



FARMERS' MARKETS

Checklist: logistical best practices

Below are all of the requirements and recommendations for farmers' markets put out by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) and sent to all local boards of health on April 28, 2020. This checklist also includes recommendations put out by the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture (MDAR) for farmers' markets. Your local board of health will determine what specific requirements your farmers' market will need to do in order to operate safely. Use this checklist to figure out how you can implement these requirements at your market. *

The following items are mandatory per DPH and will be required by all Boards of Health:

Social distancing



Managers must limit the number of customers who can enter the market space at a time.
Must control number of customers allowed within farmers' market areas to be no more than 10-15 customers per 1,000 feet.



Have customers six feet away from booths.

- *Customers must be reminded by managers & vendors that customers need to stay six feet apart through (1) signage at prominent locations, (2) signage at vendor tables, and (3) access points and through verbal reinforcement.*
- *Set up tape, chalk lines, or flags that mark six feet away from the vendor's booth. Customers should point to the product they want to purchase for the vendor to assemble; they are not allowed to pick it up themselves.*



Lines that form outside of market entry points must be monitored and set up so that customers can stay six feet apart.

Cordon off the market's perimeters to make clear entry and exit points.

Signage at the market



Have signs for customers to remind them of social distancing practices while they are at the market (see second point in above section).

Have these signs at prominent locations, at vendor tables, and at access points.



Have signs remind customers and market staff to stay home when sick.

No product sampling



Ban product sampling and on-site tasting.

*CISA does acknowledge that these recommendations hold farmers' markets to a higher and more rigorous standard than grocery stores and other food retailers.

No reusable bags



Ban reusable bags.

Use of reusable bags has been prohibited across the state.

Allowable: recyclable paper bags, compostable plastic bags, or single-use plastic bags

Gloves & Masks



Market managers, staff, and vendors use gloves and masks at all times during market.

- *Wash hands before putting on gloves and between glove change-outs.*
- *CDC glove removal guidelines: <https://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/pdf/poster-how-to-remove-gloves.pdf>.*
- *CDC guidance on face coverings: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html>*
- *CISA is keeping a list of PPE suppliers on this Google Doc: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1HXZ8OvQKRr5AZ9pywuc1ZCuIvsgphkewhm0OrugJjY/edit?usp=sharing>.*
- **Important note!** *Wearing a mask is not effective in preventing you from catching the virus. However, if you are carrying the virus and wearing a mask, masks are effective in preventing you from spreading the virus to other people. Those wearing masks should still adhere to social distancing guidelines.*

Market / vendor display cleaning & sanitizing



Don't let vendors use tablecloths (they are harder to sanitize).



Have vendors clean and sanitize their displays (their tables and the items used to display produce in) at the end of every market and at intervals during the market.

Cleaning products to use:

EPA's full list of products and how to use them are here:

<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>

You can use bleach as a sanitizing agent on contact surfaces.

(CDC dilution guidance: 5 tbsp bleach per gallon of water or 4 tsp per quart).



Discontinue the use of display items that cannot be sanitized.

If there is an item that you cannot sanitize and cannot think of an alternative, contact CISA and we will help you brainstorm an alternative.

Money handling



Cash: minimize cash transactions

- Vendors can round their prices to the nearest dollar so they can reduce the acceptance of coins and minimize the handling of change
- Encourage placing cash into jar or bucket (and customers getting their own change)
- Encourage vendors to get TotilPay (formerly Mobile Market +) to process credit/debit and SNAP transactions. Signing up through MarketLink enables vendors to get free service for one year:
<https://marketlink.org/training/free-equip-info>



If there is more than one person working a vendor booth, the vendor should set up a payment system in which ONE person is designated to handle payment and another handles produce/product

If only one person at that booth, set up system so that payment can be as touch-less as possible.

All practices below are recommendations (not requirements) put out by the Department of Public Health and/or the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture. Some of these things may be required by your local board of health. That being said, not all of these things will be required by your local board of health, and some of these items will be too cumbersome for some markets to implement.

Hand washing / hygiene



Hand washing / sanitizing stations be made available to customers and vendors. There are two types of hand washing / sanitizing stations you could have:

Type 1: Hand sanitizing stations that use gel hand sanitizer or spray bottles with isopropyl or ethyl alcohol.

