

Market COVID Response Plan

Last updated – December 4, 2020

Introduction

The Thunder Bay Country Market (TBCM) has developed the Market COVID Response Plan to reflect the potential for further “waves” of the COVID-19 pandemic. This will be a living document and will be updated as needed. This version was last updated on December 4, 2020.

Ontario Government

The Province of Ontario has implemented a *COVID-19 Response Framework: Keeping Ontario Safe and Open* on Tuesday, November 3, 2020. This framework has been revised and the newly implemented plan began on Monday, November 16, 2020.

Please click on the link to see the updated plan: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/covid-19-response-framework-keeping-ontario-safe-and-open>.

Overall, the TBCM will continue to manage the current COVID situation by keeping the following initiatives in place:

- Work closely with the Thunder Bay District Health Unit health inspectors. Please click here for information on the latest City of Thunder Bay updates <https://www.tbdhu.com/coronavirus>;
- Educate the TBCM members, vendors and customers on the Mandatory Mask Directive for Businesses & Organizations as per Ontario Government legislation, as amended from time to time;
- Masks or other appropriate face coverings are mandatory for all individuals participating in Market activities;
- Plexiglass will remain hanging at booths;
- Maintain the wider aisles for customers traffic;
- Continue to maintain and post all safety signage;
- Increase surface cleaning throughout the building;
- Screen all employees of the Market before every Market day shift;
- Supply hand sanitizer stations throughout the market (locations at both entrances/exits on the downstairs level and at all four staircases, at the top of the stairwells).

Ontario Government’s five levels of public health measures

1. Prevent
2. Protect
3. Restrict
4. Control
5. Lockdown

Stages reflecting the protocols at the Thunder Bay Country Market

1. Prevent

- i. Continue to use the designation as an *essential service / grocery store* from the Thunder Bay District Health Unit in March 2020. Therefore, the full Market to remain open on for regular Market hours both Wednesdays and Saturdays.
- ii. Remind vendors and customers not to attend the Market if:
 - a. They feel unwell;
 - b. If they have been in contact with a COVID positive person;
 - c. If they have travelled outside of the Northwestern Ontario perimeters (Ontario-Manitoba border to Parry Sound) in the last 14 days;
 - d. Or they have travelled outside Canada within the last 14 days.
 - e. If a vendor meets any of these and has no one else to operate their booth, they are to let the manager know and a sign will be put at their booth indicating it is closed.
- iii. Continue with mandatory masks or face covering and hand sanitizer stations to be located at both entrances/exits on the downstairs level and all four upstairs at the top of the stairwells.
- iv. Close the inside dining rooms, removing the tables and seating.
- v. Close the outside dining space, removing or upturning the picnic tables to prevent usage (seasonal)
- vi. Use of the back-parking lot and rear building entrance will be for vendors and staff use only.
- vii. Increasing cleaning processes and protocols;
- viii. Reimplement marketing items using updated “Shop, Don’t Stop” slogans;
- ix. The TBCM Board to continue to review and evaluate operational budget and revenues.

2. Protect

- i. Including the steps from the above PREVENT Stage;
- ii. Manage traffic numbers in and out of the building to facilitate social distancing;
- iii. Line-ups/patrons congregating outside venues to be managed by venue; 2m distance and face covering required.

3. Restrict

- i. Including the steps from the above PREVENT and PROTECT stages;
- ii. Require screening of patrons at market entrance (e.g. verbal questionnaire);
- iii. Evaluate the potential for reopening the Online Market Store, either in conjunction with regular Market days or for an alternate day.
- iv. Discontinue busking outside of the Market, if required under advice from the Health Unit
- v. Vendors who are unable to remain open due to health concerns, please advise the Market Manager for next steps;
 - Vendors who have chosen not to remain open, will have the option to have their product available in the Market Store, following the market store contractual policies.

4. Control

- i. Including the steps from the above PREVENT, PROTECT and RESTRICT stages;
- ii. Maximum number of customers, vendors and staff permitted in the building will be determined on the best advice and direction from the government bodies and our local Thunder Bay District Health Unit.
- iii. Start planning for a full online Market Store presence and roll out of information to vendors and patrons.

5. Lockdown

- i. Including the steps from the above PREVENT, PROTECT, RESTRICT and CONTROL stages;
- ii. Online store is fully operational;
- iii. Physical market is closed to public following all Ontario Government and local health unit guidelines.

Communication

Communicating with Market vendors and members regarding updates due to COVID

1. Every second week, the Market sends out an email update to all vendors/members/key staff about relevant Market updates. Any upcoming changes to the Market due to COVID should be included in these updates.
2. If there are a lot of rapid changes, the updates would change to weekly for the short-term.
3. If there is a potential COVID case at the Market from an employee, vendor or customer, the Thunder Bay District Health Unit will inform the Market manager of the potential exposure. The Market will rely on the Health Unit's expertise to advise on next steps.
4. If we are made aware of a potential COVID case from one of our vendors or employees, the Market Manager or the Board president must ensure that Health Unit is contacted directly.

Communicating with customers about updates due to COVID

1. Media contacts
 - a. Update Radio Ads with Acadia Broadcasting to reflect changes;
 - b. TV/Newspaper, media to be updated on grocery store model, framework stages, what customers can expect and how they can shop for local products.
2. Website updates
 - a. Update the COVID page on the Market website regularly and ensure each public change to Market operations is reflected on this page;
 - b. If it is a key change, ensure the front page of the website reflects the change clearly;
 - c. Ensure Vendors list page is updated to reflect vendor booths that are physically open and vendors who can be found in the Market Store or online.

3. Social Media posts
 - a. Social media has become a good way to advertise and communicate with the Market vendors, members, and customers.
 - We encourage vendors and members to ensure they makes posts which are clear, concise and not open to interpretation;
 - Should vendors or members create or share posts that receive a negative response, try to manage the comments appropriately by deleting any abusive posts, respond factually or ask questions to clarify the issue at hand.
4. Customer Newsletter
 - a. Consider implementing a customer newsletter based on email addresses from Market Online customers and previous emails collected from old website
 - Note, this will require to send an initial welcome email sent asking customers to **unsubscribe** if they received the email in error due to spam regulation.
 - b. Vendors should receive the same email, so they know what customers are being told.

Managing the safety of Market Employees

1. Ensure that Market employees:
 - a. Are screen prior to working each Market day and the screening sheet is kept safe for 1 month.
 - b. Are included on any vendor / member email updates or customer updates.
 - b. Notify management (or manager informing Board) if employee is unable to work due to illness or potential COVID risk.
2. Ensure that the Market cleaner is verbally briefed about updated requirements to cleaning protocols.
3. Have a roster of available casual staff to fill in for the Market Store.
4. Should CONTROL/LOCKDOWN stage be implemented, create a volunteer list to assist with processing and packing of online market store orders.