

## **FOOD SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR PUBLIC MARKETS**

### ***BACKGROUND:***

Public Markets have enjoyed new popularity and have seen substantial growth throughout the province. With this popularity and growth, there has also been a significant shift from the marketing of only farm-fresh and/or traditional food products such as meat, vegetables, and non-hazardous home-baking, to a wide variety of food products. With changing product lines and formats, the title “Public Market” has been chosen to represent this broader scope of operation.

Public Markets have become a venue where many novice entrepreneurs attempt to start their businesses. A public market often affords the opportunity to interface with the primary producers of food products. From the perspective of consumer protection this shift has become a concern to the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture - Food Protection and Enforcement Division. The Department recognizes the need to apply a level of control that would ensure consumer protection and at the same time, appreciates the need for entrepreneurial opportunities.

The Food Protection and Enforcement Division looks forward to working together with the farming community and other community groups, along with individuals associated with food service at these venues, to assist in the delivery of the food safety message. This joint venture should assist everyone involved in building and maintaining a strong reputation for food quality while ensuring a safer food supply for Nova Scotia.

### ***POLICY:***

It is the role of the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture - Food Protection and Enforcement Division to inspect all premises, whether permanent or temporary, where food is prepared or served to the public. This legislated responsibility is vested through the *Nova Scotia Health Protection Act* and pursuant *Food Safety Regulations* that have been developed through Section 105 of this Act.

It is also the policy of the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture to use the administrative processes and standards contained in this guideline to deem acceptability of vendors selling food products at Public Markets.

The Food Protection and Enforcement Division shall issue Public Market Permits to organizers for a location/ structure of a market, in addition to Public Market Vendors Permits to those vendors who meet the intent of this guideline and are deemed to be acceptable. The Food Protection and Enforcement Division will take enforcement action toward vendors and organizers who consistently do not meet the guidelines.

## ***DEFINITIONS:***

- 1. Administrator:** An inspector appointed as the Administrator by the Minister for the purposes of Part II (Food Safety) of the *Nova Scotia Health Protection Act*, and/or the individual appointed as the same within the *NS Meat Inspection Act*.
- 2. Event Organizer:** The individual responsible for allowing vendors to set up in association with the market, thus responsible for excluding a vendor from the event.
- 3. Farm-gate:** Land owned, leased or used by a producer to raise animals for sale and includes an individual's residence.
- 4. Food:** Any substance intended for human consumption whether cooked, or used in its raw state.
- 5. Food Establishment:** Any premises, including a mobile, stationary, temporary or permanent facility or location and the surroundings under control of the same person, in which food is processed, manufactured, prepared, labelled, served, sold, offered for sale or distributed free of charge, dispensed, displayed, stored or distributed, but does not include a dwelling except a dwelling used for commercial food production.
- 6. Not for Profit:** A community organization or a recognized charity operated for the good of a community or community organization. It does not include an individual or group operating for personal gain.
- 7. Potentially Hazardous Food:** Any food or ingredient capable of supporting the growth of pathogenic micro-organisms or the production of the toxins of such organisms.
- 8. Prepare:** Contingent on table, page 12.
- 9. Public Market:** A venue where organized groups of vendors gather on a regular basis in a common location to market food products for which they are directly responsible. The sale of Schedule A products at these venues is restricted to no more than two business days per week. There are no time restrictions on the sale of Schedule B products. This includes the operation of Farmers Markets and Flea Markets.
- 10. Public Market Permit:** A food establishment permit granted to the event organizer specific to the location where a public market is operated. The organizer of the public market would require application and approval for this permit prior to the Food Safety Specialist issuing Public Market Vendor Permits for the market.
- 11. Public Market Vendors Permit:** A food establishment permit granted to a booth operator in accordance with the NS Public Market Guidelines. This permit must be associated with a market or markets holding the Public Market Permit.

12. **Restricted Food Establishment Permit:** A food establishment permit that restricts or allows specific activities or the sale of certain foods.
13. **Vendor:** A person who occupies a stall or space in a market for the purpose of offering product for sale.
14. **Utensils/ Dishware:** Any implement that comes in contact with food when preparing, dispensing, or servicing food. These include, but are not limited to forks, knives, spoons, bowls, cups, plates, serving dishes, tongs or lifters.

