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Reopening: Guidance for **Street Vendors** and **Farmers' Markets**

Guidance Document

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Overview

Many street and farmers' market vendors, including food trucks, have quickly adapted to stay-at-home or shelter-in-place orders across the U.S. Depending on the jurisdiction, some vendors are considered essential businesses while others were closed, were granted a waiver to reopen, or are a seasonal business that is just now opening. Some establishments have implemented solutions such as: offering ready-to-heat meals that can be finished at home; pre-ordering before pick-up; contactless curbside pick-up; drive-thru farmers' markets; or delivery, using apps, text, email, or phone calls to manage orders. Some vendors have also expanded their menus beyond prepared foods to include pantry items or other ingredients that customers can prepare at home.

With stay-at-home restrictions beginning to lift, street and market vendors are faced with difficult questions that must be addressed before reopening, such as:

- How can we protect our employees, customers, and passers-by from the disease at these venues?
- How do we assure our employees and customers that we are doing all we can to protect them from the disease?
- How can we minimize the risk of disease transmission if those who are ill or have had contact with someone who is positive COVID-19 visit our food stand or market?
- What do we do if a customer is sick or not following guidelines?

Notably, according to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), currently there is no evidence to support transmission of COVID-19 associated with food. Existing food safety requirements are already very stringent and reduce the likelihood of foodborne dis-

ease transmission. Additional measures can be taken to reduce the risk of transmitting COVID-19 from touching surfaces or from person-to-person spread through respiratory droplets.

This document offers practical guidance for street and market vendors to implement measures to reduce the risk of transmitting COVID-19. These settings present a unique dynamic in that some of the staff are employees and some are also the employer/business owner. This document addresses the key questions above, and also provides tips for employers, employees, and customers.

What should an Employer or Vendor/Market Manager do to protect themselves and their customers?

Employers and managers should continually monitor international (World Health Organization - WHO), federal (U.S. CDC), state, and local guidelines for changes in recommendations, cleaning strategies, and other best management practices. Vendor associations should also consider developing a team of professionals to monitor, assess, and implement new strategies as they become available.

In addition, employers or managers should consider the following strategies for reducing the risk of COVID-19 transmission in regards to physical distancing, ventilation, enhanced cleaning practices, restrooms, food preparation areas and contact surfaces, personal hygiene, employee wellness, training, waste and laundering, and communication.

Due to the wide variety of vendors (enclosed truck, exposed cart, tent and table, etc.), it may not be possible for establishments to implement all of the following. However, trying to tackle the problem from multiple angles can help reduce health risks.



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Physical Distancing

- For market settings, limit the number of customers at one time so that customers can maintain physical distancing of at least 6 feet. Follow local, state, and federal requirements regarding the number of people who are allowed to congregate. Note that distancing requirements are for non-family members and that members of the same household can stand closer together.
 - Provide additional space between vendors (minimum of 10 feet) to ensure that staff can maintain appropriate physical distancing.
 - Provide adequate space for customers to move between vendors by reconfiguring the market into an “L” shape or single row, if possible. Mark paths and require one-way foot traffic with a clear market entrance and exit.
 - Discourage browsing or customers touching any products. Arrange booths so that tables are on the perimeter, eliminating the opportunity for customers to enter the tent.
 - Encourage customers to schedule pickups at assigned time intervals to stagger attendees and reduce peak shopping times.
 - Do not offer samples.
 - Serve any prepared foods in disposable containers.
 - Discourage the practice of returning packaging (e.g., egg crates, milk bottles) for later reuse by the vendor, particularly if made from a porous material that cannot be easily cleaned.
 - Encourage pre-bagging or pre-weighing items to expedite purchasing.
 - Discourage customers from bringing pets to the market as their actions can result in an unintended breach of physical distancing and increase the amount of time the customer spends at the market.
- Consider marking 6-foot increments on the floor so customers waiting to pick up items can maintain appropriate distancing. Consider having customers wait in their cars or away from the vendor and called by phone when their order is ready.
- Discourage customers from eating any prepared foods at the market or in the immediate vicinity of the truck or cart. Remove or block off any nearby seating to prohibit usage. Follow local, state, and federal requirements regarding whether on-premises consumption of food is suspended.
- Place plastic partitions between employees and customers wherever possible, particularly at payment kiosks.
- Operate with the minimum number of staff required. When possible, dedicate one staff person to take payments and another to handle food.
- Encourage customers to pre-order food or other items using an online platform, email, or phone (call/text message) to minimize contact time between employees and customers.
- If food ordering takes place in person, consider writing a numbered menu on a wall/large board that can be easily communicated at a distance.
- Implement non-traditional payment processing to minimize physical contact between employees and customers.
 - Consider an app-based system.
 - Encourage credit card use over cash. If possible, eliminate the need for the customer to provide their signature following payment to reduce contact with a tablet or pen.
 - For customers paying with cash or a credit card, ask them to place their payment on a receipt tray or on the counter rather than exchange by hand to avoid any direct hand-to-hand contact.
 - Continuing accepting EBT payment if applicable.



