Governor Charlie Baker issued an [**emergency order**](https://www.mass.gov/doc/march-31-2020-essential-services-extension-order) March 23, in this order farmers markets and farm stands have been recognized as “COVID-19 Essential Services”. Under the [guidelines of the State,](https://www.mass.gov/doc/covid-19-guidance-for-farmers-markets-farm-stands-and-csas/download) the City of Boston has developed a best practice protocol for these enterprises intended to provide clear and safety guidelines for the operation of the farmer market during the COVID 19 pandemic.

The situation will be closely monitored by the City and the protocols described are subject to change as this situation continues to develop.

In addition, Market managers with careful planning ***must develop protocols to protect customers, vendors and staff, and to mitigate the spread of disease***. These protocols have to be reviewed and accepted by OFA to ensure shopping for food in farmer’s markets continues to be a safe activity.

**City of Boston Farmer’s Market Best Practices Guidelines**

***Physical/ Social Distancing must be maintained at all times***

* Practice and enforce staff and customer "social distancing" measures as recommended by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). People should stay six feet from one another and not shake hands, or be in close contact for a duration of more than 15 minutes.
* Mark the pavement around the stand to indicate a “shopper area” – a 6-foot social distancing space in which one customer at a time may be to shop at each stand. Only one customer may be in this space at a time. All other prospective shoppers must wait outside this space.
* Mark the pavement with designated waiting areas around the “shopper area” to allow for prospective customers to wait for their turn to approach the stand. Vendors should enforce the physical distancing by reminding customers to wait in the designated space.
* Market managers are encouraged to layout the market to increase social space: single row layout is preferred.
* Limit the amount of people in the market/ farm stand at one time. Market managers should encourage single shoppers per household only. Market managers should determine the number of people that can be in the market space, while still practicing 6 feet of physical/social distance.
* Market should clearly identify the entry and exit to the market, making one-way circulation, and avoiding a congregation.
* All market staff and vendor staff must stay home if they are sick.
* Market staff will separate farm stand spaces with at least 10 feet of distance between the tents, more where possible, to reduce congestion.

***Food sampling, cooking demonstration and prepared food sales***

* Cooking demonstrations and samples will be prohibited.
* There is no selling of apple cider or other beverages by the cup.
* All prepared foods must be pre-packaged.

***Sanitation Guidelines***

* All market managers, staff and vendors should [Follow simple CDC rules for washing hands](https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html) and avoid touching their faces. Market managers, staff, and vendors are required to wear a face covering and utilize disposable gloves at all times during market operations. Guidance on how to correctly put on and remove gloves [here](https://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/pdf/poster-how-to-remove-gloves.pdf).
* Market managers must have hand sanitizer available for public use at all times. Market managers may choose to implement a handwashing station and are responsible for keeping them clean and serviced.
* Market managers should encourage all customers to wear a face covering while in the market. Managers may want to provide masks/coverings for customers at the market manger table. Managers may choose to require customers to wear face coverings while in the market.
* Vendors are required to hand wash and sanitize regularly. Vendors must have hand sanitizer available at their own stands as well.
* All farm stands must use vinyl or plastic table covers for easy sanitizing. Follow BPHC guidance [here](https://www.bphc.org/whatwedo/infectious-diseases/Infectious-Diseases-A-to-Z/Documents/Cleaning%20and%20Disinfecting%20for%20COVID%2019.pdf).

***Minimize the number of interactions***

* Vendor stands should be arranged in a way that minimizes/eliminates a customer’s ability to browse or touch the products. Customers should not be able to touch any product until after they have purchased it.
* If possible, it is recommended to have a physical barrier between customers and vendors.
* All items and products must be bagged for customers by vendor staff. Reusable bags cannot be used.
* Vendors are encouraged to use a CSA model by offering pre-packaged boxes of produce.

***Payments at the Market***

* Cash transactions should be minimized at the market. Online payment application platforms used on smartphones, such as Venmo or PayPal, should make a viable option to facilitate transactions at markets.
* Markets should utilize disposable plastic wrap to cover EBT machines for each customer transaction or disinfected EBT machines between customers.
* All vendors must sanitize their stands regularly by wiping down tables, terminals, cash boxes, etc.
* All staff processing credit/debit/snap transactions must wear protective gloves.

***Consumer Education and Outreach***

 Market managers should be communicating the following at their markets:

* We recommend that only one person in the household should be present to make a purchase.
* Please practice social spacing by keeping a distance of 6+ feet from other customers and vendors.
* All customers will be directed to enter and exit the market through designated points. Exceptions will be made for people with disabilities.
* Remind the customer to wash hands often for at least 20 seconds (add link of the guidelines)
* Customers are encouraged to wear face coverings to enter the market.
* Shoppers may not pick up and touch items until after being purchased.
* Encourage customers to wash all produce thoroughly before consumption
* Remind everyone in the market to avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth, and that if you need to sneeze or cough, sneeze or cough into a tissue or into the crease of your elbow.