Type 2: Hand washing stations with water, paper towels, and soap. These are generally a bit harder to set up.

- **Option 1 to set up:** Set up your own. Cost is \$150-\$300; does involve someone to set up and break it down each time.
See how-to here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hzEFZEtVP8&feature=youtu.be>
- **Option 2 to set up:** Rent a hand washing station from an event company. \$100-\$200 per month.
 - CISA recommends approaching your town government about them paying for a hand washing station rental.
- Hand sanitizer stations can be useful, though should not be used as a replacement for handwashing.

Minimize the number of touches



Encourage online ordering

Vendors can use simple Google Forms or email to collect orders, and then have orders pre-bagged for easy pickup at market. If you would like help thinking through setting up an online ordering system for your market, reach out to Stevie at stevie@buyllocalfood.org.

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Money handling

Credit/debit: encourage payment apps like Venmo or Paypal

SNAP/HIP: swipe the client's card, use gloves, and wipe down machine in between interactions if possible.

By federal law, these payments cannot be "remote" and must be done in-person.

Wooden tokens

- *Have only a portion of the tokens out and available for any given market. Don't have the full amount out in the open at the market (only what you will use in one market).*
- *Work out with vendors if you want the vendors to sanitize them before they give them to the market manager, or if the manager will sanitize them after they receive them all.*
- *Wipe tokens with sanitizing solution & let sit out for at least three days. Do not soak, as this will warp the tokens. Good sanitizing guidelines here:*

mifma.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/How-to-Clean-SNAP-Tokens-document.pdf

Plan for cancellations

Share with **vendors** how you will announce market cancellations.

Plan how you will communicate with **customers** that the market is closed.

- *CISA recommends you plan an enewsletter announcement, social media post(s).*
- *If it does not put yourself in danger, consider putting up a sign at the site for people who may come to the market that explains the reason for the closure and that the market will be open next week (if applicable).*

Signage at the market

Have signs for **vendors**

- (1) Hand washing guidance: https://www.who.int/gpsc/clean_hands_protection/en/.
- (2) How to remove gloves: <https://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/pdf/poster-how-to-remove-gloves.pdf>.
- (3) Reminder to sanitize your booth often.

Social distancing

Increase the space between vendor booths.

Arrange booths so that customers flow in one direction.

Arrange vendor booths in a straight line, or "L" formation so that customers can flow through easily (limit cross-traffic).

Communication



All of the practices checked off above, communicate that you are doing them!!!

Tell vendors, customers, market staff, and partner organizations what the market is doing to keep everyone safe.

Remember: you don't have to have all the answers. This pandemic is creating challenges for everyone and the situation is constantly evolving. Being an expert in all things COVID-19 is not as important as being transparent, accessible, and communicative.

Share what you are doing to figure things out, how you are adapting, and how the safety of your vendors, customers, and greater community is the highest priority. Not only does communicating help ensure that no one will spread the virus at your market, it is also makes for good public relations. Communicate often and the sooner you start, the better.

Communicate with **customers**: press release, email newsletter, social media posts

Include:

1. How health of customers, vendors, market staff, and greater public is the market's main priority.
2. What practices the market is doing to keep everyone safe.

Sample newsletter: www.bit.ly/COVID-newsletter

Sample social media posts: www.bit.ly/COVID-socialmedia

Sample press release and resources on how to write your own: www.bit.ly/COVID-pressrelease *

* CISA can provide a list of press release contacts in the Pioneer Valley to market managers; reach out to Zoey at zoey@buyllocalfood.org if interested.

3. Good practices for customers to use at the market (social distancing, don't touch face, don't come to the market if sick).

Communicate with **vendors**

Include:

1. Logistical changes being made.
2. Reminder to: avoid touching their face, clean and disinfect surfaces frequently.
3. Stay at home from the market when they are sick.

Note: Consider suspending penalties for last minute vendor cancellations.

For the latest resources related to farmers' markets and COVID-19, see:

<https://www.buyllocalfood.org/buy-local/covid-19-online-ordering-home-deliveries-and-closures/>

Need help figuring out how to implement these practices at your market?

CISA can help. Reach out to Zoey at zoey@buyllocalfood.org.