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- Post clear signage about pricing to reduce conversation between employees and customers. Price products so that the use of coinage is not necessary.

Ventilation

- For enclosed trucks, maximize fresh air through your ventilation system.
 - If you don't know how, ask an HVAC professional and see [ASHRAE](#) updates for more information.
- If fans such as pedestal fans or hard mounted fans are used in the truck, take steps to minimize air from fans blowing from one person directly at another individual. If fans are disabled or removed, employers should remain aware of, and take steps to prevent [heat hazards](#).

Enhanced Cleaning Practices

- Select appropriate disinfectants.
 - Consider effectiveness of disinfectants and their applicability around foods.
 - The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has developed a [list of products](#) that meet EPA's criteria for use against SARS-CoV-2.
 - Do not apply disinfectants directly to foods.
 - Review product labels and Safety Data Sheets and follow manufacturer specifications.
 - Consider consulting Occupational Health & Safety (OHS) Science Professionals or industrial hygiene experts if additional advice is needed. Find a qualified industrial hygiene and OHS professionals near you in our [Consultants Listing](#).
- Establish a disinfection routine, focusing on frequently touched items, customer areas, and high-traffic areas.
 - Use disposable products instead of a wet rag approach.
 - Ensure that disinfection protocols follow product instructions for application and contact time.

- Any payment kiosks or touch screen tables should be disinfected after each customer.
- For enclosed trucks, clean HVAC intakes daily. Don't spray disinfectants into an intake when the unit is operational.
- Consider using a checklist or audit system to track how often cleaning is conducted.
- If paper menus are used, make them single use only. Consider alternatives like a menu board or phone app. Be sure that the menu board can be read at a distance of 6 feet or greater.
- Aprons, towels, work clothing, etc. should be placed in an impervious bag after use, treated as potentially contaminated, and laundered per recommendations below.
- For markets that may reuse packaging (e.g., milk bottles), ensure that employees receiving these containers wear gloves and isolate the packaging until it can be sanitized with dish soap and hot water or in a dishwasher. Employees should change their gloves and wash their hands once the container has been isolated.
- For markets that use token payment systems, keep redeemed tokens out of circulation for the rest of the day.
- Discontinue the immediate reuse of any utensils or containers brought in by customers (e.g., water bottles, coffee mugs).
- If a person becomes sick, close off the area where they were working and do not use it until it has been cleaned and disinfected.
 - Wait as long as possible (at least 24 hours, if feasible) before cleaning and disinfecting the area.
- Perform a normal cleaning routine of outdoor areas. Do not disinfect sidewalks or roads.
 - Spread of COVID-19 from these surfaces is very low and disinfection is not effective.



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Restrooms

For markets with on-site restrooms:

- Doors to multi-stall restrooms should be able to be opened and closed without touching handles if at all possible.
 - Place a trash can by the door if the door cannot be opened without touching the handle.
- For single restrooms, provide signage and materials (paper towels and trash cans) for individuals to use without touching the handles, and consider providing a key so disinfection measures can be better controlled.
- Place signs indicating that toilet lids (if present) should be closed before flushing.
- Place signs asking customers and employees to wash their hands before and after using the restroom.
- Provide paper towels and air dryers in restrooms.¹
 - The WHO and CDC currently state that hands can be dried using a paper towel or hand dryer.
 - Due to current uncertainties surrounding the transmission of SARS-CoV-2, care should be taken when using a hand dryer or paper towel.
 - The use of touch or push hand dryers is discouraged due to possible surface contamination. If hand dryers are used, consider touchless devices.
 - Businesses and employers should work with HVAC professionals to ensure that bathrooms are well ventilated.
- Double efforts to keep bathrooms clean and properly disinfected.
- If using portable toilets, add mobile hand washing stations and trash cans nearby.

