

Market Safety and Emergency Preparedness

All the moving parts at farmers markets create an environment ripe for accidents. In addition to setting up and breaking down booths, there are power cords to trip over, lugs of produce for shoppers to trip over, cars passing by; all while busy vendors, staff, and shoppers are focused on the business at hand. Not to mention that every sort of weather can complicate the best-laid plans at any time. Given the possible hazards, being prepared for emergencies and making your market as safe as possible just makes sense. Market staff, board, volunteers and vendors can all take specific steps to reduce the likelihood of a major accident or safety issue as well as to be prepared for possible emergencies.

“Emergency Procedures for Farmers Markets”

<http://www.mifma.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/Final-Flipchart.pdf>

Fortunately, the Michigan Farmers Market Association (MIFMA) has an excellent 32-page resource that provides a thorough overview of how to be prepared for a wide variety of emergencies. Downloading this resource and adapting it for your specific market could be a simple way of being prepared and training your staff, volunteers, vendors, and board members. You might also want to find out who among your market staff, volunteers or vendors have current first aid, CPR, or any other medical training.

Contents include:

- Checklist of materials to have available at your information booth (*e.g. first aid kit, gloves, flashlight, etc.*)
- “Call for Help” template for key phone numbers
- “Emergency Contacts” template
- Emergency Reporting incident report template
- Incident Report Form
- Emergency Evaluation Procedure and Script
- Medical Emergency – what to do
- Blood Borne Pathogens

Call for Help	
Record the address or street intersection of your farmers market here:	
Write in the following phone numbers below for the location of your farmers market. More numbers are available under the Emergency Contacts tab.	
Emergency 911	
Farmers Market:	Market Manager Cell:
Market Security:	Market Insurance Provider:

- Fire
- Flood
- Severe Weather/Tornado (*Ellensburg winds aside, thinking about how to prepare for earthquakes and tsunamis may be appropriate for the Northwest*)
- Broken Water Pipe inside the market
- Power Failure
- Gasoline or Chemical Spill
- Natural Gas or Propane Leak
- Civil Unrest
- Robbery
- Shooting
- Suspect Description Report
- Bomb Threat
- Contacts and Resources

Preventive Measures on Market Day

In addition to the recommendations in MIFMA’s “Emergency Preparedness for Farmers Markets,” consider making preventative measures part of every market day.

1. Create a “safety checklist” and assign someone to do a “safety walk-through” at the beginning of each market.
2. Eliminate any potential hazards and if that’s not possible, then call attention to them with flagging, cones, or bright materials that will get people’s attention.
3. Check each vendor’s booth to make sure they all have adequate canopy weights. Some markets keep “loaner weights” in case a vendor is missing theirs.
4. Consistently enforce other market and food safety rules. If there are any infractions, document what happened and any corrective measures recommended by the market in writing and with photos.
5. Communicate safety concerns, procedures and requirements regularly to market staff and vendors. Keep a log of all safety-related training.

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**The most common incidents
at farmers markets**

- Trip and fall accidents.
- Unsecured canopies injuring people and/or property.
- Vehicular accidents.



Incident Procedures

To ensure that emergencies are handled in the best possible way, establish “Incident Procedures” for your market. And make sure that everyone involved in your market knows what they are. This usually requires regular training and reminders. In addition, to giving your staff confidence and minimizing any panic, they can also help your insurance agent act on your behalf, avoid lawsuits, and defend any claims.

Your Incident Procedures should include a “communication plan” to establish who gets contacted (e.g., emergency services, market staff, board, vendors, the media, insurance agent) and when. It will also include the Incident Report Form to document what happened in writing and with photos or drawings that diagram the scene. If possible, try to get the names and contact information for anyone who witnessed the accident. Some incidents can take a long time to be resolved, so be sure to keep all incident documentation well organized and filed in a secure manner.