



## COVID-19 Resources

*Last updated, 5/15/2020*

As of May 15, 2020, under the Governor's most recent executive order, to start "reopening Oregon" (taking effect 5/15), farmers markets, along with other businesses that have retail functions, are subject to some new requirements. These new requirements may be instead of **OR** in addition to the requirements that were in effect during the stay-at-home order and the essential business exemptions of March and April that farmers markets were operating under.

In addition to the new retail guidelines, which apply immediately and statewide on 5/15, there are restaurant reopening guidelines, which will take effect on a county-by-county basis, for those counties who have applied for and been approved to enter Phase 1 by the Governor's Office.

To check your county's Phase #, see [this page of the Governor's website](#).

This resource has been developed for farmers markets, based on the original essential business exemption guidelines, plus the newest [retail guidelines](#) and [restaurant guidelines](#) available from the Oregon Health Authority, and has been reviewed and approved by state officials at the Oregon Department of Agriculture as appropriate interpretations for the farmers market community.

See below for updated requirements and recommendations for Oregon farmers markets...

# Market Operations

*As of May 15, 2020, the following is **REQUIRED** of farmers markets:*

- All vendor types are allowed, regardless of product type, as long as they are practicing safe social distancing; **HOWEVER** any vendor who cannot, by definition, maintain social distance (masseuses, face painters, etc.) may **NOT** be allowed at market for the time being and until further notice.
- **Market staff, vendors and volunteers MUST wear cloth, paper or disposable face coverings. Markets must provide these for staff and volunteers, while vendors must provide these for anyone working their booths.**
- **Markets AND Vendor booths all need to each establish one "social distancing officer" (that's one per market and also one per each booth).** That officer must (a) know they are the officer and be able to answer affirmatively if questioned, and (b) take responsibility for enforcing the social distancing policies in their own spaces. The vendor-officers will be responsible for their spaces and the market-officer will be responsible for the common spaces in the market. This can be done in addition to other duties, but needs to be a priority for that individual.
- **Limit the number of customers in the farmers market** and focus on maintaining at least six (6) feet of distance between customers, vendors, and staff at all times. Market operators should determine maximum occupancy to maintain at least six (6) feet of physical distancing, considering areas of the market prone to crowding (like market entrances) and limit admittance accordingly, if necessary.
- Re-envision your **market layout with social distance in mind**. For example, make aisles wider and space market booths farther apart(**6 - 10ft if possible**← this has been updated from 3ft, as 3 ft was not leaving enough room for customers in line at neighboring booths).
- Implement a **zero-tolerance policy for coming to market when sick**, for both staff and vendors. Allow your staff paid sick days if needed - no questions asked.
- **Post clear signs (available at [healthoregon.org/coronavirus](http://healthoregon.org/coronavirus)) at your market info booth** listing COVID-19 symptoms, asking employees, vendors, and customers with symptoms to stay home, and listing who to contact if they need assistance.
- **No samples** and no exposed food on display; everything needs to be covered or packaged where possible.
- Require vendors to **stay home when sick or exposed to COVID-19**. We recommend you facilitate that policy by removing all barriers, such as fines or loss of seniority for cancellations. If a vendor shows up to market visibly ill or becomes ill at market, send them home immediately.
- **No live music** is allowed at farmers markets until Phase 3 of the re-opening.
- Vendors and staff are required to **wipe down high touch areas**, such as tables, screens, and cash boxes, frequently.

- Vendors are required to have market **booth layouts that promote safe social distancing between themselves and customers**. You must provide them with the space to do this, and we recommend you consider waiving additional fees if it requires extra space or equipment.

