



Health and Safety at BC Farmers' Markets: General FAQ for Market Organizers and Board Members

1 - As an employer in BC, what are my legal requirements?

BC's *Workers Compensation Act* and the *Occupational Health and Safety Regulation* set out the legal requirements you must follow as an employer operating in British Columbia.

As an employer, you must ensure the health and safety not only of your own workers, but also ensure your work does not negatively affect (or introduce hazards) to other workers present at a worksite (e.g. vendors).

Read [HERE](#) the overview of legislative and regulatory occupational health and safety requirements.

2 - As a farmers' market, do I need to be registered with WorkSafeBC?

If you start a business and hire a worker in British Columbia, you are required to register with WorkSafeBC.

If you are required to register and fail to do so, you may be subject to a monetary penalty. If you are unregistered and your worker is injured on the job, you will likely also be charged with a penalty reflecting the dollar value of the claims costs for that injured worker. These costs include wage loss, health care, vocational rehabilitation and pensions.

[Find out more](#)

3 - How much does it cost to register with WorkSafeBC?

When you register with WorkSafeBC, a classification unit will be assigned to your account (firm).

A classification unit describes particular services, materials, and equipment commonly found within a particular industrial activity.

[Find out more](#)

4 - What are my responsibilities owed to contractors?

If you're hiring a contractor, the first thing you will want to do is confirm whether that person is registered with WorkSafeBC. Read more [here](#) about what you need to know and do to hire registered or unregistered contractors.

Responsibilities owed to contractors are very complex. WorkSafeBC recommends that you contact the [Employers' Advisers Office](#) for further advice and assistance before hiring a contractor:

Toll Free within Canada: 1-800-925-2233

Lower Mainland: 604-713-0303

Email: eao@eao-bc.org

5 - How can you tell if the person helping at your farmers' market is a worker or volunteer?

The answer differs, depending on the circumstances, so WorkSafeBC makes every determination on a case-by-case basis. The [FAQ sheet](#) developed for BC Ranchers by AgSafeBC and WorkSafeBC may help you understand some of the factors that are considered in determining whether someone is a worker or a volunteer.

Health and safety responsibilities for another employer's workers and for contractors and subcontractors are complex. WorkSafeBC recommends you contact the Employers' Adviser Office for advice and assistance:

Toll Free within Canada: 1-800-925-2233

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6 - What is an organization's duty of care to volunteers, staff and customers and how does public policy, legislation, and emergency measures apply to volunteers?

Volunteers may expose themselves to health and safety risks by helping market organizers. From an occupational and health perspective, there is legal risk (for the organization) and civil liability for volunteers. In most provinces, organizations continue to have a responsibility for the health and safety of their premises, which include people visiting and/or providing volunteer services on their premises.

Laws and regulations that impact volunteers vary, particularly during public health emergencies, among provinces and territories. For this reason, it is all the more important to implement policies to ensure volunteer services are offered in a safe and responsible manner, and that appropriate regulatory requirements are observed.

Listen to [this Volunteers Canada podcast](#) for general information applicable to all provinces and helpful practices to consider for AGMs, volunteer engagement and insurance considerations. You can also read the [FAQ sheet](#) about volunteer engagement in public health emergencies from Volunteers Canada. **Read the following Q&As for information specific to BC.**

Farmers' markets should also speak with their general liability insurance provider to better understand what it is covered with regards to volunteers' health and safety. As a BCAFM

member farmers' market, your market may be eligible to access a group rate on farmers' market insurance from The Co-operators. For information, [visit this webpage](#).

7 - What does my market need to do about bullying and harassment?

Bullying and harassment is considered a hazard of the workplace which, like other workplace hazards, must be addressed by the employer. WorkSafeBC has created policy defining what is meant by bullying and harassment and stipulating the reasonable steps an employer must take to prevent or minimize it.

Included in these required steps are the development of:

- a policy statement
- reporting procedures
- investigation procedures
- worker and supervisor training

[Find out more](#)