

# Operating Guidelines for Farmers' Markets



THE GUIDELINES MUST  
BE FOLLOWED IF YOU  
OPERATE OR SELL  
FOOD PRODUCTS AT A  
FARMERS' MARKET



Thunder Bay District  
Health Unit

## Section 1 - Market Organizer

- All individuals and/or organizations planning to operate a farmers' market must submit a Market Organizer Application Form.
- New markets must submit 60 days before the beginning of the market season.
- Re-occurring markets must submit 14 days before the beginning of the market season.
- Copies of the guidelines must be distributed to each individual food vendor planning to participate in your market.
- Each market will be assessed seasonally by the Health Unit to determine if the market meets the requirements for exemption as a Farmers' Market under Ontario Regulation 562/90, Food Premises. To determine market exemption, please provide the following:
  - A. Full list of vendors, including non-food vendors
  - B. Vendor list based on the following 2 seasons:
    - May 1 to October 31
    - November 1 to April 30
- Market organizers must provide adequate washroom facilities with liquid soap in a pump dispenser and paper towels for handwashing.

NOTE: The Health Unit must receive a Market Food Vendor Application Form from each individual operator at least 14 days before the beginning of the market season.

## Section 2 - All Market Vendors Offering Food

### Food Source

- Each vendor must submit a Market Food Vendor Application Form to the Health Unit at least 14 days before the beginning of the market season.
- All foods must be obtained from **approved sources** and/or prepared at an **approved food premise**. **Home caterers** preparing the food at home must refer to the Health Unit's Operating Guidelines for Home Caterers.

- The sale of grade C and/or ungraded eggs is prohibited. Eggs must be graded at an approved egg grading station before being offered for sale. Proof of grading must be available. Eggs are to be sold at 4°C or less.
- The sale of uninspected meat is prohibited. Meat and meat products must be inspected by Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) or Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food (OMAF). Proof of grading must be available.
- For regulations and specifications regarding the sale of other farm fresh foods, such as, but not limited to honey, maple syrup and apple cider, contact the OMAF at 1-888-466-2372 or look online at [www.omaf.gov.on.ca](http://www.omaf.gov.on.ca)
- All canned or bottled foods (jams, jellies, pickles, etc.) must be packaged in new jars and must be sealed with vacuum lids. Refer to the Health Unit's Home Canning Guidelines for specific requirements regarding this procedure; pH testing of the product may be required.
- No sampling and/or serving of food unless additional conditions are met; see Section 3.

#### Labelling

- All foods that are sold in a packaged form are to be labelled with the person/business name and either the date the food was prepared OR an expiry date.
- Contact the CFIA at 1-800-667-2657 for information regarding ingredient labelling. This information is also available at [www.inspection.gc.ca](http://www.inspection.gc.ca) by searching for the Guide to Food Labelling and Advertising.

#### Transportation & Storage

- Transport foods quickly from place to place. Use thermal insulated containers with cold/ice packs to maintain cold foods at an **internal temperature** of 4°C (40°F) or lower.
- Use thermal insulated containers with heat packs to maintain hot foods at an **internal temperature** of 60°C (140°F) or higher.
- All food must be covered during transportation to protect the food from dust, dirt, insects and other foreign objects.

- Food is to be transported and stored in **food grade** containers that are not used for any other purpose. These food grade containers must protect food from contamination through the use of protective barriers (e.g., plastic wrap, foil, mesh covers, enclosed in cabinets).
- Food must be stored on shelves located at least 15 cm (6") off the floor.
- **Probe thermometers** must be used to check food temperatures. **High risk foods** cannot be left out at room temperature.
- Frozen food must be kept frozen.
- Raw foods must be displayed and handled separately from cooked and ready-to-eat foods and produce in order to avoid **cross contamination**.