#### ***ABOUT FOOD PROTECTION AND ENFORCEMENT STAFF:***

The Food Protection and Enforcement Division of Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture are represented by Food Safety Specialists and Primary Product Inspectors. The Food Safety Specialists are responsible for permitting and compliance monitoring of all food establishments as defined by the *NS Food Safety Regulations*. The Primary Product Inspectors are primarily responsible for the meat inspection programs and the subsequent legislation governing these programs. All Food Safety Specialists are Certified Public Health Inspectors through the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors. Also, both the Food Safety Specialists and Primary Product Inspectors maintain the Certified Professional - Food Safety credential through the National Environmental Health Association (USA). Our staff is available to provide advice on food safety issues.

#### ***PROCEDURES:***

1. The public market organizer will be required to apply for and obtain a Public Market Permit for the public market location.
2. The organizer of a Public Market will provide a list of participating food vendors selling products under Schedule A. This list must be kept current and submitted to the Food Safety Specialist if there are changes to the vendors list. There is no requirement for the organizer to provide a list of Schedule B food vendors, or any other vendors not related to food.
3. Vendors selling food, as described in Schedule A, will require a Public Market Vendors Permit.
4. A vendor selling Schedule A products can obtain a Public Market Vendors Permit which will allow the vendor to sell for a maximum of two days at any one market. A vendor can apply for more than one market location on the same permit, if the markets operate on different days.
5. Vendors selling foods as described in Schedule B do not require a Public Market Vendors Permit.

6. Vendors are not permitted to sell foods as described in Schedule C.
7. A mobile is exempt from the Public Market Guidelines provided they are operating from their Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture permitted unit.
8. Vendors shall make application to the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture and are subject to inspection and permitting fees as required. To prevent delays in application processing, it is advisable to submit the application a minimum of 14 days prior to the event.

**STANDARDS:**

1. Operation of a Public Market shall be in accordance with the NS Food Safety Regulations and/or these Guidelines.
2. Proposed new market structures or renovations made to existing structures must be forwarded to the Food Safety Specialist for review, recommendation, and approval prior to the proposed changes being made.
3. All potentially hazardous foods (Schedule A) offered for sale in Public Markets must originate from an approved source. Home preparation of such foods is prohibited.
4. All vendors wishing to provide food samples of products under Schedule A must obtain a Public Market Vendors Permit from the Food Safety Specialist. At all times, food safety measures must be considered. This would include the use of adequate hot or cold holding measures, use of single use utensils or need for additional cleaned and sanitized utensils, use of disposable gloves, and other requirements outlined in these guidelines.
5. Vendors wishing to provide fruit or vegetable samples on-site do not require a permit. They must follow the **Appendix – Fruit and Vegetable Food Safety**, page 16. If the vendor wishes to have periodic samples available and prepare those samples on-site, the following conditions must be met:
  - a. Fruits or vegetables used in sampling must be pre-washed using an approved source of potable water.
  - b. A gravity-fed handwashing station, as described on page 13 of the guidelines, must be present during the preparation of the samples.
  - c. The knife used to cut the samples must be exchanged every two hours and replaced with a clean and sanitized knife.

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.

6. All vendors wishing to provide fruit/ vegetable based condiments must follow the requirements outlined in **Appendix – Fruit and Vegetable Food Safety**, page 16.
7. All vendors, permitted or non-permitted, must comply with labelling of all food products in accordance with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency document, Guide to Food Labelling and Advertising. Basic food labelling requirements include:
  - Common Name
  - Net Quantity Declaration
  - Producer Name and Address
  - List of Ingredients
  - Durable Life Date (Best Before)

As stated in the Guide to Food Labelling and Advertising, in certain circumstances the vendor can have the above information posted at the vendor's booth.

8. The Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture and Nova Scotia Health Protection and Promotion advise children, elderly, and those who are immune-compromised, not to consume unpasteurized juice. Such product must be labelled "Unpasteurized" and must be refrigerated at 4C (40F), or frozen. See Schedule A in these guidelines for more requirements if selling such products.
9. The foods listed in this Guideline apply to Public Markets only. The sale of these foods outside a market setting may be subject to other federal, provincial or municipal restrictions.

