



BOH Forms: #26 Farmers' Market Checklist

Board of Health and Local Health Department Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)

This **Checklist** highlights many of the requirements during outbreaks for regulated Farmers' Markets.

The checklist is designed to be used in tandem with the **MA Food Code**. **Remember: BOH always has the final say on requirements.**

Current Emergency Orders from Massachusetts Governor Baker and DPH as of May 1, 2020: Farmers' Markets are essential services They can operate as long as they reduce exposures, limit crowding, wear masks and maintain **6-foot social distancing**.

Social Distancing Means: 1 person per 6 sq. ft. or 15 per 1000 sq. ft.: NO lines, NO gathering. NO crowding. Controlled access. Space people in lines 6 feet apart. Mark the floor or ground to help patrons stay apart at checkout. Use Parking Lot Delivery whenever possible.

Agricultural Product Sales that don't require a BOH Permit

Note: all food operations that don't require a permit are required to provide safe food to the public and post a Consumer Disclosure: "Not Regulated by the Board of Health."

- Farm Stands/Markets/Residential Kitchens offering only uncut fruits and vegetables, eggs held at 45F, raw honey, or maple syrup.
- Any processing or cutting of fruits or vegetables or the sale of non-farm food products, requires a Board of Health permit.
- Farm Stands or Markets businesses or structures may be subject to regulation by other agencies such as fire/building permits.

Permitted Farmers' Markets during a public health emergency www.mass.gov/reopening

Note: Access to safe food is essential any time, but particularly during an emergency when people have limited access to essential resources during an outbreak because of their personal situation such as the elderly or those with underlying health conditions.

- **Farmers' Market Operations: Notify your Board of Health of substantial changes to your permit.**
 - Operations or Hours or types of foods or certified staff if required.
 - NO tastings or samples allowed at this time.
 - <https://www.fda.gov/food/food-safety-during-emergencies/food-safety-and-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>

Changes in Farmer's Market Operations

- **Closures:** Remember to call when you are ready to open or reopen.
- **Modified Hours of Operation:** Due to changes in demand or staffing, you may need to modify your hours of operation.
- **Modified Operations:** It is likely that you will modify their operations during an emergency based on the situation. The BOH can help you make changes that still ensure safe food to the public and enhance protection for your staff.

Modified Farmers' Market, Farm Stand and CSA Operations – May 18, 2020 <https://www.mass.gov/doc/farm-stand-order/download>

- COVID-19 Control Plan:** must have a written Control Plan onsite at all times that includes policies and procedures for:
 - Social Distancing
 - Hygiene
 - Operations/Staff Protections
 - Cleaning and Disinfecting
- State Mandated Signage:** must have the State mandated COVID-19 signage prominently posted.
- Mask:** everyone is required to wear a mask in public at a Farmers' Market or CSA pickup point.
- Gloves:** staff are required to wear gloves.
- Social Distancing:** everyone is required to practice social distancing and stay 6 feet or more apart. Post reminder signs.
- Controlled Access:** entrances and exits must be clearly defined and controlled to limit crowding.
- One-way Aisles:** traffic should flow in one direction only and be clearly marked.
- Lines:** floors, walls or the ground should be clearly marked to help maintain the required 6-feet of social distancing
- Signs:** remind people to stay home if sick, keep their masks on, practice social distancing at all times and wash their hands.
- Cleaning:** clean and disinfect contact surfaces often and well with approved cleaners.
- Tasting:** NO sampling or tasting or any kind permitted.
- Touching Products:** public not allowed to touch produce or products. Pre-bag as many items as possible.
- Reusable Bags:** Vendors may not touch or fill reusable bags.
- Display Tables:** clean and sanitize regularly. No tablecloths or other coverings that can't be easily sanitized.
- Handwashing:** provide handwashing stations with warm water, pump soap and single use paper towels if possible.
- Hand Sanitizer:** provide 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol pump hand sanitizer stations.
- Payments:** discourage the use of cash. One person should handle product and one should handle payments if possible.
- Groups:** discourage groups from shopping together. Consider limiting access to one person per group or family.

Enhanced Employee Protection Procedures

- **Enhanced Employee Training**
 - Handwashing and the use of hand sanitizer (sanitizers only work if the hands and surfaces are free from fats and proteins)
 - Cleaning protocols and sanitation procedures.

- Food Protection Protocols for storing, transporting and displaying foods safely.
- Employee Personal Protection Protocols (PPP)
 - Wear masks at all times in public.
 - Before eating or drinking, first wash hands, remove masks by the ties and then wash hands again. Afterwards, handle the face covering by the ties, re-attach firmly and wash hands again for 20 seconds with soap.
 - Distance as much as possible from other workers and the public (at least 6 feet).
 - Wear gloves at all times and other personal and food protection equipment as available.
 - Eliminate personal contacts such as hand shaking, hugging, kissing.
 - Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or on your sleeve, then wash hands thoroughly.
- **Enhanced Employee Monitoring and Illness Reporting Requirements for the Person-in-Charge (PIC)**
 - Monitor staff daily for illness by asking them if they have any symptoms such as fever, cough, trouble breathing or have lost their sense of smell or taste.
 - Ill employees should immediately be sent home or isolated from other staff and food handling.
 - Immediately sanitize all contact surfaces, phones, computers, handles restrooms, etc.
 - BOH must receive reports of all food workers with a food related illness and COVID-19 positive tests.

