

## Texas Farmers' Markets Safety Guidelines



### Canopy Safety

Accidents at farmers' markets are often caused by wind-blown canopies, or other fly away items. TFM requires all vendors to minimize risk caused by unsecured canopies and other fly away hazards by following rules for canopy safety.

TFM rules state that 30-pound weights (the weight of a double cinder block) must be affixed to vendor canopies (one 30-pound weight per leg) *always- including during set up and tear down periods*. Do not let yourself be interrupted by anything during the canopy set up/tear down process, as a partially secured canopy is dangerous. Attaching to a neighbor's canopy is not a sufficient set-up without weights. TFM asks that vendors use bungees, rope, or another item to tie weights to the canopy and not simply place weighted items at the feet of the canopy. Weights should not create a trip hazard, and should never hang above people's heads. In fact, it is recommended to not hang weights from the top of the canopy as it may quickly add wear to it and decrease longevity of the canopy.

In certain weather conditions, even properly secured canopies can be precarious. TFM highly recommends that in addition to setting up a proper weight system, vendors attach themselves to a neighboring canopy for extra stability when needed.

If a canopy must be taken down during market hours for any reason, vendors should be very mindful of market patrons; directing them to move away so they are not injured.

### Severe Weather

TFM takes safety seriously, and tries to control as much as possible (with the cooperation of vendors) to avoid harmful incidents. However, weather is very difficult to predict. TFM has a set of general guidelines for severe weather events and we ask that vendors look to market leadership's discretion for any alterations that need to be made to the market's activities during severe weather events.

TFM is a "rain or shine market," meaning it should be assumed we are open during regular hours when rain is in the forecast. TFM aims to provide vendors with as much information about upcoming markets as possible, but it is the vendors' responsibility to check the weather regularly, and make subsequent decisions about attendance in a timely manner. If a vendor does not attend the market without appropriate notice (end of day Thursday prior to market weekend), they will be responsible for paying a full booth fee for that day.

Exceptions to the "rain or shine" rule are when severe weather creates a serious risk to the

safety of market vendors, staff, and patrons. This will likely take shape of a severe thunderstorm (with lightning) in the immediate vicinity, high winds or a tornado warning. Other less common weather events include icy road conditions or flooding. Since many vendors travel from miles away, TFM leaves them with the decision to attend the market in these circumstances. Proper notice will still be required.

If severe weather is imminent, vendors have the option of leaving the market to find safety. When possible, vendors should carefully take down their set up so fly away items do not pose a threat, and notify the market coordinator/operations manager of their departure. If you choose to leave your merchandise or equipment unattended, TFM is not responsible for those items. Vendors are not allowed to drive vehicles in or out of the market during hours when patrons are present. If a vendor's car is parked within the market, their car may have to remain inside the market until the end of business hours. At the discretion of the market manager, a booth fee might still be due after an early departure.

If already at the market and dangerous weather arrives, not allowing enough time for a safe departure, please follow these guidelines:

- For the threat of lightning, vendors may retreat to their cars for safety. Under no circumstances should vendors carry canopies in the open during lightning storms. (After the passing storm abates, vendors may return to their space to sell.)
- In the event of a tornado warning or another threatening weather event, vendors should find shelter in your vehicle at Bell or surrounding stores at Mueller until the threat passes.

The market manager or onsite designee can cancel, delay, or end the market early in extreme circumstances. If onsite at the time, the market manager or designee will inform all vendors of the decision in person. In addition to, or if the call is made before market hours, the market will send out notifications via email, and also post to our Facebook page (Bell: <https://www.facebook.com/CedarParkFM/>, Mueller: <https://www.facebook.com/TFMMueller/>) and other social media as we are able. Emails will be sent to vendor contacts (those who receive weekly emails on Tuesday and Friday). Vendors should be sure to frequently check their email and TFM's social media on bad weather days, as time of notifications may vary. It is essential vendors relay this information to anyone who is representing their business and vending at the market that day. *Any vendors who do not vacate the premises remains at their own risk, and the market is not responsible for any incidents following.*

**Please remember that it is not only your safety at stake when going against any of the guidelines above, actions to the contrary may act as signals to market patrons or other vendors that it is safe to do so as well. We thank you for your cooperation.**