



**Frequently Asked Questions
 COVID-19 and Michigan Farmers Markets
 Last updated: August 14, 2020**

Question	Answer	Updated from Previous Version
What is the address for the COVID-19 resources so can post on Facebook and our website?	Our COVID resources are available at http://mifma.org/covid-19-resources/ .	
Do you think the Governor may shut down farmers markets due to social distancing concerns?	We do not expect the Governor to close farmers markets if they are following the guidelines that have been issued. Farmers markets are considered essential and are allowed and encouraged to stay open.	
One of our markets is very small and not sponsored by any agency or organization, vendors just volunteer and do the market oversight. So long as we follow all the rules, are we ok?	As long as you are following the farmers market guidelines, it is our intention that your market can continue to operate safely.	
We have a plan that we had to have approved by the city before we opened. Do we have to file this plan with the state before continuing operations?	No, you do not need to file this plan with the state.	
Does MIFMA have a template of COVID-19 Preparedness plans for us? Would hate to reinvent the wheel, especially if markets can have standard information.	The plan should be specific to the business' space, employees, and personel policies. A template is available from the Small Business Association of Michigan (SBAM) at https://www.sbam.org/covid-19-response-preparedness-plan/ . The plan created should be in compliance with the OSHA resource found here: https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf .	

<p>Would these recommendations/guidance be for the whole season or just portions?</p>	<p>The guidelines have been updated to correspond with the MI Safe Start Plan. The Plan divides the state into regions and allows for each region to move through the 6 phases of recovery independently. You should regularly monitor which economic engagement phase of the plan your region of the state is in and adjust your market accordingly. Plans should be made to modify farmers market operations for the foreseeable future.</p>	
<p>If the Governor lifts restrictions, will MIFMA still expect these practices to stay in place? If so, for how long?</p>	<p>MIFMA's guidance will continue to change and adapt as requirements change and guidance from credible sources is modified. The most up-to-date guidance will always be posted at www.mifma.org/covid-19-resources/.</p>	
<p>What is a MERC Region?</p>	<p>MERC refers to the name of the eight regions that the state has been divided up into for the MI Safe Start Plan. Counties can be independently moved between six different phases of the plan based on the risk of spread of the epidemic in their county. Based on the risk level across multiple counties, the Governor has the authority to move regions through economic engagement phases which describe how businesses can and cannot operate in that region. The epidemiological risk level for a county may differ from the economic engagement phase for the region it is in, however the modifications necessary to farmers market operations are based on the economic engagement phase for the entire region. To view the map and track the economic engagement phase of the plan your region is currently in, consult the MI Safe Start Restrictions site (https://www.michigan.gov/coronavirus/0,9753,7-406-100467_100913---,00.html).</p>	

<p>Are there any differences of rules for farmers markets in different regions?</p>	<p>Yes, Guidance differs for markets depending upon what economic engagement phase of the MI Safe Start Plan their region of the state is in currently.</p>	
<p>If you are limiting how many customers enter market, do you also need to space out the vendors?</p>	<p>It is definitely a best practice to ensure that social distancing can be managed for all individuals within the market. It is recommended that markets are able spread vendors out ensuring customers and vendors can maintain a 6 ft distance from each other.</p>	
<p>If we are talking about limiting the number of people in the space where customers are and we are measuring the area where they can stand and move about, do we need to count the vendors as people in that space? The customer cannot go into the vendor booth area in this case, just stand outside of it.</p>	<p>It is definitely a best practice to ensure social distancing can be maintained for everyone in the space. Both calculations would be acceptable- (1) calculating the total space of the market including vendor booths and then subtracting the number of vendors from the number of people that can be in the space, or (2) if customers cannot go in the vendor's booth, then calculating the space of the market not including the vendors' booths and not including the vendors in the count of people in that space.</p>	
<p>When calculating the number of customers who can be in the market space, should all vendors and their staff be deducted from the count of people in the space?</p>	<p>Correct, any individuals who will be consistently in the market should be deducted from the number of people allowed to be in the space at one time.</p>	
<p>I was planning to have a private, designated area for vendors only, when they need a break. This would include hand washing, etc. Does this seem reasonable? What else would you recommend or what other options could there be for vendors?</p>	<p>Great point! Providing a space where vendors can step away from customers to eat is generous and thoughtful. Just be sure that they can distance themselves within that space! Also, think of each farm vendor as a separate cohort. Possibly stagger timing of each vendor's access to a break area. Have the area sanitized between cohorts to minimize spread.</p>	
<p>Is there still an expectation or recommendation for an hour set aside for a specific shopper demographic?</p>	<p>If your indoor market has more than 50,000 square feet of customer floor space, create at least 2 hours per week of dedicated shopping time for vulnerable populations.</p>	