Mask Use

Masks are First on, Last Off and should seal as tightly as possible around the nose, mouth and chin. Pantyhose sections over the mask may improve fit/effectiveness. Handle new masks with washed hands. Only handle **used** masks by the ties or rubber bands, never the inside or front. Wash hands well before and after.

Cloth Masks: do not reuse visibly soiled or wet cloth masks until washed and dried. Wear one to work and bring 2 more along. If riding public transportation, remove mask, safely store, wash your hands, put on a clean mask, and wash your hands again before working,

Safer Handwashing

- Wet hands with warm running water.
- Lather with soap and scrub between fingers, on the back of your hands, fingertips and under nails.
- Wash for at least 20 seconds. The soap needs to be in contact with the virus for 20 seconds to kill most viruses, then rinse.
- Dry hands using a single use paper towel. Avoid the use of jet air dryers as they can aerosolize any remaining contaminants.
- Wash your hands as soon as you arrive, between tasks, before and after eating and before you leave.
- *When in doubt, wash your hands.*

Safer Glove Use

Gloves are Last On, First Off and should only be used on freshly washed hands. Gloves are required when handling Ready to Eat (RTE) foods. Use a glove anytime you have a cut on your hand. Reusing gloves is not recommended as they develop small tears and are hard to take off without tearing or contaminating the inside. If you must reuse gloves, wash them thoroughly with soap and water before removing, then remove carefully without tearing, keeping the outside out, if you can, and let them air dry wet side out. Then wash your hands thoroughly again with soap and water for 20 seconds, dry with a single use paper towel and finish with plenty of hand sanitizer that is left to air dry.

- Glove are only effective if used properly, fit correctly and are not torn.
- Gloves will not protect the wearer if they become contaminated and then touch food, surfaces or the eyes, nose or mouth.
- Hands must be washed and dried before putting gloves on and before changing to a fresh pair.
- Gloves should be changed as soon as they become soiled or torn, before starting a new or different task, at least every four hours during continual use (or more often as necessary), after handling raw meat, seafood, or poultry and before handling RTE food.
- Gloves must be removed properly so as not to contaminate clean hands or surfaces and never reused.
- Wash hands again after removal for 20 seconds.

Enhanced Cleaning and Sanitation Procedures (Note: we thank the Bedford Board of Health for sharing these tips.)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>

- **Training:** Enhanced Employee Training on cleaning and sanitation
- **Sanitizers:** continuous cleaning of all surfaces and handles. Useful cleaners for corona viruses. https://mcusercontent.com/a1b0f89bb03fde185f0b23f1a/files/34f5f5ed-02a1-4c26-957e-4ea3271fa382/CBC_COVID19_Fighting_Products_030620_3_.pdf
 - Test strips are required to check the sanitizer concentration. You must use the correct strip for the correct sanitizer.
 - Chlorine should be at 50-100 ppm and Quaternary Ammonium should be 150-300 ppm (or according to manufacture specs.)
 - Always follow directions on the bottle for chemicals exactly. MSDS sheets must be available onsite. Never mix chemicals.
- Clean and Disinfect non-food contact surfaces
 - Keep non-food contact surfaces clean and use diluted bleach solution or alcohol solution with at least 70% alcohol to disinfect those surfaces. (Cleaning and disinfecting are two separate operations, and both are important and in that order.)
 - Clean and disinfect surfaces that customers touch often such as tables, door handles, serving utensils, tables, chair, menus, etc
 - Items directly touched by customers must be cleaned and sanitized after use and before use by a new customer. Specifically, tables, menus, condiments, chairs, etc.
- Food contact surfaces

- Use only cleaning supplies approved for food contact surfaces
- Must be cleaned with a food approved cleaning solution, such as chlorine or quaternary ammonium mentioned above.
- Sanitizer solutions/buckets should be tested when first mixed and changed at least every four hours. Sanitizing clothes should be stored in the solution in between use.
- It is important to clean and sanitize surfaces in the food prep areas frequently such as door handles, sink handles, refrigerator door handles, etc. Dampness can cause remaining viruses on surfaces to survive and multiply, avoid this by cleaning, disinfecting and drying frequently.

Additional reminders for providers of food, their customers and employees:

During emergencies, safe food is essential to the response. Please follow basic safe food practices.

- Before opening, check your signage, waste management, traffic flow, payment system, masks, gloves and employee protections.
- Post Signs reminding customers to stay home when ill, wear a mask in public, wash hands frequently, use hand sanitizer when they can't wash hands, and practice social distancing to stop the spread of illnesses.
- Post handwash signage in the restrooms to remind all of the proper steps for washing hands.
- Model Personal Protection Protocols at all times.
- Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold. Protect all foods from contamination. And only use approved, tested water.
- Create a culture of safety in your operation. Politely remind each other that keeping everyone safe is our primary goal.
- Contact your Board of Health for support and advice.