



CCOF

Organic Certification Education & Outreach Political Advocacy Promotion

CCOF Hybrid Inspections During COVID-19 Pandemic

Organic certification is part of the critical infrastructure of food and agriculture, an essential service. During a public health pandemic with widespread Stay-In-Place orders, CCOF will use novel inspection techniques to continue providing essential food system services while adhering to social distancing practices as recommended by government health agencies. All certified operations should remain inspection-ready and maintain required records and a current organic system plan. For us to continue to serve you, all clients must be fully cooperative with the following safety precautions during the onsite portion of inspections:

- All participants must be healthy with no respiratory symptoms in the past 2 weeks
- Observe social distancing requirements (at least 6 feet) at all times and no direct human contact
- Wear masks at all times during the inspection, wash hands, and sanitize regularly
- Minimize the number of people involved in the onsite portion of the inspection
- Schedule at a time when there is low worker density onsite
- Assist inspectors as needed so they can avoid touching anything onsite
- Provide access to all areas, some of which may be inspected by the inspector alone
- Cooperate and coordinate with the inspector to provide remote access to key staff, documents and other resources needed to verify organic compliance
- Where WHO, CDC, regional, state, or local guidelines require more strict precautions, those must be followed and communicated to the inspector in advance

Distribute this list to everyone involved in the onsite portion. Inspectors will work with you to agree on a plan for suitable safety measures. If upon arrival clients are unable or unwilling to provide a safe inspection environment, inspectors may end the inspection to protect their safety. Clients will be responsible for costs of an incomplete inspection, as well as any follow up inspections required to verify compliance. Ultimately, refusal or failure to complete required inspections may result in the loss of certification with CCOF.

CCOF has issued our inspectors guidelines for conducting Hybrid Inspections. Normally inspections occur on-site in-person. **During the Pandemic CCOF will conduct Hybrid Inspections, which are both remote and on-site.** The on-site part will be as efficient as possible. Most of the inspection will occur remotely: by phone, email, and all manner of suitable electronic communication platforms enabling interviews and document reviews.

The inspector will arrange a pre-inspection meeting with you to develop and agree upon an inspection plan that is suitable for your operation and communication capabilities. **Together you will determine what software and device platforms are available, and best suited to the scope and structure of your records and documents.** Optimally this will include webcams and screen sharing for the office portion. Inspectors and producers will need to be flexible to work with whatever virtual tools are available. Telephone and email in some cases may have to suffice. Whenever CCOF is unable to verify essential compliance points during any inspection, a follow up inspection may be required.

Typically, Hybrid Inspections will require several separate scheduled components, such as: Pre-inspection >> Main Meeting >> On-site >> Final Meeting.

We thank you for your cooperation and flexibility as we work together during this unprecedented situation to continue producing organic food and upholding high standards of integrity in our organic certification.

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