#### ***SCHEDULE 'A' FOOD PRODUCTS:***

These foods are classed as potentially hazardous foods. Storage of such food must be at a temperature of colder than 4C (40F) or hotter than 60C (140F). The vendor must demonstrate to the satisfaction of a Food Safety Specialist that sufficient controls are in place to ensure a safe product. This includes equipment and processes at the approved source of origin, while transporting the food product and during display at the market. Foods prepared at the approved location must be stored at an approved location until the food is vended at the market(s). Unsold Schedule A products must be held at an approved location in order to be re-sold at a public market. Inspected meat products are exempted from this requirement.

The duration or time at which potentially hazardous foods are at temperatures between 4C (40F) and 60C (140F) **cannot be used** as the only control of microbial growth for potentially hazardous food. Equipment approved by the Food Safety Specialist to keep potentially hazardous foods at

temperatures colder than 4C (40F) or hotter than 60C (140F) is required. Potentially hazardous foods cannot be kept at room temperature.

To obtain a Schedule A permit, a proposed vendor of pre-packaged unpasteurized juice or cider must source the juice/ cider from a facility evaluated by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). Written documentation is to be submitted to the Food Safety Specialist to confirm the fruit is pressed at one of these evaluated facilities. Inspection criteria for producers of unpasteurized juices are outlined in the CFIA document, *Code of Practice for the Production and Distribution of Unpasteurized Apple and Other Fruit Juice/Cider in Canada*, and the *CFIA Code of Practice - General Principles of Food Hygiene, Composition, and Labelling*.

Juices and ciders from these sources, which are offered for sale and are not pasteurized must be labelled “unpasteurized”, properly stored, and refrigerated at 4C (40F), or frozen. Ciders/ juices which are pasteurized to the CFIA standard of a 5-log reduction of *E. coli* O157:H7, but are not commercially sterile, also require refrigeration at 4C (40F) or colder, or be kept frozen.

Foods not listed but classed as potentially hazardous may also be offered for sale upon the approval of a Food Safety Specialist.

#### **Examples of Schedule A foods:**

- Raw Meat and meat products
- Raw fish and shellfish
- Poultry, poultry products
- Eggs (See # 8 under Quick Reference Guide chart)
  - Uninspected (“farm fresh”) eggs must only be sold to the final consumer
- Fruit and vegetable juices processed on-site
- Unpasteurized juices, ciders
- Milk and dairy products
- Cut fruits and vegetables
- Fruits and vegetables to be marketed as washed for ready-to-eat purposes
- Potentially hazardous dessert products, i.e., cream pastries, meringue topped pies, cheesecakes
- Any other food that is capable of supporting bacterial growth

#### ***SCHEDULE ‘B’ FOOD PRODUCTS:***

These food products are not considered potentially hazardous food and will be considered acceptable products for sale in a public market.

Foods not listed but determined **not** to be potentially hazardous food by a Food Safety Specialist may be offered for sale in a Public Market.

#### **Examples of Schedule B Foods:**

- Raw fruit and vegetables (whole, cut necessary for harvesting purposes only)

- Honey
- Jams and jellies
- Live lobster
- Baked goods and pastries (excluding cream pastries and meat filled pies)
- Hard candy and fudge
- Home preserved pickles and relish with pH less than 4.6 (bottled and sealed in acceptable preserve jars), or a water activity of less than 0.85
- Pasteurized Fruit Juices
- Maple Products
- Chocolate
- Reconstituted powdered drinks (water used must be from a commercially bottled source, an approved municipal water supply, or a potable water supply registered by Nova Scotia Environment)
- Coffee and tea (milk/ cream to be kept at temperatures of 4C (40F) or colder, and water used must be from a potable water source approved by the Food Safety Specialist)

### ***SCHEDULE 'C' FOOD PRODUCTS:***

These foods present the highest risk to public health when conditions are compromised or may contravene existing legislation. **These products will not be permitted** to be offered for sale to the public in a Public Market.

