

Hidden Harvest Ottawa

DRAFT COVID-19 Guidelines - Volunteers

Hidden Harvest Ottawa (HHO), recognizes the gravity of the current context of COVID-19, and is establishing the following Guidelines to ensure the health and safety of our volunteers, Neighbourhood Leaders, home owners, food agency staff and volunteers, and the general public during this summer's harvest season.

These Guidelines have been developed with information from local and national health authorities. It outlines minimum standards to be followed.

Changes may be made to these Guidelines in response to new information from Public Health agencies. By signing these Guidelines you acknowledge that it is your responsibility to have reviewed the latest Guidelines shared with you. Thank you for your time, and for your continued support!

FRUIT PICKING AND SHARING GUIDELINES

1. Everyone involved must sign an agreement to abide by COVID-19 Guidelines
 - Children under the age of 16 will not be allowed to attend HHO events during the 2020 season, unless the child is held by a parent / guardian throughout the harvest event (ie. an infant in a carrier)

2. Everyone attending an Event will declare that they are symptom-free and low-risk
 - Volunteers and NLs will review the **Ontario Government Self-Assessment Tool** (<https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/>) and declare that they “do not seem to have symptoms or be part of an at-risk group”.
 - Anyone who is feeling unwell, who has had symptoms of COVID-19 within 14 days, who has recently come into contact with someone who has shown symptoms, or is a member of an at-risk group, is not able to host an event at their home or pick fruit.

3. No more than 9 individuals are allowed to participate in an Event
 - Currently the Ontario Government allows for groups of 10 or less.

4. Physical Distancing efforts must be in effect at all times
 - The site of the fruit pick must have enough space for fruit pickers to maintain at least 2m, or 6ft, between them.
 - If you sign up, show up! All volunteers acknowledge that registering for an event is committing to attend, and that if they cannot make it they will cancel their spot by clicking the button in their confirmation email. Due to the importance of spacing, extra spots will not be opened this year to account for volunteer no-shows:
 - There are times that physical distancing will not be possible due to physical safety concerns, such as holding a ladder - these occurrences are to be limited to only as-needed, and at the discretion of the individuals involved.

If the above policies are met, the Harvest Event can be planned to proceed. Volunteers and tree registrants then must then follow the guidelines below at the event:

Before the Harvest

1. Neighbourhood Leaders (NLs) are volunteers who have accepted the responsibility to organize the Harvest Event. In advance, NLs will discuss the event with the tree owner, confirm the food agency the fruit will be donated to, gather containers that the fruit will be donated in, and ensure that all needed equipment will be available and sanitized for the event. *The virus is easily inactivated by using simple disinfectants such as store-bought disinfectants, and alternatively diluted bleach solution prepared daily.*¹
2. All volunteer Fruit Pickers, including NLs, will:
 - Declare that they have reviewed the Ontario Self-Assessment Tool, and that they “do not seem to have symptoms or be part of an at-risk group.”
 - Volunteers will not be penalized for not attending the harvest if they develop any symptoms or an increased risk of COVID-19 prior to the event. In this case, the volunteer should cancel their spot through their confirmation email, and also make an effort to contact the Leader to advise them of the cancellation.
 - If NLs have a change in symptoms or level of risk prior to the event, they will do their best to find a replacement NL, but if no one is found they will cancel the event and notify all volunteers of the cancellation.
3. Before the event, Tree Owners will:
 - Sterilize ladders and rakes before the event for use by volunteers.
 - Open the harvest site in advance, and make equipment easily accessible so volunteers are not required to unhook gates, open doors, etc.
 - Provide a location for the disposal of compost gathered during the volunteer’s pre-pick tidy of the area.
 - Stay in the house during the pick and not offer refreshments or interact with the volunteers. If absolutely necessary, any directions or instructions must be provided from at least 6 feet away.

