

January 8, 2021: Recommended Measures for Farmers' Markets to Continue Safely Operating

Disclaimer

All farmers' markets should observe the measures outlined in the directives on pages 2-4 of this document and adopt a regionally appropriate COVID-19 prevention plan for their farmers' market's operations. Additional resources are available at the end of this document (page 5).

Please note that all farmers' markets—even if not presently operating—are urged to contact Farmers' Markets of Nova Scotia (FMNS) *immediately* for sector-specific support and guidance.

FMNS is Nova Scotia's farmers' market sector association. FMNS has been consistently providing updates and direction to farmers' markets so that they may continue to safely operate. FMNS continues to work with various Government of Nova Scotia departments to stay updated on efforts to contain the spread COVID-19.

Public markets are presently allowed in Nova Scotia. FMNS continues to hold that farmers' markets may be able to serve more customers and generate more sales for vendors through adopting a pre-ordering and/or pick-up model, which may include operating an online marketplace. A hybrid approach may offer your farmers' market more opportunities for vendors and patrons while being ready to adapt to any future restrictions.

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

FMNS encourages those farmers' markets that run public markets to ensure that their primary focus of the market is on promoting commercial activity for their vendors, with an emphasis on creating safe, population-controlled spaces with enforced social distancing and/or physical barriers, 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. But these are not normal times, and we must adapt and observe restrictions to make sure our farmers' markets can continue to operate and support our communities safely.

To ensure that we continue to safely provide food and necessities for Nova Scotians, 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 on pages 2-4 of this document.

Directives from FMNS effective on Monday, January 11, 2021

Note: FMNS recommends that farmers' markets post this statement to their websites, social media accounts, and newsletters.

The following measures should be observed at farmers' markets in Nova Scotia:

General directives for all farmers' markets:

- All farmers' markets can operate a public market.
- FMNS continues to recommend that farmers' markets adopt and use a pre-ordering system (such as an online marketplace) with designated population-controlled pick-up areas.
- Public markets may operate indoors or outdoors in a clearly demarked building and/or designated area.
- **Farmers' markets must restrict the population limit of people in their building to 50% of the total building capacity (also known as "occupant load").**
 - This population restriction applies to public markets, retail stores, designated eating areas, and any other space where customers are entering a farmers' market building to purchase or consume a product.
 - The 50% number includes shoppers, vendors, and staff.
- **Farmers' markets must ensure 2-metre social distancing protocols are maintained and/or that physical barriers are used.**
- Physical barriers can be used to safely optimize your market's vendor layout when physical distancing cannot be maintained.
 - Please follow the Province of Nova Scotia's guidelines for physical barriers by reviewing Page 9 of this document: <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/docs/Events-theatres-and-venues-COVID-19-prevention-guidelines.pdf>
 - **Contact your local Public Health Officer before purchasing or building physical barriers to ensure you follow restrictions.**
- Lineups are only allowed at any part of your farmers' market (indoors and outdoors) if patrons wear a non-medical face mask.
- **All vendors, staff, volunteers, and patrons must wear a face mask while attending an indoor public market or any interior space of a farmers' market.** Please review the following conditions:
 - Non-medical masks should fit securely to the head with ties or ear loops, be made of at least two layers of tightly woven material fabric, and be large enough to completely cover the nose and mouth without gaping.
 - Non-medical masks shouldn't be made of plastic or other non-breathable materials.
 - Face shields are not an acceptable alternative for face masks.
 - 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.

- Those exempt from wearing a mask include children under the age of 2, or children aged 2 to 4 if they cannot be persuaded, or individuals with underlying medical conditions.
- A farmers' market operating in an indoor space *must* provide public access to a washroom.
- 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 \(Vocalists and Instrumentalists\)](#).
- **All farmers' markets in Nova Scotia can have designated eating areas for patrons to sit down and eat.**
 - Designated eating areas must have appropriate distancing measures in place and/or physical barriers 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.
- All vendors, staff, and volunteers must follow safe food handling and hygiene practices in all areas of your market.
- Ensure that all staff and volunteers have ready access to hand washing stations and hand sanitizer.

Notes for farmers' markets operating public markets:

- Strictly follow and enforce social distancing practices for vendors, staff, volunteers, and customers.
- Vendor tables or booths must be spaced at least 6 feet apart or be separated by a physical barrier. Vendors may be spaced closer than 6 feet apart if a physical barrier is used.
- 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.
- 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 may wish to 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.

Directives farmers' markets conducting pre-purchase 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.

Directives for farmers' markets operating designated storefront spaces:

- 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.

Notes for strictly controlling the population and ensure 2-metre social distancing of customers:

- You should choose to set an appropriate limit on the number of people in a designated space at a time to ensure physical distancing.
- 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.

Additional notes:

- 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.

Additional Resources

- Government of Nova Scotia's COVID-19 information website:
 - <https://www.novascotia.ca/coronavirus>
- Farmers' Markets of Nova Scotia's *Guide to Financial Assistance and Funding Opportunities for Farmers' Markets and Vendors in Nova Scotia (October 15, 2020)*:
 - <https://farmersmarketsnovascotia.ca/2020/10/15/october-15-2020-updated-guide-to-financial-assistance-and-funding-opportunities-for-farmers-markets-and-vendors-in-nova-scotia/>
- Government of Nova Scotia's COVID-19 Prevention Guide for event organizers, theatres and performance venue:
 - <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/docs/Events-theatres-and-venues-COVID-19-prevention-guidelines.pdf>
- 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/>
- 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 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>