

Guidance for Minnesota Farmers' Markets and Vendors

Under current Executive Orders, farmers' markets and food and agriculture vendors at markets are considered either Critical Businesses or Places of Public Accommodation. These entities are required to develop and implement a COVID-19 Preparedness Plan that addresses the following items according to state guidelines:

- Employee health,
- Social distancing,
- Worker hygiene and source control, and
- Cleaning and disinfection protocols.

Critical Businesses

As defined in Executive Order (EO) 20-74, Critical Businesses are those that received a critical sector exemption under EO 20-48. This includes, but is not limited to, farmers' markets and food and agriculture vendors that have not offered on-premises consumption of food and beverage during the current pandemic – and continue to not do so. These businesses are required to develop and implement a COVID-19 Preparedness Plan by June 29, 2020.

Places of Public Accommodation

As defined in EO 20-74, a Place of Public Accommodation includes but is not limited to a market or vendor that offers on-premises consumption of food and beverage. To offer on-premises consumption of food and beverage, these Places of Public Accommodation must establish and implement a COVID-19 Preparedness Plan according to state guidance for their respective industry sector immediately, if they have not done so already.

Templates

A COVID-19 Preparedness Plan template is available on the Department of Labor and Industry website at www.dli.mn.gov/updates.

Guidance for farmers' market and vendor COVID-19 Preparedness Plans adapted from state guidelines is available on the Minnesota Farmers' Market Association website at www.mfma.org.

In addition to the Additional Guidance for Markets included below, state guidance organized by industry sector is available on the Stay Safe MN website at <https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/index.jsp>. This website includes guidance for grocery and convenience stores, which farmers' markets and vendors not considered a Place of Public Accommodation can adapt from in developing their Preparedness Plans. It also includes guidance for Restaurant and Bar Businesses, which farmers' markets and vendors that offer on-premises consumption of food and beverage can adapt from.

Key Requirements

Places of Public Accommodation are subject to the following limitations:

- Occupancy of any indoor space must not exceed 50 percent of the normal occupant capacity as determined by the fire marshal, with a maximum of 250 people in a single self-contained space.

- Occupancy of any outdoor space must ensure that the number of customers at any one time is limited to the number for whom physical distancing of 6 feet can be maintained between tables, not to exceed 250 people.

Food samples are allowed whether the farmers' market or vendor is considered a Place of Public Accommodation or not provided:

- Each vendor follows the requirements for food sampling at farmers' markets in Minnesota Statutes, section 28A.151 at www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/28A.151, and
- The food is covered or shielded according the Minnesota Food Code, samples pre-portioned, the sampling area is monitored by a worker to maintain social distancing and discourage congregating, the worker is protected by social distancing and/or the use of barriers, and adequate trash receptacles are provided to dispose of waste.

Implementation Guidance for On-premises Consumption of Food and Beverage

Recommend farmers' markets consider and select one the following options for implementing on-premises consumption of food or beverage:

- Continue to have all farmers' market vendors provide food or beverage for off-premises consumption only (with food sampling allowed), or
- Locate all farmers' market vendors who meet the definition of Place of Public Accommodation in a single area (i.e., providing food or beverage for on-premises consumption or other industry sector-specific business type). Cordon the area and monitor the flow of customers to ensure compliance with the occupancy requirements for an outdoor space of a Place of Public Accommodation. Ensure customers consume food or beverage in this area of the market only, or
- Integrate vendors who offer on-premises consumption of food or beverage (or who otherwise meet the definition of Place of Public Accommodation) among other market vendors. Limit the occupancy of the entire farmers' market premises to 250 customers or less at any time of operation. Ensure compliance with physical distancing between tables used for on-premises consumption of food or beverage.

Additional Guidance for Markets

- Consider alternate locations that could allow drive through or pick up
- Place stalls at least 6-feet apart
- Place an empty table in front of all vendors' display tables, using that table to place purchases; exchange money
- Widen the aisles between the rows of stalls
- Tape/chalk 6 feet markings in all aisles to show customers where they can stand to maintain 6' of separation with each other
- Place handwashing stations at entrances, recommend everyone wash their hands upon entering
- Create a border around your market, limiting entrances and exits (fencing, tape, or rope are all options)
 - » Add signs to the border stating "Please enter through the entrances with the handwashing stations."
- Increase signage at the market, considering the following examples:
 - » Wash your hands >>> here is the handwashing station.
 - » Maintain 6 feet distance.
 - » Sorry – no mingling! No handshaking!
 - » (If applicable) Please no on-premises consumption of food or beverage (or direct customers to food and beverage consumption area)

- Increase market volunteers/staff to monitor handwashing and crowd control
- Consider controlling the flow of customer traffic
 - » Can customers all go in the same direction in aisles to limit people crossing in front of each other in less than 6 feet?
- To reduce crowds and yet maintain sales, have customers place pre-orders with vendors. This could include setting up a drive-through to pick up these pre-orders.
 - » Enable online prepayments when possible to reduce the amount of time people spend in face-to-face transactions
 - » Consider different days or locations for customers to pick up pre-ordered products

Additional Guidance for Vendors.

- Consider pre-bagging fruits, vegetables, and other items to limit handling of food and to keep customers moving quickly
- Encourage customers to pre-order and pre-pay online when possible; this will help customers move more quickly through the market
- Consider bringing a handwashing station for individual market stalls
- Place an empty table in front of display tables, using that table to place purchases and exchange money
 - » This maintains 6 feet of separation and helps prevent customers from touching products
 - » It also allows vendors to pack all items for a customer into a bag or container that only the customer touches
- If customers bring their own bags, let them pack their bags
- Have at least two people in the stall: one person only handles payments; the other only handles products. If not possible, wash hands or sanitize in between these tasks

Additional Sanitation Guidance for Markets and Vendors.

- Consider ways that market tokens can be washed or sanitized, or alternate ways to limit direct contact when cash or in person transactions are necessary (e.g. SNAP transactions). Consider sanitizing point-of-sale equipment between uses
- Follow CDC recommendations for cleaning and disinfecting: [CDC COVID-19 Clean & Disinfect](https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2020/s0507-covid-19-clean-disinfect.html)
- Use tables and table coverings that can be washed and sanitized (vinyl, plastic; not cloth or wood) and implement a schedule to sanitize during the market
- Bring a spray bottle with correct sanitation solution and hand wipes to wipe off equipment
- Use recommended products that have an EPA-approved emerging viral pathogen claims:
 - » EPA's Registered Antimicrobial Products for Use Against Novel Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2, the Cause of COVID-19 (www.americanchemistry.com/Novel-Coronavirus-Fighting-Products-List.pdf)
 - » American Chemistry Council Center for Biocide Chemistries - Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Fighting Products (www.americanchemistry.com/Novel-Coronavirus-Fighting-Products-List.pdf)
 - » Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method, contact time, and the use of personal protective equipment, and don't mix them together!)
 - » Not all products are appropriate for food contact surface sanitizing