### **Examples of Schedule C Foods:**

- Raw Milk
- Low acid canned/ bottled food (home produced) such as tomatoes, salsa, mushrooms, beans, and carrots (a pH of equal to or greater than 4.6)
- Home bottled meat, canned fish, smoked fish, shellfish and seafood products which are not produced in a licensed facility
- Uninspected meat or poultry; or meat and poultry products as defined in the *Meat Inspection Act* or *Sale of Wildlife* as defined in the *Wildlife Act*
- Potentially hazardous food which has been stored at temperatures between 4C and 60C or prepared under unsanitary conditions
- Other such foods deemed to be unacceptable by the Food Safety Specialist

**QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE**  
Products and the Conditions for Sale

Product	Fresh or Unrefrigerated	Refrigerated	Frozen	See below for details
Fruit	Yes	Yes	Yes	5
Vegetables	Yes	Yes	Yes	2
Honey	Yes	n/a	n/a	1
Meat	No	Yes	Yes	1, 2, 6
Fish	No	Yes	Yes	1, 2, 6
Poultry	No	Yes	Yes	1, 2, 6
Dairy Products	No	Yes	Yes	1, 7
Baked Goods	Yes	Yes	Yes	3, 6
Eggs	No	Yes	n/a	8, 9
Cold Frozen Drinks	Yes	Yes	Yes	1, 4
PROCESSED FOODS				
Cabbage Rolls, Samosas, (with or without meat)	No	Yes	Yes	1, 6
Pizza	No	Yes	Yes	1, 6
Cured Ham or Bacon	No	Yes	Yes	1, 6
Pickled eggs	Yes	Yes	n/a	6, 9
Jams and Jellies	Yes	Yes	n/a	6
Pickled Vegetables	Yes	Yes	n/a	6
Relish	Yes	Yes	n/a	6
Candies	Yes	n/a	n/a	6
Fudge	Yes	n/a	n/a	6
Chocolate	Yes	n/a	n/a	6

1. Must comply with provincial and federal regulations and be considered from an approved source.
2. No low-acid home preserved or bottled vegetables or meat permitted, including those products that are pressure bottled.
3. No unrefrigerated cream filled or custard filled pastries, or pies with meringue.
4. Water must be from an approved source.
5. Cut melons must be wrapped and refrigerated.
6. Product requires adequate protection from consumer handling.
7. Only commercially pasteurized milk or milk products may be sold.
8. Only clean eggs stored at 4C (40F) are permitted for sale. Cracked eggs are prohibited.
9. Uninspected (i.e., 'farm fresh' eggs) can only be sold to the final consumer.

## ***FOOD HANDLING***

A person who has completed training in food safety acceptable to the Food Safety Specialist must be on site at all times during the operation of a food service booth selling Schedule A products at a public market and when these foods are being prepared off-site.

Food hygiene training per Section 28 of the NS Food Safety Regulations is required if serving foods from Schedule A. Food handler courses will not be mandatory for commercially pre-packaged Schedule A foods, including inspected pre-wrapped meat/ fish, or eggs.

Food safety training is recommended for public market vendors serving food from Schedule B.

Every person who works within the booth, preparing or serving food shall:

1. Be clean and wear clean outer garments used for no other purpose (aprons are suitable).
2. Confine hair in such a manner that it will not contaminate food (hair net, cap, etc.).
3. Not smoke while preparing or serving food.
4. Wash hands before handling foods and at frequent intervals.
5. Wash hands after using the washroom.
6. Not handle food or help with its preparation or serving if they have boils, infected wounds, respiratory diseases.

The potential for contamination of foods is increased at public markets while facilities to control contamination may be limited. If equipment requirements cannot be met at the market, preparation of Schedule A foods must take place at a facility approved by the Food Safety Specialist, using safe, acceptable food handling practices.

After receiving the application form, a Food Safety Specialist will contact the vendor about the submission and discuss the food handling issues specific to your proposed foodservice.

The mixing, cutting, chopping of foods, or making sandwiches on-site is restricted based on equipment availability at the market. See page 12, Preparation Table for details.

## ***RESTRICTIONS ON COOKING RAW MEATS/ POULTRY/ EGGS AT PUBLIC MARKETS***

The Department limits the type of foods served based on the principles of food safety. The Food Safety Specialist will advise you on what foods are or are not permitted.

***Commercially pre-cooked products are required except where processes, food handling, and equipment use is approved by the Food Safety Specialist. Refer to page 12, Preparation Table.***





Volumes and types of foods served will be dictated by the facilities available.