<p>Is vendor spacing recommended or required at this time?</p>	<p>Vendors should be able to maintain a 6 foot distance from each other, just as customers should. At a minimum, vendors should be spaced at least 6 feet apart.</p>	
<p>Do we still need vendors to wear masks if we are an outdoor market?</p>	<p>Yes, it is a best practice for all vendors to wear masks as they may come within 6 ft of another employee within their booth or even with a customer. The Executive Orders are clear that employees in food-selling establishments should be wearing masks and that masks are required to safe-gaurd all Michigan workers interacting with the public and/or within 6 feet of any other employees.</p>	
<p>Why limit number of people in market when groups of 100 or 250 people or less are permitted (depending upon the phase of the MI Safe Start Plan)?</p>	<p>Special events are currently limited to a maximum of 100 or 250 people, depending upon what region of the state you are located in. <i>Farmers markets are not considered special events because they are essential food retail outlets, therefore these limitations do not apply to farmers markets.</i> As essential food retail, farmers markets should limit the number of customers who can be in the market at one time in order to ensure that everyone within the market is able to maintain proper social distancing- 6 feet of space between people.</p>	
<p>What are some best practices for limiting number of customers at the market at any given time?</p>	<p>The 100 person limit referred to in the Executive Orders refers to “special events.” Farmers markets are essential food retail and not classified as special events. Markets in regions that are in Phases 1, 2, 3 or 4 should limit the number of customers in your market space to the amount of customers that can safely distance themselves at least 6 feet away from all other customers and vendors. See the calculation in our guidelines for how you can do this for your market based on your space.</p>	

<p>The executive order requires masks outdoor? Or is this a recommendation?</p>	<p>The Governor's EO legally requires the public to wear face-coverings indoors and in crowded outdoor settings. If farmers markets are limiting the number of customers in the space at one time based on the calculations our guidelines instruct, an outdoor market space should remain uncrowded. However, it is strongly recommended that face-coverings be worn in all public spaces even when not legally required. As essential food retail, farmers markets are being held to the standards of grocery stores and licensed food establishments which both require their staff to wear masks at all times.</p>	
<p>Do the markets have to provide gloves and sanitizer for the vendors, or would that be their responsibility?</p>	<p>Gloves and sanitizer are in short supply at this time. Supporting and not penalizing vendors who are not able to access these items directly would be what we recommend.</p>	
<p>Any thoughts on self-screening waivers upon entering the market?</p>	<p>Current Executive Order(s) pertaining to safeguarding Michigan's workers instructs all employers to implement a daily self-reported health screening for all employees and volunteers. MIFMA created a resource to help markets develop this process and that resource is available at http://mifma.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Guidelines-for-Developing-a-Daily-COVID-19-Screening-</p>	
<p>Are markets required to continue COVID screening for vendors?</p>	<p>The employees and volunteers working at farmers markets must complete a daily health screening which consists of responding to a series of self-reported health-related questions. Vendors should be performing daily health screenings for all of their employees, including those that represent them at your market.</p>	