**Vendors are required to practice social distancing within their market booths** as well as enforcing it at their booths:

- Think about, and communicate with your vendors in advance, to see who usually brings non-household members to work together in their booths. Could they limit that this year?
  - If not, can you expand the space for each of these vendors? 2 tents instead of 1? More space at their booths, with a booth set-up designed to keep them apart?
  - If this creates a space-pressure for the number of booths/vendors you can have in your market at one day, then maybe consider limiting the number/type of vendors you host this season, to prioritize the most essential food & grocery providers, in the safest way possible?
- For **markets whose counties **HAVE NOT** entered Phase 1**, the following hot/prepared food rules still apply:
    - **Suspend durable dishware programs** and insist on disposable or compostable options for hot food vendors.
    - **Restrict hot food sales to take out only.**
    - **Remove all seating**- for example, food court tables and chairs. No dine-in options allowed.
  - For **markets whose counties **HAVE** entered Phase 1**, the following hot/prepared food rules now apply:
    - Farmers markets may reinstitute dine-in seating or food courts **ONLY** if the following practices can be enforced by market staff:
      - Ensure tables are spaced at least six (6) feet apart so that at least six (6) feet between parties is maintained, including when customers approach or leave tables.
      - Limit parties to 10 people or fewer. Do not combine parties/guests at shared seating situations who have not chosen to congregate together.

People in the same party seated at the same table do not have to be six (6) feet apart.

- Disinfect customer-contact surfaces at tables between **each** customer/dining party including seats, tables, menus, condiment containers, and all other touch points.
  - AND all other applicable guidelines in [this restaurant guide](#).
  - Additionally, vendors such as food trucks and stands must be able to comply with all pertinent information in [this restaurant guide](#).
  - If a market is unable to enforce these practices, its hot food vendors may continue to operate only as pick up/to go service, under the guidelines, above, for markets who have **NOT** entered Phase 1.
  - Additional questions should be directed to your local health authority, who will be responsible for interpreting and enforcing these guidelines.
- **Follow all rules and guidance from the OHA, ODA, and your local government.**

**The following are not required by state officials at this time, but are **STRONGLY recommended BEST PRACTICES**...**

- **Encourage customers to wear cloth, paper or disposable face coverings.** Note: requiring customers to wear face coverings is proving to be a very challenging policy to enforce across the nation right now, so markets are urged to assess their own internal capability to enforce this policy and/or consult legal counsel in advance of adopting such a policy.
- **Cancel all nonessential programming, display or partner booths, and interactive activities**, such as kids crafts or music. Note: although not recommended by OFMA at this time, as of 5/15/2020, markets may choose to host sponsor/partner booths or activity booths IF, and only if, all applicable safety and social distancing requirements above can be enforced.
- **No live music is allowed until Phase 3 of the re-opening of the state.**
- **Sterilize and/or sequester market scrip** such as SNAP tokens between each market.
- Add **more hand washing stations** and hand sanitizer.
- **Clean and monitor restrooms frequently.**
- Continue to **run your nutrition incentive programs**, such as SNAP, DUFEB, WIC/Senior FDNP - if anything, more families are going to find themselves in need in the coming days!
- Consider **relaxing restrictions about buying “before the bell”** to cut down on long lines and crowding.

- **Consider having a “senior hour” or “at risk hour”** at the beginning of the market to provide the safest shopping experience for our most vulnerable community members.
- Ask vendors to **collect and bag all items for customers**. This can be enforced through signage, by putting the cash register at the front of the booth, and other visual and verbal guidance.
- **Encourage one-way flow** with marked entrances and exits, but do not block egress for fire exits. Use signs to direct one-way flow of traffic.
- **Prohibit customers from trying on items that are worn on the face** (cloth masks, scarves, headbands, eyewear).
- A good **booth layout strategy** is to put an empty table at the front of the booth, with the table with products behind it, then the vendors behind that table, enforcing social distance and putting **products out of reach of customers**.
- Emphasize that vendors handling money, tokens or vouchers should not handle food products until they have washed their hands. If possible, encourage vendors with more than one person manning their booth to **designate one person to handle and bag purchases for customers, while a second person handles money and transactions**.
- Ask each vendor to have **hand sanitizer available to customers** at checkout.
- Encourage vendors to **bring their own handwashing gear** if possible, in addition to hand sanitizer, to keep their own hands clean.
- Encourage vendors to **round their prices to the nearest dollar** amount, where possible, to cut down on the number of coins and cash changing hands per transaction.
- Recommend that vendors **bring plastic tablecloths** (or clear plastic to cover cloth tablecloths) for easier wipe-downs.
- While handwashing is the most effective way to cut down on disease transmission via touch, **if any of your staff or vendors have a habit of touching their faces frequently, it may be useful for them to wear disposable gloves** that they change frequently, as a reminder not to touch their faces.
  
