

ABC's for Farmers Market Organizers

Assure that your vendors have the proper permits, rulebook and training to keep everyone safe.

Be sure to check with the local fire department or inspector about potential fire or electrical hazards (special use permits may be necessary for temporary electrical service).

Canopies, umbrellas and tables need to be anchored so they can't be easily knocked down or blown over.

Dedicate some time to think about food safety. There are many things that could go wrong with food at a market. Certain precautions must be taken to ensure a healthy fun farmers market.

Eradicate stress by being extra prepared and making sure that everything is organized and clean. I.e. there are no potholes or extension wires that threaten to trip customers.

Food-safety hazards come in three different types: Biological, Chemical and Physical. All can be very dangerous to your customer's health and safety.

Garbage cans should be placed all around the market and a plan should be put into place to keep the market sanitary and the streets free of garbage.

Have a working, routinely inspected fire extinguisher located at the market information booth and at all vendors' stalls that use electricity or open flames.

Indicate any and all wet surfaces with proper signs so they can be avoided.

Jagged or sharp objects protruding from vehicles, canopies and tables must be removed or softened to ensure no one gets hurt.

Keep track of and record detailed information about vendors and staff background checks and histories in case they are needed in the future.

Listen to vendors, volunteers and staff suggestions on how to improve health and safety. They may have other training or experiences that will help you to improve your farmers market. Make sure to use discretion.

Make sure to create a site map and signage that identifies all exits and entrances, first aid stations, security office, temporary structures, portable washrooms, sanitation stations, emergency vehicle access, food/merchandise vendors, etc.

Notify all staff and customers of the proper safety procedures during special events such as auctions and petting zoos.

Once stalls are set up managers and owners should go around and inspect the stall displays to make sure they are properly equipped (sneeze guards) and that nothing can fall off and/or injure someone.

Prior to opening the market all managers and owners should attend and pass the food-safety education classes as well as assessment and planning courses.

Quandaries should be discussed and fixed as soon as possible. Other organizations such as health and safety companies should be able to help with any food concerns.

Rules and regulations should be set and strictly followed.

Sneeze guards are super important and must be put in place for any and all display food and samples.

Take time to check in with your local and provincial health and safety services for farmers markets.

Use newsletters, leaflets, postings, email, websites and annual or other meetings to keep vendors and volunteers informed on safety issues and upcoming events that require special consideration.

Verify that a market manager, owner or an appointed manager is on site while the market is in operation to conduct proper inspections of the market.

Waste must be kept in proper containers and buckets to prevent it from accumulating on the ground.

X'amine all products to make sure that all organic and pesticide free products are certified and labeled properly.

Your vendors and staff should talk so everyone can benefit and learn from each other.

Zones should be clearly marked to identify sanitation stations, washrooms, auction space, vendors' spaces and emergency spaces.