

Sampling is a good way to promote your product and introduce people to local foods. It can also be an opportunity to spread viruses and bacteria. However, there are methods you can use to reduce this risk.

Do I need a Public Market Permit for Fruit and Vegetable Samples?

No, a public market permit is not required. However, there are precautions that must be taken:



- Fruits or vegetables used in sampling must be pre-washed using an approved source of potable water.
- The knife used to cut the samples at the market must be exchanged every two hours and replaced with a clean and sanitized knife. Separate labelled bags or containers must be provided for the storage of dirty and clean dishes to prevent cross contamination. Alternatively, disposable serving utensils/ dishes can be used, and are to be disposed of and replaced with new disposable serving utensils/ dishes every two hours.

- The Food Safety Specialist may discontinue the allowance of preparing fruit and/or vegetable samples on-site, depending on the frequency, the number of products sampled, or the existing sanitary conditions.

Handwashing:

- A gravity-fed handwashing station must be present during the preparation of the samples.
- The handwashing station must include a sink or basin and a sufficient supply of running water, liquid or powder soap and single service towels.
- In the event that plumbing facilities are not provided, the water may be gravity fed from a water container provided it contains an on/off valve, wastewater collected in a container below the valve, and wastewater disposed in an appropriate manner (i.e., in a toilet, janitorial, or handwashing sink) when full.

Preparing Fruits and Vegetable Samples Prior to the Market

- Be sure to store fresh fruits and vegetables separately, away from unprocessed or raw food items in order to avoid cross-contamination
- Before and after handling fresh fruits and vegetables, always wash your hands thoroughly for at least 20 seconds with water and soap.

- Before preparing/ cutting fresh fruits and vegetables prior to attending the market:
 - a. Thoroughly wash them under potable running water, unless otherwise specified - do not use soap or detergents.
 - b. Scrub fresh fruits and vegetables that have firm surfaces, such as oranges, potatoes and carrots with a clean produce brush. The flesh of improperly washed fresh fruits and vegetables can become contaminated during cutting.
 - c. Cut away any damaged or bruised areas on fresh fruits and vegetables since harmful bacteria can thrive in these areas.
 - d. Clean your knife after cutting these damaged or bruised areas to prevent contaminating the rest of the fruit.

- Thoroughly wash all food equipment such as counter tops, cutting boards and utensils that come into contact with fresh produce with hot water and soap. Rinse surfaces and sanitize them with a mild bleach solution (5 mL [1 tsp.] household bleach (5.25%) per 750 mL [3 cups] of water) and air-dry.
- Once cut, immediately place peeled or cut fruits and vegetables on/into a separate clean plate/container to prevent them from becoming cross-contaminated.
- Refrigerate fresh fruits and vegetables at 4°C (40°F) within **two hours** of peeling or cutting. Leftover cut fruits and vegetables should be discarded if

left at room temperature for more than two hours.

For more information on food safety, contact your local Food Safety Specialist, or visit the Department of Agriculture's food safety website at <http://www.gov.ns.ca/agri/foodsafety>