<p>As the market manager, am I suppose to be taking vendors temps before the market?</p>	<p>MIFMA is not recommending that markets take anyones temperature. The daily health screening we are recommending for staff and volunteers is a series of self-reported questions each person would respond to. The MIFMA resources on this daily health screening process is available at: http://mifma.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Guidelines-for-Developing-a-Daily-COVID-19-Screening-Program.pdf</p>	
<p>Regarding vendor handwash stations, the ones that vendors are recommended to have at their booths, are these recommended for just the vendors to use or for customers too?</p>	<p>The handwashing stations you are referencing are the ones required for vendors to have in their booths when sampling. Those stations should still be in place, but MIFMA’s recommendation is that there be additional handwashing stations available to customers in locations within the market that are easily accessible to them, such as entrances and exits. It would <u>not</u> be our recommendation that vendors allow customers to use their handwashing station, simply because of the challenges that it would pose to continue abiding by the recommended social distancing guidelines. The type of handwashing stations that vendors use and that customers use can be the same type of set up.</p>	
<p>Can we just have hand sanitizer instead of a hand washing station?</p>	<p>The preference is to have a hand washing station. Hand sanitizer is not a direct replacement for hand washing. Hand sanitizer is to be used when hand washing stations are not available.</p>	
<p>Handwashing should be done after each exchange of money in my opinion.</p>	<p>We encourage handwashing whenever switching between tasks and before touching your face. We also encourage touchless and/or cashless payment options.</p>	
<p>If there is no access to a handwashing station for a smaller outdoor market, does that mean we can not open?</p>	<p>It is our recommendation that markets provide handwashing stations for customers and market staff. Here is a link to a MIFMA resource on how to build an inexpensive hand washing station for your market: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QP8JJ2qj0OI&feature=youtu.be</p>	

<p>Is there specific guidance on best mixture or best way to sanitize for COVID-19?</p>	<p>Recommendations from the CDC are as follows: Clean AND disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks. If surfaces are dirty, clean them. Use detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection. Then, use a household disinfectant. Most common EPA-registered household disinfectants will work.</p>	
<p>What is a recommended mixture to sanitize for COVID-19? How can I make my own disinfectant if I am unable to purchase an EPA registered household disinfectant.</p>	<p>You can find the CDC's recommendations for cleaning and disinfecting at https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cleaning-disinfection.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fprepare%2Fcleaning-disinfection.html.</p>	
<p>Is homemade hand sanitizer allowed for a vendor to sell?</p>	<p>The sale of hand-sanitizer is regulated at the federal level by FDA. Sales of the product should comply with their standards, regulations, and certification process.</p>	

<p>Do you know which distilleries are selling hand sanitizer?</p>	<p>Each distillery is handling sales a little differently:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Michigrain: Order ahead by calling 517-220-0560. Distillery is letting one person in at a time to pick up orders at 523 E Shiawasee St. in Lansing. - Red Cedar Spirits: Stop by the tasting room at 2000 Merritt Road in East Lansing to pick up bottles. They're asking people to be in and out quickly to limit social contact. - American Fifth: People can pickup from 2 to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday in the tasting room at 112 N. Larch St. in Lansing. People who work in health care, public safety or for local businesses staying open to serve the public can ask about larger volumes by calling 999-2631 or emailing crafted@americanfifthspirits.com. - Ellison: Details still coming. Check social media pages and website for updates. - Sanctuary: Stop by the taproom at 902 E Saginaw Hwy in Grand Ledge to pick up bottles. 	
<p>Is it okay for non-essential vendors to come back to the market?</p>	<p>Which vendors can attend your market is dependent upon the phase of the MI Safe Start Plan that your region is in currently. Markets in regions in an economic engagement phase of 1, 2 or 3 must limit their vendors to only those selling essential goods as all retail is limited in those phases. Markets in regions under economic engagement phase 4 or 5 can include all vendors in the market that they have the room to safely distance.</p>	
<p>I was asked if someone makes mask can they sell them at the market.</p>	<p>MDARD considers masks to fall under the category of “personal hygiene products” and would be allowable to sell.</p>	
<p>I have a vendor that makes Kettle Corn at the market. Will this be allowed this year?</p>	<p>Consult your local health department for guidance around on-site preparation and/or encourage pre-package products as much as possible. At this time, vendors should not allow sampling of products.</p>	

