

Policy and Procedures for Safe Food Handling During COVID-19 on the Farm

(These are intended for small and urban farms and gardens)

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Immediate Steps:

1. Post signage about washing hands and maintaining 6 ft. social distancing.
2. Post signage about new Covid-19 Guidelines: Guidelines for Preventing the Spread of Infection
3. Finalize new Policy and Procedures for Safe Food Handling During COVID-19
4. Provide training to all farm workers and staff following new guidelines and procedures.
5. Identify a designated “food safety lead” to ensure safe food handling is followed.
6. Purchase needed materials and supplies.
7. Set up more hand washing stations at key transition points at farm.
8. Set up designated break area away from food handling area.
9. Instruct everyone to maintain 6 feet of physical distance between people at all times.
10. Instruct all farmers to keep hands away from faces; use of masks are encouraged.
11. Follow all new standard operating procedures (SOPs) for good health and hygiene, and cleaning and sanitizing.

Daily Check List for Food Safety Leads

Upon arrival and throughout the day: Make sure...

1. A trained “food safety lead” is designated for the day to review COVID-19 protocols with all workers, ensure all tasks are completed and materials are re-stocked and re-supplied.
2. All cleaning and sanitizing materials needed (see materials list below) are in adequate supply.
3. All toilets are clean and stocked with toilet paper, and all wash facilities are clean, sanitized, and stocked with hand-pump soap, single use towels, trash can with liner.
4. All sanitizer spray pumps are prepared and available.
5. Drinking water (with single use cups) or personally water bottles are available.
6. All harvest gloves, tools, and containers are clean, sanitized and in good condition and protected from exposure to droplets.
7. All transportation vehicles for food delivery are clean and produce is protected.
8. Clean and sanitize all critical surfaces following disinfection plan.
9. Have a check in with all volunteers – how’s everyone feeling? Stay home if sick.
10. Provide training to all volunteers in Farm COVID-10 guidelines.
11. Share “food handling” handout to people receiving food from Farm.

End of Day:

1. Are harvest trays, tools, gloves and washing bins cleaned and sanitized?
2. Has the drinking water container been cleaned and sanitized (if applicable)?
3. Is the packing area cleaned, sanitized and free of debris?
4. Is all packaging stored in a safe, secure location.
5. Have all Personal Protective Equipment been cleaned?
6. Have all garbage cans been emptied and plastic liners refilled?
7. Have all toilets and wash stations been cleaned, sanitized and restocked?
8. Do any supplies need to be re-stocked? (hand gloves, cleansers, sanitizers, toilet or hand-washing supplies, first aid kit, record keeping sheets, signage, plastic garbage can liners).
9. Make plan and ensure resupply of necessary materials.

Check List of Materials and Resources for Cleaning & Sanitizing

Toilet paper	
Single use paper towels	
Hand-pump hand soap for handwashing	
Dish soap	
Plastic bags to line garbage bags	
Bags to pre-bag produce	
Hydrogen peroxide or other spray disinfectant to spot disinfect	
Bleach (to make sanitizing solution) and put in spray bottle	
Garbage cans with lids at bathrooms/wash stations, host table, farm stand.	
Measuring cup & measuring spoons & funnel (to measure proper concentrations of sanitizer) into spray bottle.	
2 Spray Bottles	
4 scrub brushes labeled for use	
25 cleaning towels (wash in hot water with detergent at end of each day)	
Nitrile gloves (for use as needed)	
Dish gloves	
Apron	
Goggles (for mixing sanitizing solution)	

What to Clean and Sanitize & Frequency?

What to Clean and Sanitize	How Frequently
Packing table	1-2x/day
Host table: table top, back of chairs	1-2 x/day
Gate lock	Evening
Toilet (s): door knobs, toilet seat, inside and outside door.	Evening
Handwashing station: wash bin, edge, faucets, spigots	Evening
Scale, Harvest trays	Evening
Tool handles: clippers, shovels, wheelbarrows	Evening
Other surfaces?	

How to Make Basic Sanitizing Solution

Using Bleach:

- 5 tablespoons (1/3 cup) of bleach to 1 gallon water OR 4 teaspoons per quart.
- Make fresh each day (chlorine volatilizes)
- Put in spray bottle

Using hydrogen peroxide:

- Place full strength 3% in spray bottle
- For sanitizing baths using concentrated solution, prepare appropriate dilution:

USE THIS AMOUNT OF 35% HYDROGEN PEROXIDE	AND THIS AMOUNT OF WATER*	TO MAKE THIS AMOUNT OF 3% HYDROGEN PEROXIDE
1 part	11 parts	12 parts
1 and 1/4 cups	14 and 3/4 cups	1 gallon (16 cups)
1 and 1/4 tablespoons	3/4 cups + 2 and 3/4 tablespoons	1 cup (16 tablespoons)
1/4 cup + 1 tablespoon	3 and 1/2 cups + 3 tablespoons	1 quart (4 cups)

Alternative sanitizers- EPA list of approved disinfectants for Covid-19: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>

Standard Operating Procedures for Safe-Food Handling During COVID-19

General SOP for Cleaning and Sanitizing Food Contact Surfaces

There are 4 general steps that should always be used for cleaning and sanitizing surfaces that come in contact with food. For your SOPs on cleaning harvest and packing containers, you should note if you are using a hose, power washer, or dunk tank, and any other relevant details, such as the type of disinfectant used.

