



Preparing for Your Farm Inspection During the Covid-19 Pandemic

TCO Cert's inspection protocols for conducting inspections during the Covid-19 Pandemic were created to keep our operators and Verification Officers (ie. VOs, also called inspectors) as safe as possible while also ensuring compliance to the Canadian Organic Standards. These protocols and practices were developed using a variety of resources. The inspections may vary depending on local requirements and restrictions.

The biggest difference between inspections during the Covid-19 Pandemic and inspections in previous year is that VOs will not be conducting a paper audit at the operation site. The paper audit will be conducted prior to a socially distanced on-site inspection of fields and storage sites. This may create some challenges, but with your cooperation, the inspections will be able to be effective despite this change.

Steps to your Covid-19 Inspection:

1. Send inspection documentation

In previous years, a VO would come to your farm and look through your documents. This year the VO will review these documents prior to inspecting your farm. In order to accommodate this protocol, each operation will need to send documents electronically or by fax at least 2 weeks in advance of your inspection. Please contact your administrator to discuss where to send these documents.

Here is a list of documents that may be included to send prior to your inspection:

- Seed documents** – This includes invoices, seed searches, completed Non-GE and Untreated Seed Affidavits, seed tags. If purchased seed is organic, send Organic Certificate and Product Listing Addendum
- Sales documents** – The sales documents are for any sales made since the last inspection. This could include Bills of Lading, Settlement statements, Receipts, Clean Truck Affidavit. Alternatively, you can send a summary of your sales records – TCO Cert has created a Sales Record Summary document that you can use to summarize your records.
- Input documents** – This is for any inputs that are being used in this current certification year. Please include labels and receipts of all of the inputs that are being used this year.
- Field Activities Records** – This includes all field activities since the last inspection. Examples would be images of calendars or notebooks. Should also include 2019 harvest records and 2020 seeding records. Clean-out records, if applicable, should be included in this as well.
- Bin Records** – This includes the Bin registers or bin in-out record.
- Updated Field Management Summary** – Please update your Field Management Summary (FMS) with an accurate listing of your current fields.
- Requested documents:** If there are documents requested in your Pre-Inspection Review letter, please also send those. This may include updated maps, revisions to your Organic System Plan (OSP) or Organic System Plan Annual Update (OSPAU), Prior Land Use Affidavit (PLUA), or other documents.

For Livestock inspections, please also send:

- Purchase invoices for livestock, including chicks. Organic Certificates and Product Listing Addendum for any purchased organic livestock.
- Calving Records for 2020.
- Feeding records if any grain or silage is fed; Organic Certificates and Product Listing Addendums for any purchased organic feed.
- 2020 Water Test for Bacteria.
- Non-treated verification for any purchased bedding as wood shavings, straw, etc.
- Labels and receipts for vaccines, supplements, salt, etc.
- Health Records, if antibiotics, parasiticides, etc. are administered.
- Sales records for animals sold.

2. Phone or virtual interview

The VO will review the documentation you have sent in and will conduct a short interview with you over the phone or by video to clarify any questions and to discuss the next steps for your on-site inspection. You may be asked to provide additional documentation at the on-site inspection or after the inspection. Additionally, the VO will complete a *Covid-19 Screening Questionnaire* prior to coming to your operation.

3. On-Site physical inspection with social distancing

This will be a socially distanced on-site inspection. The following protocols will be followed:

- Maintain 2m distance
- Wear a mask during on-site inspection
- Do not shake hands
- VO will not enter private residence
- VO will not enter any buildings, unless it is deemed necessary in which case will be one at a time
- Do not share a vehicle
- Wash and/or sanitize hands prior to and after on-site inspection and as needed

The VO will look at fields, storage locations, and equipment as per usual, as well as livestock or other areas if applicable. If it is decided you all will view the fields, you cannot share vehicles. If this is the case, you and the VO should decide on where your stops will be before getting into your separate vehicles.

If there is a piece of equipment that will need to be inspected (e.g. a new liquid foliar applicator), please try to ensure it is outside of any building.

4. Exit Interview and Additional information

At the end of the inspection, the VO will go over the key findings in an exit interview as was done in previous years. However, you will not sign or receive copies of the Exit Interview or Inspection Affidavit at the time of inspection. Copies of these will be emailed or faxed to you by the VO or your Coordinator.

5. Additional Information

There may be some additional paperwork that needs to be viewed after the inspection. You and the VO can put a time frame on when the documents need to be submitted for the VO to complete the inspection. For documents that need to be submitted are not available at the inspection and

will need to be collected after the inspection, the VO will have the Coordinator collect it, as was the case in previous years.

Please note that these protocols and steps may vary, depending on circumstances specific to your operation. With your cooperation, inspection costs should not be affected. However, if additional time needs to be spent by the VO completing your inspection, this may affect the cost of your inspection.

There may be changes over the summer restricting travel or reducing services once again. TCO Cert, Chapter Administrators, and the VOs will all try to remain diligent at communicating any changes or updates as they become applicable.

Your patience, understanding and cooperation are needed and greatly appreciated in this unprecedented time during this global pandemic. If you have additional questions, please contact your Chapter Administrator or Certification Coordinator.