### Personal Hygiene

- Food handlers are to be clean and wear clean outer garments.
- Food handlers are not to smoke while handling or preparing food.
- Hair is to be confined (e.g., tying hair or wearing a hat).
- Food handlers are to wash their hands whenever necessary; before handling or preparing foods, after using the restroom, sneezing, coughing, blowing the nose or handling money AND after any other possible point of contamination. See APPENDIX A for an overview of correct handwashing procedure.
- Food handlers must be free from infectious agents that may be spread through food or water and must not handle food when ill.
- When serving/dispensing food, use **utensils** such as tongs, ladles, lifters and spoons whenever possible. Never serve with your fingers.
- No double-dipping of **utensils** when tasting food (e.g., dipping a utensil in the food, tasting and then dipping again with the same utensil). Instead, ladle a small amount of food into a dish and taste the food from the dish with a spoon. Do not reuse the spoon.
- Do not touch hair, face or other parts of the body with your hands and then handle food.
- Wear non-latex based gloves if you have a cut or burn on your hands. Do not handle food directly while wearing a bandage.
- Keep fingernails short and never wear jewellery when preparing food.

## Section 3 - Market Vendors Offering Samples and/or Serving Food

- Prepare all foods as close to serving time as possible.
- Never thaw foods at room temperature. See APPENDIX B for safe thawing methods.
- Use your **probe thermometer** to verify cooking, cooling, hot holding and cold holding temperatures.
- Refer to the chart in APPENDIX C to ensure that the minimum **internal temperatures** are reached.
- Hot foods must be cooled from 60°C (140°F) to 20°C (68°F) within the first 2 hours, then from 20°C (68°F) to 4°C (40°F) within an additional 4 hours. See APPENDIX B for safe cooling practices.
- Microwaves are to be used only to reheat individual food portions that will be served immediately after reheating.
- Never reheat leftovers more than once.
- Work surfaces for food preparation must be **cleaned and sanitized** after each use. Clean work surfaces by washing the area with hot soapy water, rinse with water and then sanitize by spraying with a sanitizing solution. **Sanitizing** solutions may be made with chlorine (bleach), iodine, quats (quaternary ammonium) or any other agent that is approved by the public health inspector. Cloths used for **cleaning** can be stored in a **sanitizing** solution using 2 tablespoons of household bleach in 4 litres of water.
- Provide enough extra **utensils** (e.g., enough to last the day) and store them in a clean container OR wash on-site according to APPENDIX D. Change serving **utensils** every 2 hours.
- Customer samples must be protected from contamination (i.e. individual toothpicks, serving spoon).

### Cleaning & Maintenance

- If facilities are available, **utensils** and equipment used to handle foods are to be washed, rinsed and **sanitized** on-site. See APPENDIX D.
- If facilities are not available, utensils and equipment are to be taken to an approved home or other approved food premises for **cleaning and sanitizing**. See APPENDIX D.

- All garbage and waste is to be disposed of in containers made of durable, leak proof and non-absorbent material. Garbage must be removed as often as necessary.

### Temporary Handwashing Station Setup

- Food booths that are preparing, serving, and/or sampling on site must have a temporary handwash station set up. It must be accessible without leaving the vendor's side of the booth but may be shared between booths.
- Set up a water jug, equipped with a spigot that allows the water to run free without having to hold open, and a five-gallon receiving bucket. Fill the water jug with hot water, set it on a chair or on a counter, and then set the receiving bucket directly under the spigot.
- Empty the receiving bucket, as needed, into a sink and NOT onto the ground or into the storm sewer.
- Supply paper towels as well as liquid soap in a pump dispenser.



## Section 4 - Definitions

**Approved source** - the food and/or establishment has been inspected by an official government agency; for example, the Thunder Bay District Health Unit (TBDHU)

**Cleaning (cleaned)** - the physical removal of dirt, soil and grease, typically carried out with soap/detergent, water and a scrubbing action

**Cross contamination** - the transfer of disease-causing micro-organisms to food; for example, chicken blood dripping onto cold cuts or produce in the refrigerator

**Exemption as a Farmers' Market** - To be considered a Farmers' Market, more than 50% (e.g., 50% + 1) of the vendors must be producers of farm products and who are primarily selling or offering for sale their own products. Farm products are those that are grown, raised or produced on a farm and intended for use as food; include, without being restricted to:

- fruits and vegetables
- mushrooms
- meat and meat products
- dairy products
- honey products
- maple products
- fish
- grains and seeds
- grain and seed products

A farm can be defined several ways; as a rural area with barn, silo, fields and a full-time farmer OR as a hobby farm (e.g., rural area with fields and farmer on a part-time basis) OR as a producer who grows only local produce on their own property or a common gardening area.