During the Harvest Event

1. Before picking, the Neighbourhood Leader will:
 - Read aloud the talking points from **Safe Harvesting Practices** and ensure all picking volunteers understand the precautions that will be taken.
 - Take and record attendance. This can help public health with tracking efforts if anyone becomes infected.
 - Divide up tasks and equipment, ensure equipment is not shared.
2. All volunteer Fruit Pickers including NLs acknowledge that they will:
 - Wear a face mask or face cloth to prevent droplet spread. Please bring your own face mask if possible, and put it on prior to arrival on site. Consider bringing an extra mask in case yours becomes too damp to be effective during the event. A facemask will also be available if you

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do not have your own. [How to wear a non-medical mask or face covering properly \(video, 1 min\)](#)

- Sanitize hands upon arrival on site and practice proper hygiene practices (avoid touching face, sneeze/cough etiquette, proper hand washing/sanitizing). Please consider bringing your own hot, soapy water in a thermos, or bring your own hand sanitizer. Hand sanitizer will also be available if you do not have your own.
- Bring and use your own gloves, if required, for cleaning the site of compost materials. If gloves are used, hands should be sanitized before and after using gloves, and proper glove removal techniques should be followed. Gloves will also be available if you do not have your own.
- Bring your own bags or boxes, as needed, for carrying their share of fruit. There is to be no sharing of bags between volunteers.
- Keep personal belongings together and not share belongings with other volunteers (water bottles, sunscreen and personal towels/cloths for sweat)
- Not access to the tree owner's home. Please use the bathroom prior to attending an event.
- Agree that attendance at harvest events will be taken, and that contact information may be shared with authorities should contact tracing be required at a later date.
- Use ladders only if they choose to. Ladder safety procedures must be in effect at all times: ladders must be secured by a second person holding the base of the ladder.

3. Physical distancing:

- Unless picking with members of the same household, everyone attending the Event must maintain a physical distance of 2m or 6ft whenever it is possible to do so while maintaining physical safety.
- Volunteers will be encouraged to divide up tasks and complete them individually while social distancing. For example, only one person holds the ladder, one person weights the fruit, etc.
- *The length of an extended fruit picking pole is an excellent measure of 6 ft, and can be used to visualize proper distance by volunteers at all pick sites.*

4. Be kind, and err on the side of caution:

- Please be conscientious, responsible, supportive, and respectful of each other and the safety Guidelines that we ask everyone to uphold. The strength of our group is in the trust and dependability between every autonomous individual involved. We trust you all to use common sense, and err on the side of extra precaution, during this pandemic.

5. Failure to comply with COVID-19 protocols:

- Due to the severity of the circumstances, if an individual does not follow the Guidelines they will be asked to leave the site. If asked to leave a second time, they will be removed from our volunteer list for the 2020 season. Volunteers may also be warned or fined by bylaw enforcement officers.

If you wish to make your own disinfectant for equipment, you can use a sanitizing solution of either 75% or higher alcohol based product or bleach at a concentration of 1 teaspoon (5 mL) per cup (250 mL) or 4 teaspoons (20 mL) per litre (1000 mL). Diluted bleach has a shelf life of 24 hours, so mix a fresh batch every day. See Health Canada for a list of disinfecting products <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19.html>

Fruit Sharing & Donation

1. Where possible, volunteers will be asked to keep only the fruit that they handle. Volunteers will be expected to bring their own containers to take home their share of the fruit.
2. All volunteers must have clean, sanitized hands, when handling fruit.²
3. The homeowner's share of the fruit will be left on their porch or where appropriate, to ensure contactless transfer.
4. Only 1 person will be responsible for delivering fruit to food agency partners, and they must wear a mask when dropping off the fruit, and are to sanitize their hands before and after making the delivery.
5. HHO will not accept returns of tote bags from Food Agencies: they are to be washed or properly disposed of.

Key Resources Used in the Development of HHO COVID-19 Guidelines

Ministry of Health

[Safe Food Donation Reference](#)

Ottawa Public Health

[Guidelines for Food Banks, Donation Centres and Volunteers](#)

Volunteer Ottawa

[Safety Protocols and Volunteer Resources](#)

Government of Canada

[How to Use Hand Sanitizer](#)

[How and When to Wear a Mask](#)

Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association

[Resources for Growers and Workers](#)

Work Safe BC

[Glove removal procedure](#)

Workers Health and Safety

[Gloves at Work - Safeguards for workers for confronting COVID-19?](#)

² Outside of health care settings, the Public Health Agency of Canada says, "Gloves are only recommended when workers will come into contact with an ill person, or a contaminated object or environment."
https://www.whsc.on.ca/Files/Resources/COVID-19-Resources/WHSC_Pandemic_Gloves-at-Work_Safeguards-for-workers.aspx