

Official statement from Farmers' Markets of Nova Scotia

July 29, 2020

Updated Recommended Measures for Farmers' Markets to Continue Safely Serving Nova Scotians

Nova Scotia remains under a Provincial State of Emergency, effective Sunday, March 22nd. The situation can change at any time. Please go to <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/> to stay updated on the situation.

Farmers' Markets of Nova Scotia (FMNS) is providing updates and direction to farmers' markets so that they may continue to safely operate with restrictions and new temporary business models. We have provided recommendations that apply to indoor farmers' markets and for open-air farmers' markets. FMNS continues to work with various Government of Nova Scotia departments to stay updated on efforts to contain the spread COVID-19. We're working with farmers' markets across Nova Scotia to ensure all of the most up-to-date Nova Scotia Health Authority and federal health and safety precautions are being followed at all times.

All farmers' markets should observe the measures outlined in this directive and adopt a regionally appropriate model for their market operations.

Additional resources are available at the end of this document.

Update from FMNS effective as of 12:00pm on Monday, July 28th, 2020:

- FMNS continues to recommend that farmers' markets adopt and use a pre-ordering system with designated population-controlled pick-up areas.
- Farmers' markets can operate a public market so long as **2-metre social distancing protocols are maintained at all times**.
- In order to ensure physical distancing, you should choose to set an appropriate limit on the number of people in a designated space at a time.
- If social distancing is not possible, then a 10-person limit must be observed.
- *All* farmers' markets must have a COVID-19 prevention plan that clearly demonstrates their market's social distancing and health and safety measures. FMNS has created a plan template, available upon request.
- In addition to the abovementioned measures, effective Friday, July 31st, all farmers' market vendors, staff, volunteers, and patrons **must wear a face mask while attending an indoor farmers' market**.

Important Disclaimer

FMNS continues to hold that farmers' markets may be able to serve more customers and generate more sales for vendors through a model of pre-ordering and pick-ups. However, FMNS acknowledges that operating public markets may be more suitable for your situation. Public markets are very much possible, but it should be noted that they pose an added element of risk to the public that must be controlled.

It should be noted that if you have begun a pre-ordering system and/or an online marketplace, it may be in your market's best interest to keep that system in place and/or run a hybrid model, as the COVID-19 situation can change at any moment, including the potential for farmers' markets to be barred from operating a public market.

FMNS encourages those farmers' markets that run public markets to ensure that the primary focus of the farmers' market is on promoting commercial activity for their vendors, with an emphasis on creating safe, population-controlled spaces with enforced social distancing, and to encourage customers to purchase products then exit the area promptly.

We know that farmers' markets are so much more than just a place to buy things. They're the social, cultural, and economic backbone of communities across Nova Scotia. They're small-business incubators, job creators, and hubs for community building. They're home. But these are not normal times, and we must take action and observe restrictions to make sure our farmers' markets can continue to operate and support our communities safely.

Please note that all markets—even if not presently operational—are urged to contact us immediately for support and guidance.

In order to ensure that we continue to safely provide food and necessities for Nova Scotians, flatten the curve and prohibit the spread of COVID-19, and continue operating in compliance with the requirements of the Provincial State of Emergency, we encourage all farmers' market managers, staff, volunteers, and vendors to review and observe the measures below:

Directives for Indoor and Open-air Farmers' Markets

The following measures should be observed at all farmers' markets in Nova Scotia, effective immediately:

- All farmers' markets should operate through a pre-purchasing and pick-up model, where possible.
- Your farmers' market may operate a public market.
- Public markets may occur either inside or outside a farmers' market building, or as open-air markets.
- In either instance, a public market must occur in a clearly demarked area.
- Post this statement (or your own) to your website, social media accounts, and newsletter.
- **You must strictly ensure 2-metre social distancing on the premises for all customers, at all times.**
- **In order to ensure physical distancing, you should choose to set a limit on the number of people in a designated space at a time.**

- **If social distancing is not possible, then no more than 10 people may be present in a given area. In this instance, all of those in attendance should wear a face mask.**
- Effective Friday, July 31st, all farmers' market vendors, staff, volunteers, and patrons **must wear a face mask while attending an indoor farmers' market.**
 - Face masks do not need to be worn in outdoor areas.
 - Face masks may be temporarily removed in indoor spaces when eating or drinking.
 - Musicians, performers, or entertainers who need to use vocal activities may remove their face mask during their performance.
 - Further exemptions include:
 - Children under the age of 2, or children aged 2 to 4 if they cannot be persuaded.
 - Individuals with underlying medical conditions.
- **If live music or entertainment occurs in or on the premises of your farmers' market, then your market must observe the Government of Nova Scotia's [COVID-19 Prevention Guide for event organizers, theatres and performance venues](#) and the [COVID-19 Guidance for Musicians \(Vocalists and Instrumentalists\)](#).**
- **You can have designated eating areas, and they can operate at 100% capacity, so long as there is appropriate distancing between tables.**
- **You must have a COVID-19 prevention plan prepared and ready to share that clearly demonstrates how your market is complying with the *Health Protection Act Order* and public health directives, including how your market is ensuring 2-metre social distancing.**
 - You must have a printed copy of your plan ready to present to a public health officer if asked for it.
 - Your vendors should be aware of your plan.
 - FMNS has created a plan template, which is available upon request.
- **Strictly follow and enforce social distancing practices for vendors, staff, volunteers, and customers at all times, noting that individuals must never be closer than 2 metres apart, at any time.**
- **Strictly control the population and ensure 2-metre social distancing of customers:**
 - Create clearly marked dedicated spaces with strict, well-defined boundaries.
 - Offer and encourage hand washing or the use of hand sanitizer before customers enter spaces.
 - Clearly mark out 2-metre spacing in the queue(s) or line-up area(s) leading to your dedicated space(s), and have staff or volunteer personnel on hand to let customers know when they can enter a space.
 - Structure your space to encourage customers to come in and out as quickly as possible.
 - **Encourage all customers to secure their order and leave the premises as quickly as possible.**
- For pre-ordering pick-ups:
 - Stagger the times for your pick-ups.
 - Encourage your customers that only one person per household should be picking up products. Only those who have purchased product ahead of time should be permitted entry. Exceptions can be made for single parents and/or caregivers.
 - For touchless pick-ups, you may wish to post your market's phone number on your social media or the window or door where pick-ups occur, giving your customers the option of parking in a

