



Food Safety Precautions Around Fresh Produce Fields Fact Sheet

Paula Rivadeneira and Channah Rock



Food safety is a high priority for fresh produce growers, not only because of new regulations related to the Food Safety Modernization Act, but because they care about the health and safety of their customers. Most fresh produce, like lettuce and other leafy greens, is eaten raw so growers have to be particularly diligent in following food safety protocols that will help to prevent foodborne pathogen contamination in their fields. Trained professionals conduct assessments of agricultural fields throughout the growing season to ensure that pathogens like *Salmonella* and *E. coli* do not contaminate the food we are going to eat. *Salmonella* and *E. coli* cause gastrointestinal distress, and in some cases, may even lead to kidney failure and death. If you find yourself near a fresh produce field during the growing season, whether you are working in the field or just visiting the area, adhering to the following guidelines will help prevent the introduction of pathogens into fresh produce fields.

While you are in or near a fresh produce field, you **SHOULD**:

- Wear gloves
- Wear a hairnet and beard net
- Wear disposable shoe covers
- Cover cuts, wounds, and sores completely
- Use only the restroom facilities that are provided
- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water after eating, drinking, smoking, or using the restroom
- Sanitize all equipment before entering the field
- Service all equipment outside of the field
- Drive and park only on designated roads
- Dispose of trash properly
- Clean your boots and truck tires to remove debris, weeds, seeds, etc. from other fields that you visited recently

While you are in or near a fresh produce field, **DO NOT:**

- Enter the field unless you are authorized to do so
- Chew gum or spit (chewing tobacco or saliva)
- Smoke
- Eat or drink
- Urinate or defecate, except in the restroom facilities that are provided
- Enter the field if you have a gastrointestinal illness (diarrhea or vomiting) or a communicable disease
- Allow unauthorized people into the field
- Allow children, toddlers, or infants into the field
- Bring wild, domestic, or livestock animals into or near the field
- Bring in debris, weeds, seeds, etc. from other fields that you visited recently
- Use glass containers
- Wear jewelry or hairpins (a plain watch and plain ring band are usually allowed)
- Wear open-toed shoes, sandals, or heels
- Wear shorts
- Wear headphones
- Burn trash or litter

Following these guidelines will help fresh produce growers to maintain safe, pathogen-free crops. If you have questions about food safety, you can contact Paula Rivadeneira, the Food Safety Extension Specialist in Yuma County, AZ at pkrivadeneira@email.arizona.edu or at 928-782-5893. Other resources include the Food and Drug Administration's Food Safety Modernization Act website <https://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/FSMA/> and the Arizona Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement website <https://www.arizonaleafygreens.org/>.



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