- **For markets whose counties **HAVE** entered Phase 1, and are choosing to reopen your seated dining areas**, we strongly recommend that you identify at least one staff member or volunteer to be the host of that area, who can clean tables between diners and ensure that all the required safety practices listed above and in OHA restaurant guidelines are being complied with.
  
- **Recommend the following safety practices** for your customers:
  - Thoroughly wash your hands often for at least 20 seconds, and if not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
  - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
  - Sneeze or cough into a tissue or into the crease of your elbow.
  - Wash all produce thoroughly when you get home.

- Wash your reusable produce bags between market visits.

## Communications

- Emphasize in ALL communications that **protecting public health is your number one concern**. You really care about your farmers market community, and that should shine through as the core of every communication you put out.
- Provide customers with relevant, up-to-date information about **whether your market is open, and what your market is doing to ensure their health** and welfare at the market. Use all the electronic communications tools at your disposal: social media, email listservs, webpages, etc.
- **Visual cues** are important at a farmers market - most markets don't have time to stop every customer on the way in to explain new expectations to them! **Post signs** with your precautions and procedures all around the market, including the vendor booths. If you have spacing expectations for the customers, colored tape can be helpful too! It is best for markets to print and provide any new signage for vendors, rather than relying on them to do it themselves. See example pictures at the end of this document.
- Really **support customer compliance at market by reminding them of the rules** in a firm but polite way! This could be a great project for volunteers who would normally be doing other activities that your market has discontinued for now (kids' programs, etc.). The responsibility for enforcement however lies with each social distancing officer.
- Do **communicate your "why's" to the public**, for those markets who choose to stay open...
  - You provide essential services and food to your community
  - You support X# of local businesses
  - You ran \$X of SNAP transactions per year and therefore serve a vital food access role for families of all income levels
  - Your market layout allows for social distancing, and your vendor practices and short supply chains allow for higher sanitation levels than are achieved in most grocery outlets
  - See [this excellent customer shopping guide](#), created by Corvallis-Albany Farmers Market
- Consider making a press release or working with local media to get a story published. [This article](#) does a great job of laying out the value proposition of shopping at farmers markets right now.
- When creating your promo materials for this year's market season, try to **take new photos or use old ones that do NOT feature a crowded, bustling market!** We want to send the message on all levels that markets have shifted their operations to address this public health crisis.

## OTHER RESOURCES

- OFMA has put together an addendum to this document in which we share what farmers markets across the state are doing to implement regulations & best practices. You can read stories from the market managers [here](#).
- OFMA has also put together a document of photographs from markets across the state, which provide visual suggestions for implementing COVID-19 strategies. You can view those pictures [here](#).
- There is an **Oregon farmers markets email listserv**, where a robust conversation has been taking place about COVID 19 strategies. You can [join it here](#), if you're not already on it.
- The **Farmers Market Coalition** has put together an excellent [webpage](#) with resources for farmers markets, including best practices, sample press releases, Facebook posts, emails, etc. (Many of our recommendations came from this page).
- **OSU Extension** has put out a [great handout](#), which will be especially useful for your farm vendors, but pertinent to market operators too
- **Oregon Health Authority** has a [COVID-19 page](#)
- The **CDC** has a [FAQ COVID 19](#) page
- **USDA**: [Coronavirus information](#)
- **FDA**: [COVID 19 Guidance](#)
- **WHO**: [COVID-19 advice for the public](#)

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