



Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets
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Office of the Secretary

September 14, 2020

PICK-YOUR-OWN RESTART PLAN

Pick-your-own agricultural producers, including berry farms and orchards, shall adhere to the Agency of Commerce & Community Development (ACCD) [Phased Restart Work Safe Guidance](#) (Work Safe Guidance) for retail operations and follow the best practices identified in this Pick-Your-Own Restart Plan.

MANDATORY HEALTH & SAFETY REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL BUSINESS, NON-PROFIT & GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS: All businesses must follow Vermont Department of Health and CDC guidelines outlined in ACCD's [Work Safe Guidance](#) as required by the [Amended and Restated Executive Order 01-20](#).

BUSINESS CUSTOMER & GENERAL PUBLIC MASK USE: Customers, and the public in general, are required to wear masks or cloth facial coverings in accordance with the Governor's Executive Order requirements. Currently, those requirements are described in [Addendum 2 to the Amended and Restated Executive Order 01-20](#).

RETAIL OPERATIONS GUIDANCE

- Non-essential retail operations are limited to 50% (fifty percent) of approved fire safety occupancy; or 1 customer per 200 square feet; or 10 total customers and staff combined, whichever is greater. If ACCD's occupancy limit for retail establishments changes, the new occupancy threshold will apply to this guidance. Operators must prominently POST their temporary occupancy limit and which method was used to determine it on all entrances. Posting templates are available at accd.vermont.gov.
- Cashless/touch-less transactions are strongly preferred.
- Curbside pickup remains the preferred method of operation. When possible, retailers should take steps to schedule or stage customer visits, such as waiting in cars or outside, to ensure lower contact operations.
- Organized outdoor markets, such as flea markets, shall adhere to the [Farmers Market Guidance](#) issued by the [Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets](#).
- Pick-your-own agricultural producers, including berry farms and orchards, shall adhere to retail guidance, and follow the best practices identified in the Agency of Agriculture's Pick-Your-Own Restart Plan.

1. REQUIRED PRACTICES FOR PICK-YOUR-OWN (PYO) OPERATIONS

1.1. Customer Face Covering. In accordance with Executive Order guidance, Vermonters shall wear masks or cloth facial coverings over their nose and mouth any time they are in public spaces, indoors or outdoors,

where they come in contact with others from outside their households, especially in congregate settings, and where it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of at least six feet.

Nothing in the Executive Order or any other State health and safety guidance shall require the use of a mask or cloth facial covering for anyone under the age of 2, any child or adult with a medical or developmental issue or challenge that is complicated or irritated by a facial covering, anyone with difficulty breathing or as further set forth in guidance issued by VDH.

A person who declines to wear a mask or cloth face covering because of a medical or developmental issue, or difficulty breathing, shall not be required to produce documentation, or other evidence, verifying the condition.

Businesses and non-profit and government entities shall implement measures notifying customers or clients of the requirement to wear masks or facial coverings, which may include, but shall not be limited to, posting signage stating that masks or cloth facial coverings are required and denial of entry or service to customers or clients who decline to wear masks or facial coverings.

1.2. Limited Outdoor In-Person Picking. PYO farms shall admit no more than one customer per 200 square feet of the crop space that is available for harvest/picking at the time of admission. All employees and customers in the harvest area must practice social distancing and follow all related safety requirements. If customer demand significantly exceeds available space, PYO farms should pre-schedule customer visits to limit the number of people on site.

1.3. Social Distancing and Customer Flow. PYO farms must manage customer flow to ensure a distance of at least 6 feet between all employees and customers at all times, including ensuring that all customers either wait in their vehicles or remain at least 6 feet apart while awaiting entry to the harvest/picking area.

1.4. Containers and Tools. Picking containers must either be clean containers provided by customers who maintain exclusive control over them, disposable containers provided by the PYO farms for customers to take home, or reusable containers that employees thoroughly clean and disinfect before each use. All tools or other devices that customers may share must be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected by employees before each use.

1.5. Retail Stations. We recommend all in-person sales be conducted at an outdoor retail station whenever possible and we encourage operations with an indoor retail station to include a sneeze guard. The retail station must be regularly cleaned and disinfected and must have a hand-washing station or hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol. Transactions should be conducted in advance whenever possible, and in-person sales should be conducted by electronic transaction without utilizing cash.

1.6. Additional Requirements. To limit in-person contact and the risk of contamination, the on-site consumption of food—including crops being picked—is not allowed in a PYO operation area. In addition, customers are not permitted to congregate on site before, during, or after picking. PYO customers are prohibited from areas of the farm not specifically open to customers. PYO customers can visit another business area of the farm, like a farm stand, in accordance with the applicable COVID-19 related safety standards for that part of the operation.

2. PHYSICAL DISTANCING PLAN

2.1. All employees and customers will follow all safety practices and always maintain a distance of at least 6 feet between all employees and customers. Customers that arrive in small groups can pick together, but must maintain a distance of at least 6 feet between their group and other customers from outside their household.

2.2. Online or telephone orders and transactions are encouraged because they are accomplished without in-person contact with customers. All employees engaged in this work shall practice social distancing.

2.3. Sales should be conducted outside whenever possible. Indoor retail operations are limited to 50% (fifty percent) of approved fire safety occupancy; or 1 customer per 200 square feet; or 10 total customers and staff combined, whichever is greater. If ACCD's occupancy limit for retail establishments changes, the new occupancy threshold will apply to this guidance. Operators must prominently POST their temporary occupancy limit and which method was used to determine it on all entrances. Posting templates are available at accd.vermont.gov.

2.4. All harvest areas are limited to a maximum of no more than one customer per 200 square feet of the crop space available for harvest at the time of picking. All employees and customers must practice social distancing and follow all related safety requirements. The designated health officer employee will ensure compliance. The customer waiting, harvest, and retail area shall also be marked for one-way access wherever two-way access would require employees or customers to be closer than 6 feet apart, and whenever a crop row provides less than 10 feet of open space for foot traffic.

2.5. Outdoor space will be further monitored to ensure that all customers awaiting access to a harvest site remain in their vehicles or maintain sufficient separation while awaiting entry. The designated health officer employee will ensure safety compliance for traffic flow and customer spacing while awaiting access to a harvest site.

2.6. Employees shall not have more than three persons in a vehicle and should have a single employee per vehicle whenever possible. If ACCD changes this limitation in its Work Safe Guidance, the new standard shall apply to this guidance.

3. POSTINGS AND NOTIFICATIONS

3.1. Internal for Employees. All PYO farms shall distribute a concise internal document to all employees that explains all social distancing and related safety requirements.

3.2. External for Customers/Visitors. All PYO farms shall employ a designated health officer employee to ensure ongoing and simultaneous compliance with all safety requirements in each sector (parking/waiting, harvesting, retail) of the PYO operation.

3.3. Postings/Signs. PYO farms shall post visible signs that include the following information: a) preordered sales transactions are prioritized and preferred; b) identifying the maximum number of customers permitted in indoor retail spaces and outdoor harvest sites; c) the protocol for maintaining separation while awaiting entry, d) that all customers must wear appropriate facial coverings, and e) customers with COVID-19 or COVID-19 symptoms are not allowed on the premises. Instructions for minimizing contact shall also be posted adjacent

to each retail station, which shall be conducted in an outside area whenever possible.

3.4. All PYO farms shall adopt a written plan to ensure that all safety, health, and sanitation requirements are followed in each facet of their operations.



Anson Tebbetts Secretary

Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

