prior to entering the premises. ✓ Businesses or places that are open shall ensure that equipment, washrooms, locker rooms, change rooms, and showers accessible to the public are cleaned and disinfected as frequently as necessary to maintain a sanitary condition. ✓ All workplaces must develop a COVID-19 workplace safety plan and have it available should an inspector or compliance officer request to see it during an inspection. ✓ The venue must manage line-ups and patrons congregating. Patrons lining up must maintain a physical distance of 2 metres, and if the line up is inside the business, then face coverings are also required.
<p>Step 3</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Farmers' markets are open with capacity limited to permit physical distancing of 2 metres. ✓ Live music permitted. ✓ Post capacity limit in a conspicuous location.

Safety Plan

- A safety plan must be prepared and available upon request. Information on how to create a safety plan can be [found here](#).
 - The safety plan should describe the measures and procedures implemented or will be implemented to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. For example, it should include information on screening, face coverings, physical distancing, use of personal protective equipment and cleaning and disinfection.
 - A copy of the safety plan must be posted in a conspicuous place.

Staff/Vendor and Patron Screening

- **Before each shift, all staff/vendors must be screened** to identify if they:
 - Have **symptoms of COVID-19** such as fever, cough, or difficulty breathing.
 - Have had contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the past 10 days.
 - Have received a COVID alert exposure on their cell phone in the last 14 days.
 - Have been instructed by public health to self-isolate due to travel or contact history.

Any staff member that answers "yes" to any of these conditions must be sent home and advised to contact their local public health unit.

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- Staff should be reminded to stay home if they are sick. If an employee becomes ill with COVID-19 **symptoms** while at work, they must go home right away to **self-isolate** and contact their health care provider or an **Assessment Centre** to get tested.
- Workers with a household member who has symptoms and awaiting COVID-19 test results should self-isolate and not attend work until results are known, unless they are fully vaccinated. If the household members' results are positive, the worker must self-isolate as directed by public health. For more information, visit the **Self-Isolating section of our website**.
- Patrons must be passively screened. This can be completed by posting **signs** at all entrances reminding people not to visit if they feel ill or have been directed by their local health unit to isolate.

Face Coverings and Personal Protective Equipment

- The Province of Ontario has mandated face coverings in indoor areas of businesses or organizations. Some exemptions apply. See Schedule 1 section 2(3.1) of **O. Reg 364/20** for more information.
 - Face coverings are strongly recommended in outdoor farmers' markets where physical distancing may be difficult to achieve.
 - Staff working in indoor areas are accessible only to employees who are able to physically distance themselves from all other staff members in that space do not need to mask while in this area.
 - Face coverings may be temporarily removed while eating and drinking.
- Personal protective equipment covering the eyes, mouth and nose is required when a worker must come within 2 metres of another person who is not wearing a face covering (i.e. because they state an exemption). At a minimum, this would include a **medical mask and eye protection** (face shield, safety glasses, or goggles). If a plexiglass or impermeable barrier separates the worker from the person not wearing a face covering, additional PPE is not mandatory (but a face covering is still required).
 - See our **Eye Protection Guidelines** for more information on appropriate eye protection.
- When workers/patrons remove their face covering temporarily to consume food or drink (i.e. on lunch break) others must separate them by at least 2 metres or by plexiglass or other impermeable barrier.
- Organizers should:
 - Have a policy in place outlining how the provincial face-covering requirements will be implemented as per the **Southwestern Public Health Letter of Instruction**.
 - Provide staff with a sufficient supply of face coverings and eye protection.
 - Consider having a supply of face coverings available for customers to use.
 - Train staff on implementing the provincial face-covering regulation, including how to manage individuals claiming exemptions.
 - Provide all staff with information on **proper use, removal, and washing of face coverings**.

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- Post **signs** at entrances to remind customers of **face-covering requirements**.

