

Official sector-specific COVID-19 prevention plan

April 23, 2021

April 23, 2021: Recommended Measures for Farmers' Markets to Continue Safely Operating

Disclaimer

Starting at 8am on Friday, April 23 and until at least Thursday, May 20, Nova Scotia will have new circuit breaker restrictions for the Halifax region to control the confirmed community spread of COVID-19. Changes to restrictions are highlighted on pages 2-5 of this document. The term "Halifax region" includes the Halifax area, as well as the communities of Hubbards, Milford, Lantz, Elmsdale, Enfield, South Uniacke, Ecum Secum, and Tralgar.

Please note that farmers' markets are still allowed to operate in the Halifax region. Farmers' markets outside of the Halifax region are not affected by these new changes. Farmers' Markets of Nova Scotia continues to hold that public markets are essential food infrastructure providing essential economic services.

All of Nova Scotia remains under a Provincial State of Emergency and farmers' markets must continue to adhere to restrictions contained in the most current Nova Scotia [Health Protection Act order](#). Please note that the situation can change at any time. Go to <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/> to stay updated on the situation.

All farmers' markets should observe the measures outlined in the directives on pages 2-5 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 6).

Please note that all farmers' markets—even if not presently operating—are urged to contact FMNS immediately for sector-specific support and guidance.

FMNS is Nova Scotia's farmers' market sector association. FMNS regularly provides updates and directives to farmers' markets so that they may continue to safely operate. We continue to work with various Government of Nova Scotia departments to stay updated on efforts to contain the spread COVID-19.

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 helping your market adapt to any future restrictions.

FMNS encourages those farmers' markets that run public markets to ensure that the primary focus of the market is on promoting commercial activity for their vendors, with an emphasis on creating safe, population-controlled spaces with social distancing measures and/or physical barriers.

FMNS continues to hold that farmers' markets are the social, cultural, and economic backbone of communities across Nova Scotia. They're small-business incubators, job creators, and hubs for community building. By adapting and observing restrictions we'll keep ensuring that our farmers' markets continue to safely operate and support our communities.

Directives from FMNS, effective Friday, April 23, 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 from April 23, 2021 until at least May 20, 2021:

General directives for all farmers' markets:

- All farmers' markets can operate a public market both indoors and outdoors.
- All public markets must take place in a clearly demarked building and/or designated area.
- Rules for occupancy limits:
 - Farmers' markets outside of the Halifax region may operate at full capacity (100% of your building's occupant load) if they ensure 2-metre social distancing protocols are maintained and/or that physical barriers are used.
 - **In the Halifax region, indoor farmers' markets may operate at a maximum of 25% capacity (25% of your building's occupant load) if they ensure 2-metre social distancing protocols are maintained and/or that physical barriers are used.**
 - Occupants include staff, volunteers, vendors, and customers.
- 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.
- Rules for eating areas:
 - **Designated eating areas are not presently allowed at indoor farmers' markets in the Halifax region, and indoor farmers' market vendors may only offer food on a to-go basis.**
 - Outdoor farmers' markets and indoor farmers' markets outside of the Halifax region can have designated eating areas for patrons to sit down and eat.
 - Designated eating areas must have appropriate social distancing measures in place and/or physical barriers between tables.
 - No group of patrons shall have more than 10 persons at a table.
- Rules for travel:
 - Farmers' market vendors are essential workers and are permitted to travel to and from the Halifax region to sell at a farmers' market.
 - Non-essential travel is not allowed to and from the Halifax region.
- Rules for face masks:
 - **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.**
 - **All vendors must wear a face mask while at their booth at an outdoor public market.**

- **Farmers' market patrons are not required to wear a face mask while attending an outdoor public market provided that social distancing can be consistently maintained.**
- Please review the following conditions for face masks:
 - Non-medical masks should fit securely to the head with ties or ear loops. They should be made of at least two layers of tightly woven material fabric and be large enough to completely cover the nose and mouth.
 - Face shields are not an acceptable alternative for face masks.
 - Face masks may be temporarily removed in designated eating areas in indoor spaces when eating or drinking.
 - Non-medical masks should not be made of plastic or other non-breathable materials are not an acceptable alternative for face masks.
 - 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 \(Vocalists and Instrumentalists\)](#).
- Rules for animals:
 - Dogs are allowed at outdoor public markets.
 - Service dogs are allowed at indoor and outdoor public markets.
 - Emotional support animals may be permitted at indoor and outdoor public markets only if they do not pose a risk to the public and/or food safety protocols.
- 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.

Guidance 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 are currently not allowed to issue product samples to customers at this time.**
- 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>
- Restated Order of the Chief Medical Officer of Health (section 32 of the *Health Protection Act*)
 - <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/docs/health-protection-act-order-by-the-medical-officer-of-health.pdf>
- Farmers' Markets of Nova Scotia's *Guide to Financial Assistance and Funding Opportunities for Farmers' Markets and Vendors in Nova Scotia*
 - <https://farmersmarketsnovascotia.ca/2020/10/15/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>