Can wine be sold at farmers markets at this time (no tasting)?	Yes, wine is included. No sampling should take place at this time.	
For small fruits (ie. strawberries,raspberries, blueberries,), do you recommend covering fruit with plastic or cover boxes of fruit for sale?	We recommend a barrier between any product and customers. That barrier could be space or a physical barrier like a plastic cover.	
Is sampling of either food or non-food (like lotions) now allowed?	Product sampling continues to be excluded from food-selling establishments by the Governor's Executive Orders.	
Can food vendors serve to go orders with utensils?	Yes, food vendors can serve to go orders with utensils.	
Can vendors do wine tasting?	MIFMA's guidelines still restrict sampling of all products at farmers markets as they are food-selling establishments.	
What about kettlecorn? Are we allowed to have our vendor pop onsite and pack to go?	Prepared food vendors and food trucks are to comply with regulations for restaurants in their MERC Region. Individual markets should determine if they have the resources to safely offer on-site consumption of prepared foods, or if offerings should be limited to packaged items that can be taken off-site. This includes kettle corn vendors.	
Is onsite food consumption allowed?	Onsite food consumption should not be encouraged within any markets in a region under economic engagement phase 1, 2, or 3 of the MI Safe Start Plan. Markets in a region under economic engagement phase 4 or 5 may allow onsite food consumption as long as seating areas are frequently sanitized and spacing allows groups to properly social distance.	
So, the coronavirus is not known to transfer on food?	Correct, there is no evidence that the coronavirus can be transferred through food directly. But, there is a possibility that it may transfer on food packaging.	

<p>Is it necessary for us to wipe down our products before we sell them?</p>	<p>This virus is not a food safety issue, but may transfer on surfaces. There is no evidence that consuming food spreads the virus. Our webinar panel of experts recommends focusing measure to prevent the known respiratory spread of the virus.</p>	
<p>It is recommended in MIFMA's guidelines that vendors have at least 2 staff in order to handle transactions one person to handle currency and one to handle product. Is this something you would recommend enforcing as a market or just considered best practice for vendors at this time?</p>	<p>It is a recommendation at this time and not a requirement. If a vendor is not able to have two staff at their booth, help them think through how to wash their hands frequently, use gloves, a drop box for cash, and other strategies to protect themselves and their customers.</p>	
<p>Is it still recommended for vendors to have two people in their market stall?</p>	<p>It is a recommendation, but not a requirement that vendors staff their booth with at least two people. If one person can do it, I would recommend allowing that flexibility for your vendor.</p>	
<p>What are the recommendations for layouts of the vendor space?</p>	<p>Increase market stall spacing and aisle widths to allow customers and vendors to distance themselves at least 6 feet away from others. Have vendors set up in a way that minimizes/eliminates a customer's ability to touch the products.</p>	
<p>Is there any information or movement towards approving Bridge Cards for online ordering with pickup and payment in-person?</p>	<p>It is allowable to take orders online or by phone and then facilitate SNAP payments when the order is picked up in-person/at curbside. In May, Michigan was also approved by the USDA Food and Nutrition Service to allow for online SNAP processing. Having access to affordable equipment/software to facilitate online purchases will be the next step in the process. Research into feasible options is ongoing.</p>	