**Food grade** - corrosion-resistant, non-toxic, non-absorbent containers safe for storing food (i.e. plastic, stainless steel, glass)

**Food premises** - means a premises where food or milk is manufactured, processed, prepared, stored, handled, displayed, distributed, transported, sold or offered for sale, but does not include a private residence

**High risk food** - any food that is capable of supporting the growth or survival of disease causing micro-organisms or their toxins

**Home caterer** - any person who prepares or handles food in his or her home with the intention of providing it to the public and is inspected and approved by the TBDHU

**Internal temperature** - inside temperature of food

**Probe thermometer** - an instant read thermometer that can be easily inserted into foods to verify food preparation and storage temperatures

**Sanitize (sanitized, sanitizing)** - the reduction in number of disease-causing microorganisms, typically carried out with a chlorine and water solution of 2 tablespoons of household bleach in 4 litres of water.

**Utensil** - any article used in the preparation or handling of food

## HANDWASHING



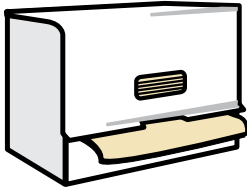
1. WET HANDS



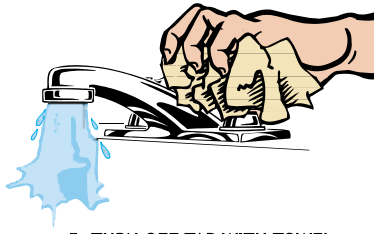
2. SOAP / LATHER (20 seconds)



3. RINSE



4. TOWEL DRY



5. TURN OFF TAP WITH TOWEL

### **ALWAYS** wash your hands before:

- Handling ready-to-eat foods
- Starting work
- Preparing food
- Eating
- Handling clean utensils, silverware and plates

### **ALWAYS** wash your hands after:

- Handling raw foods, especially meat and poultry
- Eating or smoking
- Taking out the garbage
- Cleaning food preparation areas (surfaces, equipment, plates and utensils)
- Cleaning washrooms
- Sneezing, coughing, or blowing your nose
- Going to the washroom
- Touching your hair, face or body
- Touching anything else that may contaminate hands (including money)

**IF IN DOUBT, WASH YOUR HANDS!**

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## Appendix B – Safe Thawing Techniques

Never defrost poultry, seafood or meats at room temperature.

Refrigerator Method:

- The safest way to thaw foods is to place them in a refrigerator.
- Place food in its wrapping on a drip-proof tray, a plate or in a container.
- Store raw foods on lowest shelves to prevent them from dripping or splashing other foods
- Allow 6-9 hours per pound (14-20 hours/kg) to defrost.

Cold Water Method:

- Unwrap the frozen meat, poultry, or fish and place in a container.
- Place this container in a clean and sanitized sink under the water tap.
- Pour cold **RUNNING** water on the food in the container.
- Let the cold water run constantly or add ice to the water (and change this water often) to make sure that the water stays cold. Ensure the sink is cleaned and sanitized after thawing is completed.
- Allow 30 minutes per pound (1 hour/kg) to defrost.

Microwave Method:

- Thawing uncooked frozen meat in a microwave is only recommended if the food is to be cooked immediately after thawing.
- Microwave heat is often uneven and the outside portions of foods should be removed as they thaw. This will keep the outside from starting to cook before the inside is fully thawed. Refrigerate the removed portions until the food is cooked.

## Safe Cooling Techniques

- A. Hot food must be cooled rapidly to reduce the time it spends in the **Temperature Danger Zone** which is between 4°C (40°F) and 60°C (140°F).
- B. Never put extremely hot foods in a refrigerator!
- C. Foods must cool from 60°C (140°F) to 4°C(40°F) within 6 hours:
  - Stage 1 – during the first two hours, foods must cool from 60°C (140°F) to 20°C (68°F)
  - Stage 2 – during the next four hours, foods must cool from 20°C (68°F) to 4°C (40°F)
- D. When cooling large batches or pieces of food:
  - Break or cut the food up into smaller pieces.
  - Divide large batches into several smaller ones.
  - Stir the foods as they cool.
  - Place food in shallow pans and/or an ice water bath.