Food Preparation Areas and Contact Surfaces

- Prepare foods in advance when possible to minimize or eliminate on-site food preparation.
- Place adhesive floor mats in any food preparation areas.
- Cover any exposed clean dishes, pots, and pans. Store disposable dishware in a covered area.
- Discourage the sharing of any items (e.g., tools, equipment, supplies) that are difficult to clean, sanitize, or disinfect between uses.
- Minimize bare-hand contact with food products.
- If silverware is provided to customers, it should be enclosed in a sterilized package.
- Use disposable napkins.
- Discontinue the use of all self-serve condiments (e.g., ketchup bottles, salt and pepper shakers) and consider providing pre-packaged condiments.

Personal Hygiene

- Encourage staff to frequently wash or sanitize their hands.
- Markets should provide portable hand-washing stations at the entrance and/or throughout the market so that vendors and customers can wash their hands before and after interacting. Provide hand sanitizer if hand-washing stations are not feasible.
- Each vendor should provide hand sanitizer for customers.

Employee Wellness

- Communicate to staff the importance of being vigilant for symptoms and staying in touch with their employer or manager if or when they start to feel sick.

¹NOTE VERSION CHANGE: In version 1 of this guidance document, in the section titled "Restrooms" it stated to disconnect or tape off the hand dryer.



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- Conduct employee temperature screening and wellness checks before and after each shift.
 - Temperature screening can include manual (use non-contact infrared thermometers) or thermal camera methods.
 - Employees can self-check temperature while wearing a glove, or disinfect the thermometer between use.
 - There are a number of examples available for wellness questionnaires (see Resources below).
- Persons who have a fever of 100.0F (38.0C) or above, or other signs of illness should go home or seek medical attention.
- Have a plan if someone is sick.
- If an employee is sick or receives any kind of testing (virus or antibody), results should be reported to the employer and the timing/decision to go back to work should only be with a doctor's approval.
- Be mindful of [heat hazards](#), particularly for employees working outdoors while wearing face coverings and gloves.

Training

- Provide instruction and training to employees on how to:
 - Handle their work clothing properly at home if laundry service is not provided.
 - Properly put on and remove gloves.
 - Clean and disinfect surfaces and payment tablets according to product specifications.
 - Correctly use respirators or masks. The CDC has recommended sequences for [donning and doffing PPE](#).
 - Identify signs and symptoms of heat stress.
- Provide Safety Data Sheets for cleaning chemicals and ensure employees are aware of the hazards of use.

- Consider consulting an industrial hygienist if you have questions about selecting personal protective equipment (PPE) and training. Find a qualified industrial hygiene and OHS professionals near you in our [Consultants Listing](#).

Waste and Laundering

- Single-use items and used disinfection materials can be treated as regular waste, following food safety guidelines.
- Cloth materials (e.g., linens, aprons, etc.) should be washed and dried on the highest temperature setting allowable for the fabric.

Communication

- Communicate to customers what the vendor or market is doing to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 (e.g., disinfection routine, health policies for staff, and health & safety measures in place).
 - Consider communicating to customers when in-person pickup may not be a good option (e.g. taking care of someone who is COVID-19 positive, exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, being in a high-risk category, etc.).
- Use signage to communicate any new protocols to customers to encourage compliance (e.g., staying home if sick, wearing a face covering, maintaining physical distancing, coughing or sneezing away from others). Post large signs rather than handing out flyers.
- Communicate that the vendor has the right to refuse service to anyone exhibiting symptoms or not following guidelines (e.g., physical distancing).
- If your market layout has changed to accommodate physical distancing, consider developing and sharing a map of the new layout so that customers can quickly find vendors and develop a plan before they arrive.
- Platforms for communication could include websites, reservation processes, posted flyers, and outdoor signage.



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Other Control Measures

- For markets that offer non-essential programming (e.g., bands, balloon entertainers, face-painting, demonstrations), this should be discontinued to discourage lingering.
- Require gloves for all staff and ensure the gloves are changed frequently.
 - Consider changing gloves after each encounter with cash or a credit card.
 - Communicate that wearing gloves is not a substitution for hand-washing.
- Follow [FDA guidelines](#) for food handling.
- Require face coverings for staff. Encourage market customers to also wear face coverings.
 - The type of covering worn should be determined by local requirements and availability. **(NOTE: Homemade face coverings primarily protect others not yourself).**

NOTE: If an employer chooses to provide an N95 respirator, please fully consider all the potential OSHA requirements.

- Ask employees to consider the following if they commute to work using public transportation:
 - Use other forms of transportation instead (e.g., walking, biking, driving alone or with household members only).
 - Wash their hands as soon as possible after their trip.
- If payment transactions must occur in person, require that employees handle all food items prior to exchanging cash or a credit card.
- For customers who bring reusable shopping bags, vendors should not bag their products for the customer. Instead, the customer should pick up and bag their own products.
- Plan for staff absences by developing flexible attendance and sick-leave policies, plan for alterna-

tive coverage, and monitor and track COVID-19-related staff absences.