<p>Is it expected that the \$20 daily limit on earning Double Up Food Bucks will be back at any point this season? Or should we expect to be able to match any amount all season?</p>	<p>At this time, Fair Food Network has not indicated a return to the \$20 per day matching limit. Markets will receive, at minimum, a 30 day warning if/when the cap goes back in place.</p>	
<p>Will someone send us more Double Up Food Bucks tokens? If not I think we will probably run out without soon!</p>	<p>Cassidy at Fair Food Network can help with Double Up tokens, and you'll need to order your SNAP Bridge Card tokens from the company of your choosing. Contact joe@mifma.org for additional information.</p>	
<p>Double Up Food Bucks can be provided with P-EBT, correct?</p>	<p>Yes, that is correct. P-EBT can be matched with Double Up as it a SNAP benefit.</p>	
<p>Should we be recording P-EBT and EBT seprately in our Double Up customer logs?</p>	<p>Some folks will get new cards and some will have additional funds added to their existing cards, so you may not even be able to tell which form of SNAP a customer is using. A new Customer Tracking Log for Double Up Food Bucks has been provided that allows you to indicate if the customer is using a new P-EBT card. Visit the Market Manager Portal to download that new tool.</p>	
<p>If you collect P-EBT do you need to record this seperate from regular EBT for recording/reimbursment?</p>	<p>It is all SNAP and can be recorded the same.</p>	
<p>In order for our market to accept EBT, we would have to get a wireless device. If we do a curbside pick up system, our phone line device would not be possible to use because of the different location.</p>	<p>State funding is available to equip markets with wireless devices and Joe can help you work through that process. You can learn more and apply at https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScd6ek2OmsdV6THWYNbQxw_TZgKIN5xrgpoiPBZk8gfMQGoxA/viewform.</p>	
<p>My market is new this year. We have applied to accept SNAP but missed the DUFb application deadline. Will any exceptions or new application periods be opened?</p>	<p>If you are interested in signing up for Double Up Food Bucks please contact Rebecca Viera, MIFMA's Food Access Manager, at Rebecca@mifma.org or 517-432-3381.</p>	

<p>Will kids be doing P-EBT transactions?</p>	<p>P-EBT cards will be issued to the adults in a household with eligible children. There is no expectation that kids will be using them.</p>	
<p>Are there liability concerns that markets and their fiduciaries should be aware of?</p>	<p>MIFMA has always and continues to recommend that farmers markets and their vendors are properly insured. We recommend that markets or their sponsoring organization carry general liability insurance that covers the market. MIFMA also recommends that markets recommend or require their vendors to carry general and product liability insurance and that they list the market as an additional insured on their policy. At this time, we recommend contacting your insurance agent to discuss any further coverage during this pandemic. To support our members in acquiring insurance that meets their needs, our membership benefits include discounts with insurance providers. Visit www.mifma.org/join to learn more.</p>	
<p>We own a restaurant and also operate a farmers market on our property, which is insured by our liability coverage. Should we still ask all vendors to carry their own insurance?</p>	<p>MIFMA recommends that all vendors carry at least \$1 million in product liability coverage and \$1 million in general liability coverage.</p>	
<p>Can porta johns be used at farmers markets?</p>	<p>Yes, absolutely! They should include at a minimum hand sanitizer or have an adjacent hand-washing station and they should be frequently cleaned and well-maintained.</p>	
<p>We are a restaurant with an outdoor market. Can we open the restaurant building for customers to use the bathrooms and the ATM machine?</p>	<p>Yes, as long as customers are allowed to remain 6 ft. apart and the space can stay at the capacity limits that correspond with the region's current economic engagement phase of the MI Safe Start Plan.</p>	

<p>What about rules for on-farm sales, is there info on this? Or are we simply a business under 50,000 sq ft?</p>	<p>Recommendations for social distancing, eliminating non-essential areas and activities, sanitizing surfaces and minimizing cash transactions would all apply to on-farm sales. I would suggest applying all recommendations for farmers markets that are applicable to your set-up and to also reference guidance from the Michigan Agri-Tourism Association (MATA) that you can find here: https://www.michiganfarmfun.com/pandemic.asp.</p>	
<p>Do you know if anyone has guidelines for community garden operations?</p>	<p>The University of Florida Extension has put out a fact sheet for community gardens that you can access at https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/fs342.</p>	

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