numbered parking spot, phoning when they arrive, and having staff deposit the order into the trunk.

- For public markets:
 - Vendor tables or booths must be widely spaced out on the premises.
 - Vendors should not issue product samples to customers.
 - All customers should be encouraged by staff and volunteers to enter and exit the designated public market space as quickly as possible.
 - Customers should be encouraged by staff and volunteers to refrain from stopping and chatting with vendors. Vendors should also be encouraged to refrain from engaging in lengthy conversation.
 - Vendors should not allow customers to touch their products unless they intend to purchase that product.
 - Vendors should pre-package all products in units with set prices, and not sell by volume or weight.
 - Food can be consumed on site, but 2-metre social distancing **must** be maintained.
 - Vendors should encourage the use of credit card or debit card, and refrain from accepting cash. If this is not possible, vendors should have a designated person handling cash while another person handles product.
 - Vendors who must handle cash should consider rounding to the nearest dollar to avoid excessive use of coins, and should consider bringing a cash box of sanitized currency, keeping customer currency in a separate container.
- If appropriate, your market may wish to create a designated storefront space:
 - All of the abovementioned social distancing and population control practices must also be enforced.
 - Provide handwashing stations for customers, and do not allow a customer to enter your storefront without first washing their hands.
 - Please note that additional permits or licences may be required.
- All vendors, staff, and volunteers must continue to follow safe food handling and hygiene practices at all times at all areas of your market:
 - Ensure that all staff and volunteers have ready access to hand washing stations and hand sanitizer.
 - **All staff, volunteers, and vendors should wear a facemask.** A non-medical face covering is appropriate (see Additional Resources below for further information).
- Managers must ensure that all vendors do not charge higher than fair market prices for goods and services. Failure to adhere to this directive could result in an enforceable offense by police under the *Emergency Management Act*.
- Please note that police throughout Nova Scotia have been authorized to enforce orders under Nova Scotia's *Health Protection Act*. This means that individuals or businesses that do not follow strict social distancing and self-isolation practices can be charged with a fine of \$1,000 for individuals, and \$7,500 for businesses.
- **Any person exhibiting any symptoms must refrain from being involved in any aspect of a farmers' market at all times.**
- Some farmers' markets may serve as event venues, such as hosting a wedding or a performance. If your farmers' market is acting as a recognized business or organization hosting social events, arts

and culture events, faith-based gatherings, or weddings and funerals, then you may have up to 250 people outdoors, or 50% of capacity to a maximum of 200 people indoors.

Additional Resources

- Farmers' Market Coalition webinar: Farmers Markets Physical Redesign for Covid-19 Mitigation:
 - <https://farmersmarketcoalition.org/resource/webinar-farmers-markets-physical-redesign-for-covid-19-mitigation/>
- Farmers' Markets of Nova Scotia's *Guide to Financial Assistance and Funding Opportunities for Farmers' Markets and Vendors in Nova Scotia*:
 - <https://farmersmarketsnovascotia.ca/2020/07/09/july-9-2020-updated-guide-financial-funding/>
- Government of Canada's information about non-medical facemasks:
 - <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/prevention-risks/about-non-medical-masks-face-coverings.html>
- Government of Nova Scotia's COVID-19 Guidance for Musicians (Vocalists and Instrumentalists):
 - <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/docs/COVID-19-Guidance-for-Vocalists-and-Instrumentalists.pdf>
- Government of Nova Scotia's COVID-19 information website:
 - <https://www.novascotia.ca/coronavirus>
- Government of Nova Scotia's COVID-19 Prevention Guide for event organizers, theatres and performance venues:
 - <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/docs/Events-theatres-and-venues-COVID-19-prevention-guidelines.pdf>
- Government of Nova Scotia's *Preparing to Reopen Nova Scotia* website:
 - <https://novascotia.ca/reopening-nova-scotia/#not-required-to-close>
- Government of Nova Scotia's Order by the Medical Officer of Health Under Section 32 of the *Health Protection Act*:
 - <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/docs/health-protection-act-order-by-the-medical-officer-of-health.pdf>