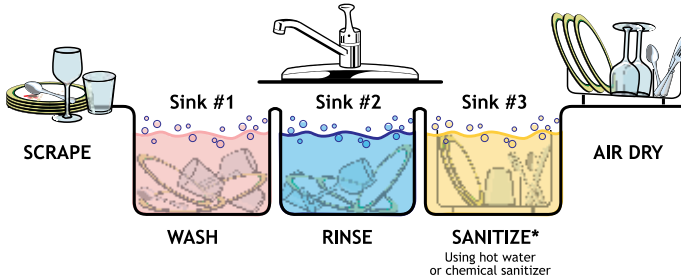
## Appendix C – Internal Cooking Temperatures

<b>Final Internal Cooking Temperatures</b> (Using a Probe Thermometer) Temperatures must be maintained for a minimum of 15 seconds		
<b>Poultry</b> Whole poultry Individual pieces	82°C 74°C	180°F 165°F
<b>Mixtures</b> Containing poultry, egg, meat, fish or other hazardous food	74°C	165°F
<b>Beef &amp; Veal</b> Hamburger, deboned and rolled roasts	71°C	160°F
<b>Pork</b> All products	71°C	160°F
<b>Lamb</b> Ground, deboned and rolled roasts	71°C	160°F
<b>Fish</b> All products	70°C	158°F
<b>Eggs</b>	63°C	145°F

## DISHWASHING

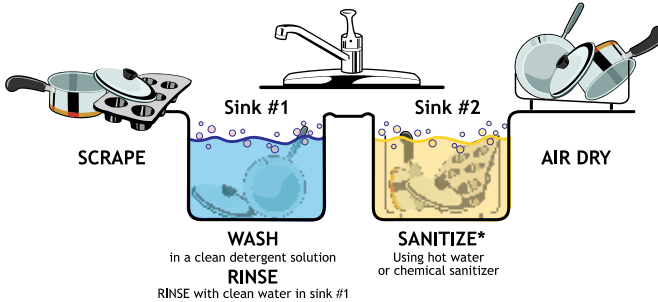
### Dishwashing - 3 sink method

For Multiservice Articles



### Dishwashing - 2 sink method

For Pots, Pans and Cooking Utensils



#### \*Sanitize using hot water:

- Dishes must be immersed in hot water (77°C) for 45 seconds

OR

#### \*Sanitize using chemical sanitizers:

- Water temperature for chemical sanitizing must be 24°C (75°F).
- Sanitize for 45 seconds.
- NEVER mix chemicals. Combining chemicals is toxic!

- Use one of the following chemical sanitizers, and measure it correctly!

**Chlorine ("bleach"): 100 ppm** (1 oz per gallon of water)

**Iodine: 25 ppm** (0,25 oz per gallon of water)

**Quaternary Ammonium ("Quats"): 200 ppm** (2 oz per gallon of water)

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Please call a public health inspector at 625-5900 or toll-free at 1-888-294-6630 with any questions.

## DISTRICT OFFICES

### **Greenstone**

P.O. Box 1360  
510 Hogarth Avenue West  
Geraldton ON P0T 1M0  
(807) 854-0454

### **Manitouwadge**

P.O. Box 1194  
Manitouwadge Health Care Centre  
1 Health Care Cres.  
Manitouwadge ON P0T 2C0  
(807) 826-4061

### **Marathon**

P.O. Box 384  
Marathon Library Building  
24 Peninsula Rd.  
Marathon ON P0T 2E0  
(807) 229-1820

### **Nipigon**

P.O. Box 15  
Nipigon District Memorial Hospital  
125 Hogan Rd.  
Nipigon ON P0T 2J0  
(807) 887-3031

### **Terrace Bay**

P.O. Box 1030  
McCausland Hospital  
20B Cartier Rd.  
Terrace Bay ON P0T 2W0  
(807) 825-7770