- Markets should consider suspending penalties for last-minute vendor cancellations.
- Any items left by customers should be placed in a sealed bag and the bag should be disinfected and isolated until the customer returns.
- Stay informed about local COVID-19 information and updates in your geographic area.

What should an Employee do to protect themselves and the customers?

- Evaluate your health constantly. If you are sick, stay home. If you have an elevated temperature, stay home. If someone at home is sick, stay home. If you have allergies and sneezing, stay home. **NOTE: Employer HR Policies, HIPAA guidelines, and other laws should be followed at all times.**
- Wash your hands when you arrive at work; after contact with a customer; after touching your face or face covering; before, during, and after you prepare food; after touching garbage; and when you leave work.
- At all times, wear a face covering or something better if you have it. This is most important at times when physical distancing is difficult, such as when working in an enclosed truck or market booth with other staff.
- Let your employer know if you have concerns about the PPE that may be provided to you and make sure that you are properly instructed on how to use it.
- Attempt to delay the urge to sneeze or cough if possible; carry a disposable towel or handkerchief towel, so if you get the urge to sneeze or cough, cover your nose, mouth and mask with it and then, attempt to delay the urge to sneeze or cough, immediately leave the premises to wash your hands and face thoroughly before returning to work.



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- If you bring your children with you to work, ensure that they stay close-by and abide by physical distancing requirements and other protocols established by your employer or market manager.
 - Cloth face coverings should **NOT** be worn by babies or children under the age of two because of danger of suffocation.
 - Children under the age of 12 are generally not required to wear face coverings, but follow local, state, and federal requirements.
- To the extent possible, maintain a distance of at least 6 feet from other customers and employees when waiting, interacting with a vendor, or walking throughout a market.
- If you get the urge to sneeze or cough, keep your mask on, cover your nose, mouth, and mask with a napkin or handkerchief, attempt to delay the urge to sneeze or cough, immediately leave the area if you are in the presence of others, wash your hands and face thoroughly before returning, and replace your mask.

What can a Customer do to minimize the transmission of Covid-19?

- If you are sick, stay home. If you have an elevated temperature, stay home. If someone in your house is sick, stay home. If you have allergies and can't control sneezing, stay home.
- Consider having just one member of your household visit the street vendor or farmers' market to reduce crowding. Be aware that members of the same household can stand together and do not need to distance themselves from each other.
- Use delivery or pre-ordering/pick-up services where you can.
- Review the menu or create a shopping list in advance so you can limit your time interacting with a vendor or walking throughout the market.
- Wear a face covering as you approach, interact with, and leave the area of a street vendor, or as you enter and leave a market.
- Wash your hands before and after you leave a market, if possible. If not, use hand sanitizer.
- If you use reusable shopping bags, wash these at home following each use.

Resources

- The [Farmers Market Coalition](#) has compiled information and resources from farmers markets, state associations, health departments, and the CDC.
- The CDC has compiled [guidance for restaurants and bars](#) to promote behaviors that reduce spread, maintain healthy environments, maintain healthy operations, and prepare for sick employees.
- Numerous wellness questionnaire examples are available online (e.g., [South Dakota Department of Health's COVID-19: Employee Screening Questions and Guidelines](#)).
- The CDC has developed [cleaning and disinfection recommendations for commercial facilities](#).
- The EPA has developed a [list of disinfectants](#) for use against SARS-CoV-2.
- ASHRAE has a list of [COVID resources](#) for commercial buildings.
- AIHA's Indoor Environmental Quality Committee developed these guidance documents about reopening and cleaning buildings after closures due to COVID-19: [Recovering from COVID-19 Building Closures](#) and [Workplace Cleaning for COVID-19](#).



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the science of anticipating, recognizing, evaluating, and controlling workplace conditions that may cause workers' injury or illness. Through a continuous improvement cycle of planning, doing, checking and acting, OHS professionals make sure workplaces are healthy and safe.

Get additional resources at AIHA's [Coronavirus Outbreak Resource Center](#).

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These guidance documents were primarily developed for those smaller business that don't have readily available occupational health and safety resources, and designed to help business owners, employers, employees and consumers implement science-backed procedures for limiting the spread of the coronavirus. They are subject to any local, state, or federal directives, laws, or orders about operating a business and should only be used if they do not conflict with any such orders.

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