If raw meats/ poultry/ eggs are approved for use by the Food Safety Specialist, food service workers must observe the following precautions:

1. Meat patties must be pre-formed off site at an approved facility, and transported to the site under adequate refrigeration. They cannot be formed on site from bulk meat.
2. These foods must be kept properly refrigerated until placing on the grill.
3. Raw foods must be kept separated from cooked foods at all times. It is recommended that at least two people be involved, one to handle the raw food (e.g., putting on the grill) and the second to handle the cooked food, placing it in a roll, and serving to the customer.
4. Care must be taken to ensure all meats are thoroughly cooked. Minimum cooking temperatures for these foods can be obtained from the Food Safety Specialist. A metallic stemmed probe thermometer is required to be on-site and used to verify that adequate minimum cooking temperature are reached.
5. Documentation of temperature verification checks may be required by the Food Safety Specialist. This written information should be available at the vending booth for viewing during the food safety inspection.

**PREPARATION**

This table serves a purpose as a general guide and some situations may require discussion with the Food Safety Specialist prior to submission of the Public Market Vendor’s Permit application.

<b>d/w = dishwashing</b> <b>h/w = handwashing</b> <b>FSS = Food Safety Specialist</b>	<b>Equipment Availability</b>	Gravity fed h/w station only at booth; no plumbing on-site	Gravity fed h/w station at booth; communal plumbing for d/w on-site (hot and cold water)	Hot/ cold water (pressurized) h/w station in immediate vicinity of booth; communal d/w sinks on-site of adequate size for pot-ware OR in-booth d/w sink(s) of appropriate number and size to accommodate vendor operation to be reviewed/ approved by FSS; cooking equipment and appropriate surface for food contact (materials and adequate surface area)	Dedicated hot/ water (pressurized) h/w station within the booth; dedicated preparation/ d/w sink(s) on-site of appropriate number and size to accommodate vendor operation to be reviewed/ approved by FSS; cooking equipment and appropriate food contact surfaces (materials and adequate surface area)
<b>Levels of Preparation</b>					
<b>Level 1:</b> No preparation on-site (heat/ cook to serve, hot holding, cold holding only); all preparation at an approved facility					
<b>Level 2:</b> Minimal preparation on-site; in addition to first level, includes assembling, mixing, cooking					
<b>Level 3:</b> Full preparation, in addition to first and second level, includes cutting/ chopping, using re-usable dishware for public					

## ***TRANSPORTATION***

Foods in Schedule A which are prepared off site and are intended to be served at the public market must be prepared at a location approved by the Food Safety Specialist.

All food products capable of supporting bacterial growth must be transported at 4C (40F) or colder, or 60C (140F) or hotter, and must be transported in closed, food-grade containers.

## ***FOOD AND UTENSIL STORAGE***

Food shall be protected from contamination from foreign substances and adulteration. All food must be enclosed, covered, packaged or otherwise contained to protect food from contamination.

Provide storage off the floor or ground for single service articles and foods. The use of pallets, shelving, etc. to keep articles dry and reduce the risk of contamination from insects, dust, etc. is suggested.

## ***BOOTH OR STRUCTURE***

The booth or structure intended to house the Public Market vendor booth must be satisfactory to the Food Safety Specialist. Separation of the food preparation, service and storage area from the public access area is important to ensure controlled protection of food products.

A roof and floor is recommended to prevent dust and dirt from getting into food where grass or ground exists.

## ***HAND WASHING***

Proper hand washing is one of the most important steps in the prevention of food borne illness. Hand washing stations will be required when vendors have direct food contact with Schedule A products. The use of gloves is not considered a replacement for handwashing.

For these vendors, hand washing facilities is required within the food handling/ preparation area of each public market vending booth, or another configuration providing immediate access to food handlers. The public market organizer must submit to the Food Safety Specialist additional plumbing plans for review and approval.

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 of in an appropriate manner (i.e., in a toilet, janitorial, or handwashing sink) when full.

### ***DISHWASHING***

Facilities for washing and sanitizing utensils/ dishes should be available within the confines of the public market, or in the immediate vicinity. Communal facilities should consist of three sinks, able to immerse pot-ware, and must be supplied with pressurized hot and cold running water. All utensils/ dishes must be air dried. Instructions on how to properly wash, rinse, sanitize, and air dry dishware should be posted by the dishwashing area for vendor reference.