1. Clean and sanitize wash bin.
2. Pre-rinse surface with clean water to remove any visible soil
3. Wash with food-safe soap and water, and brush (avoid using sponges)
4. Rinse with water to remove soil and soap residues
5. Sanitize with disinfectant
6. Allow to air dry
 - o If using Storox or other hydrogen peroxide/peracetic acid product, note the percent and parts per million used, how measured, etc...
 - o If using chlorine, note percent solution used, and how measured, etc.
7. Store harvest tools & equipment away from risk of exposure.

SOP: Cleaning & sanitizing Bathroom Facilities

- Food safety champion (FSC) will check bathroom twice while farm is operational
- FSC will make sure toilet paper and hand washing station well-stocked
- FSC will clean port-a-potty once during farm operating time
 - o Wash hands and put on rubber gloves
 - o rinse with hose
 - o brush/wipe toilet seat and surrounding area with diluted bleach solution
 - o swab floor of unit using mop and diluted bleach
 - o rinse out unit with hose
 - o clean all brushes, towels and mop used in above process
 - o wash hands after completing

SOP: Cleaning & Sanitizing Produce Packing & Holding Areas

- Wash hands and put on rubber gloves
- Clean and sanitize harvest table following four step procedure.
- Wash hands after completing/before moving to next task
- Food safety lead will monitor area during work session and repeat above procedure as needed
- Food safety lead will make sure packing crates/buckets are clean and sanitized before produce placed in them
- Food safety lead will remind farmers working in packing area to avoid touching face/mask and wash their hands if they become contaminated

SOP: Cleaning and Disinfecting Harvest Trays

- Wash hands and put on rubber gloves
- Set up 4 plastic bins side by side on folding table for designated pre-rinse, wash with soap, rinse, and sanitizing.
- Follow four step procedure in each bin:
 - 1) Remove all dirt by spraying tray with clean water from hose;
 - 2) scrub with soap and water solution and scrub with designated brush;
 - 3) rinse off soap with hose;
 - 4) sanitize by spraying trays liberally with sanitizing solution and designated scrub brush to cover all surfaces.
- Stack trays on designated sanitized table and allow to air dry.

SOP: Cleaning and sanitizing tools (wheelbarrows, shovels, harvest tools, etc.)

- Wash hands and put on rubber gloves
- Rinse all tools with clean water from hose and remove visible dirt
- Spray tool with soap and water solution and use scrub brush on handle
- Rinse tool with clean water from hose
- Spray with sanitizing solution
- Place in drying rack and let air dry
- Wash hands before moving to next task

SOP Harvesting

- Wash hands and put on clean work gloves
- Use clean/sanitized harvest tools and trays (located in area designated “clean”)
- Place harvest trays on tables set up along main path of field.
- Take one tray at a time to harvest fresh produce and carry full tray to “harvest table”
- Always maintain 6 ft. physical distancing with other farmers
- When done harvesting, remove gloves, wash hands

SOP Packing/Distributing

- Wash hands and put on clean gloves
- Weigh produce on sanitized scale; have another farmer record in harvest book
- Transfer fresh produce into bags and place on “For Distribution” table.
- Check that distributor’s vehicle is clean and encourage them to clean hands and wear bandana/mask for delivery.
- Carry bag/transfer with clean wheelbarrow to Distributor’s car/farm stand and transfer bags to back of clean and sanitized car for distribution to customers.
- Remove gloves, wash hands and if returning to weighing tasks, don new gloves and mask

SOP: Break Area

- Before taking a break:
 - wash hands for 20 seconds & dry with single use towel
 - remove mask & place with personal items;
 - wash hands again for 20 seconds & dry with single use towel
- Maintain 6 ft. social distancing.
- Avoid sharing snacks that may cause risk of virus transmission.
- Put away snacks after each use.
- Wash hands for 20 seconds, reapply mask, wash hands again.
- Clean and sanitize break table after break and at end of day.

SOP: Farm Stand Procedures

- Post signage regarding farm stand instructions.
- Always maintain 6ft physical distancing among all volunteers and customers.
- Wash hands and put on appropriate gloves and masks for handling produce.
- Set up pop-up, table, chairs and sanitize surfaces.
- Designate a waiting line for customers with tape or chalk starting 6 ft from farm stand and lay out lines 6 ft apart where additional customers should wait to maintain physical separation requirements. Serve 1 customer at a time.
- Ask customers to name or point at what items they want and what quantity.
 - Volunteers will fill clean bags with produce and place on designated “pick up table” to maintain 6 ft physical separation.
 - Another volunteer will monitor/help maintain customer separation and donation container with own 6ft physical distancing-will also hand customers safe food handling practices sheet.
- Volunteers should perform hand hygiene with soap and water before handling produce and wash hands when moving from one task to another.