Physical Distancing and Capacity Requirements

- The number of people in the market must be limited to allow for physical distancing.
- Vendors shall work in a manner where possible to maintain physical distance between all patrons.
 - Patrons and vendors may briefly be less than 2 metres apart during payment or transferring purchases/goods. Options to avoid such interactions should be considered (i.e. packing own goods, tap/e-transfer payment options)
- Consider creating a one-way flow of traffic throughout the space to facilitate physical distancing.
 - Where possible, create a separate entrance and exit points with appropriate signage.
- Walkthrough the store or market stall to identify areas needing adjustments to permit physical distancing.
- Post signage stating the maximum capacity of the market space(s) and monitor the entrances to control staff and patrons who are entering the market.
- Venues are responsible for ensuring patrons lining up or congregating outside maintain physical distancing. If line ups occur inside the business or market, patrons must maintain physical distancing and wear a face covering.
- At checkout:
 - Consider installing plexiglass or other physical barriers if physical distancing cannot be maintained.
 - To be effective, the barrier must be large enough to create a shield between the people's breathing zones on either side.
 - View our **Guidance on Physical Barriers** for more information.
 - Consider using every other check-out station to permit physical distancing.
 - Place visual/textural markers (e.g. tape on the floor, pylons, signs) spaced 2 metres apart for patrons lining up when waiting to cash out.
- Consider stocking shelves and arranging product displays when the market is closed to patrons. Where stocking or product display arrangements are needed during operating hours, define safe practices for workers/vendors. Consider closing aisles while restocking or using signs to remind patrons to maintain physical distance.

Cleaning and Disinfection

- Provide hand sanitizer with 60-90% alcohol concentration in dispensers outside the market entrance, particularly near high-touch surfaces such as bank machines, door handles, railings, etc.
- Encourage frequent handwashing using the **correct technique** and/or the use of hand sanitizer upon entering the market, as well as between interactions with vendors/patrons.
- Clean and sanitize high-touch surfaces frequently (door handles, countertops).
 - Wipe down the debit machine between customers with a disinfectant/sanitizer.

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- Use a general cleaner with a DIN, and follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Workers should wash their hands before and after stocking/rearranging shelves or product displays.
- **Washrooms** available for customer use must be cleaned and disinfected at least twice daily or more frequently as is necessary to maintain a sanitary environment.
- Shopping carts and baskets should be sanitized between each patron. Those which cannot be easily sanitized should not be provided (e.g. cloth bags).
- Remove soft/porous items that are difficult to sanitize, such as upholstery, cushions and rugs.
- See **PHO Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Spaces** for more information.

Food Sampling and Dining Areas

- Indoor Farmer's Markets:
 - Food samples are not recommended.
 - Tables for indoor dining must be physically distanced, or have a barrier between each one.
- Outdoor Farmer's Markets:
 - Food samples are not recommended.
 - Outdoor dining is permitted with restrictions. See **COVID 19 Food Premises Guidance document** for more information.

Entertainment

- Live entertainment is permitted with restrictions.
 - Performers must have 2 metres distance or barrier from the audience.

Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC)

- Increase the introduction and circulation of outdoor air by maximizing the outdoor air ratio of the HVAC system settings, or by opening windows and doors, where possible. Avoid recirculating air.
- Do not open windows and doors if doing so poses a safety risk.
- Ensure the HVAC system(s) are adequately maintained.
- Where provided, use the highest efficiency filters that are compatible with the HVAC system.
- Keep areas near HVAC inlets and outlets clear.
 - Seating and activities should be away from high airflow areas, i.e. not in front of vents.
- Rooms where indoor ceiling fans are used should have an upward airflow rotation.
- If portable fans are used, limit air blowing across people and surfaces by positioning them to provide an upward movement of air.

Additional Resources

[Farmer's Markets Ontario During COVID-19
Guidance for Food Premises](#)
[Ontario Regulation 364/20: Rules for Areas in Step 3](#)

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