If dishwashing equipment is made available in the vendor booth, the appropriate number and size to accommodate proposed operation is to be reviewed and accepted by a Food Safety Specialist.

The absence of dishwashing on-site restricts the level of preparation for vendors, as outlined in the Preparation Table on page 12. If dishwashing is not available on-site, reusable utensils/ dishes should be replaced every two hours with clean, sanitized utensils/ dishes. 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.

### ***SINGLE SERVICE ARTICLES***

All articles used for service to the public must be single service only.

Condiments must not be served from open containers. Squeeze bottle dispensing is suitable.

Milk must be served/dispensed in its original container.

### ***WASTEWATER DISPOSAL***

All wastewater from a public market site operation must be:

1. Plumbed directly into a sanitary sewer or approved on-site sewage disposal system.
2. Where this is not practical, a suitable means of collecting the wastewater is required (see “Handwashing” section of these guidelines).

Proper maintenance of wastewater systems is mandatory.

## ***SOLID WASTE***

All garbage generated by the public market must be stored in covered, rodent and insect proof containers.

Covered litter containers must be provided close to each food booth. Additional containers (one approximately every 30 m [100ft]) should be provided on the site. Containers should be emptied as often as necessary, and adhere to provincial solid waste diversion requirements.

A commercial type container or dumpster should be provided at large markets and emptied as often as necessary.

## ***TOILET FACILITIES***

Toilets and provision for handwashing for food handlers in the vicinity of an outdoor public market, or in the building of a closed structure public market, are required. Toilet facilities for the public at a public market are recommended.

Where portable self-contained privies are to be used, it is the responsibility of the organizer(s) to ensure that a maintenance agreement for these units is in place prior to market operation. It is recommended that hand washing be conveniently located near the toilet facilities and should include running water, liquid or powdered soap and single service towels.

## ***CONTACT INFORMATION***

Please contact your local Food Safety Specialist from our website staff directory, <http://www.gov.ns.ca/agri/contactus/staffdir/> , under Legislation and Compliance Services, Food Protection and Enforcement.

## *APPENDIX*

### *FOOD SAFETY FOR FRUITS AND VEGETABLES (For Vendors Providing Samples or Condiments Only)*

Buying poor quality products and using improper storage, handling and preparation techniques for fresh produce can result in foodborne illness. To reduce the risk of illness, follow these food safety practices.

- Fresh fruits and vegetables can become contaminated with harmful microbes when they come into contact with un-processed food items such as meats and their juices. 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 hot water and soap.
- Before preparing/ cutting fresh fruits and vegetables:
  - Thoroughly wash them under potable running water, unless otherwise specified - do not use soap or detergents;
  - 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;
  - cut away any damaged or bruised areas on fresh fruits and vegetables since harmful bacteria can thrive in these areas;
  - 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 them 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.
- Utensils used to cut fruits and vegetables must be designed to be easily washed and sanitized.
- 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 within **two hours** of peeling or cutting at temperatures 4C (40F) or colder. Leftover cut fruits and vegetables should be discarded if left at room temperature for more than two hours.

- Fruits and vegetables that have been peeled or cut must be prevented from coming into direct contact with raw meat, poultry, fish, or unprocessed fruits and vegetables.
- Be aware of certain types of fruits and vegetables that contain natural toxins. These products must be sold and/ or served with these food safety risks in mind. Never provide as vendor samples uncooked cassava root, bamboo shoots, or fiddleheads. In most cases, thorough cooking and/ or soaking for a specified period of time will render these products safe for consumption. Consult with your Food Safety Specialist if you plan to sell these products.
- If you have additional questions regarding safe fruit and vegetable preparation practices, contact your NS Department of Agriculture Food Safety Specialist.

**Adapted From:**

Canadian Food Inspection Agency. *Food Safety Facts for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables*, October 2006. Web source: [http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/Food\\_Safety\\_Specialista/concen/specif/fruvege.shtml](http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/Food_Safety_Specialista/concen/specif/fruvege.shtml)

Canadian Food Inspection Agency. *Natural Toxins in Fresh Fruits and Vegetables*. July 2009. Web source: [http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/Food\\_Safety\\_Specialista/concen/specif/fruvegtaxe.shtml](http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/Food_Safety_Specialista/concen/specif/fruvegtaxe.shtml)