



Department of Inspectional Services
Worcester, Massachusetts

Inspectional Services

John R. Kelly,
Commissioner

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FARMERS MARKET LICENSING GUIDELINES

To participate at a Seasonal Farmers Market in the City of Worcester, you must first obtain a "Permit to Operate as a Seasonal Retail Vendor/Participant of a Farmers Market."

Seasonal Permits are issued from November 1st and expire April 30th (winter season) and from May 1st thru October 31st (summer season.)

Payment in the amount of \$25.00 is due with each application. Applications can be obtained at 25 Meade St, Room 203 or by calling the Food Protection Program at 508-799-1198 ex.33030. Applications are also available on the City of Worcester webpage in the Document Center.

Please note that each location and season will require a separate filing and fee.

Farmer's Market Vendors that Require a Retail Food Permit

Some farmer's markets, who traditionally have offered locally grown produce and farm products, have expanded into retail food operations offering processed foods. Farmer's market vendors that sell food products and processed foods other than fruits, vegetables, honey, and eggs shall be licensed as a seasonal retail food operation and inspected by the City of Worcester Inspectional Services in accordance with Massachusetts Regulation 105 CMR 590.000 - Minimum Sanitation Standards for Food Establishments - Chapter X. Examples of processed foods commonly sold at farmer's markets include pies, cakes, breads, jams and jellies, candy, and baked goods.

The City of Worcester, Department of Inspectional Services Food Protection Program will assess the facilities available at the farmer's market, and prohibit any food-handling operation that cannot be safely performed. In addition, Inspectional Services may prohibit the sale of certain food items if the items cannot be handled and maintained in accordance with 105 CMR 590.000 requirements.

Approved Source

Processed foods sold at a farmer's market must be manufactured in a licensed food processing facility, a licensed food establishment, or a licensed residential kitchen. Copies of current residential kitchen permits, retail food establishment permits or food manufacturing licenses where the food was prepared must be submitted to Inspectional Services along with the vendor's application and payment.

Meat and poultry must be slaughtered in a federal and/or state licensed and inspected facility.

Product Labeling

All packaged foods must be labeled with the common or usual name of the product; list of ingredients in descending order of predominance by weight and a complete list of sub ingredients; net weight of product with dual declaration of net weight if product weighs one pound or more; name and address of the manufacturer, packer, or distributor (if the company is not listed in the current edition of the local telephone book under the name printed on the label, the street address must also be included on the label); nutrition labeling unless exempted by federal regulation; all FDA certified colors; all ingredients that contain a major food allergen, regardless if they might otherwise be exempted from labeling by being a spice, flavoring, coloring or incidental additive; the term "Keep refrigerated" or "Keep frozen" (if product is perishable). All perishable or semi-perishable foods require open-dating and recommended storage conditions printed, stamped, or embossed on the retail package. Once an open-date has been placed on a product, the date may not be altered.

Bulk, unpackaged foods that are available for consumer self-dispensing shall be labeled with the manufacturer's or processor's label that was provided with the food or a card, sign, or other method of notification. Bulk, unpackaged foods that are portioned to consumer specification need not be labeled if a health, nutrient content, or other claim is not made, however, ingredient and major food allergen information needs to be available to customers upon request.

Food Samples

Processed food samples should be cut, wrapped and secured in the licensed facility where they are manufactured, and must be protected from environmental and consumer contamination during transportation and display. Any food handling process involving exposed ready-to-eat foods must be closely evaluated for proper controls and restricted if there is any potential for contamination or growth of pathogenic organisms. If a vendor offers food sampling, Inspectional Services may impose additional hand washing requirements for that vendor.

Food Demonstrations

Vendors or market managers may wish to offer food/cooking demonstrations periodically during farmer's market season. These activities are held for promotional purposes and to generate interest at the farmer's market. Cooking demonstrations with small samples of cooked food maybe prepared and offered at the farmer's market for promotional and/or educational value with prior Inspectional Services notice, review, and approval. Safe food handling practices, including adequate food cooking temperatures, must be followed. Sample portions are to be kept small as the intent is that the food is not for food service.

Vendors cooking or preparing food onsite will be required to apply for a Temporary Food Service Permit in the amount of \$195.00.

We recommend that prospective applicants make inquiries to the Department of Inspectional Services, Food Protection Program at 508-799-1198 ex. 33030.