

April 4, 2020

This year, we celebrate our 50th anniversary. It was a celebration of the true American Dream: immigrant family building a business in Chicago from the ground up, with a simple but honest mission to provide the best quality groceries at a fair price. Never did we think a few weeks later we would be living a Nightmare amidst a global pandemic. Please know that we are still family owned and operated and don't have fancy publicists or marketing departments to craft our messages, so the following words are coming from us, the owners, from the heart.

When a soldier joins the military or an officer enrolls in the police academy, these public servants have an implicit knowledge of their risks. They signed up for this sacrifice and valiantly put their lives on the line for the greater good. When medical professionals take the Hippocratic oath, they selflessly protect and heal those who are ailed. These heroes undergo extensive training, don their protective gear, and follow established protocols to keep themselves as safe as humanly possible, all while knowing they could end up a martyr. Overnight, our bakers, stockers, butchers, and cashiers have enlisted in this battle. They joined the ranks of these public servants, but they didn't necessarily sign up for this responsibility when choosing their career paths. However, true to the Pete's Market spirit, our family has stepped up to the challenge. Our grocery warriors have joined the front lines with courage and adaptability.

Never have we been more proud of our team. Which is why, with a very heavy heart, we share that we learned about our first confirmed COVID-19 case yesterday at our Madison and Western location. This person has not been to the store for over a week and just received the test results yesterday. We face an impossible dilemma. Either we close our doors to protect our families or we suit up and continue marching on. Our employees have been given the option to stay at home, with benefits intact, and many have taken that option because they are elderly, immunocompromised, or single parents. This is an impossible situation, and there is no simple, easy answer. If we close our doors, not only are we furloughing our employees who rely on their paychecks for survival, but we are withholding food and necessary supplies from the public. If we keep our doors open, we are subjecting our family to this unruly virus. I say "our family" because that's how personal this is. My father, my sister, my brothers-in-law, and uncles are literally on the front lines. And employees who have been with Pete's Market longer than I've been alive are right alongside them. The employee who tested positive is one of our own. This person is not just a number; this person is part of our family, and we ask for your prayers and positive thoughts for a full recovery.

Pete's Market employs over 85% full time; we are not the standard grocery model (which is closer to 20% full time). We take care of our people and provide stability for them, even during these very unstable times. We are taking every measure to keep them safe and protected. Unfortunately, I don't think this will be the first and only positive case of COVID-19. Statistically speaking, it is bound to happen. Therefore, we will do our best to keep you informed via our website. We don't have a way of testing every customer who comes in, just as we don't have a way of testing our team members. There aren't even enough tests available for hospital employees, when there is a 100% chance they are exposed in their work environments. Even they are struggling to get adequate PPE (e.g., masks and gloves) due to nationwide shortages, so you can imagine where grocery employees stand in that supply chain. Again, we are in an impossible, unprecedented situation.

One of our cashiers asked if she could work from home, but unfortunately, we don't have that luxury. Either we close, or we go to war every day, with the assumption that the enemy virus is everywhere. We have decided to carry on. We simply have to assume everyone has it or has been exposed to it and proceed with the utmost caution. Therefore, we have taken measures to protect ourselves and our customers as best we can. Please do your part too. We are in this together.

What We Are Doing To Protect Our Stores and Employees

- Limit the number of customers at a time. We will be posting a limit per store based on square footage on Monday, 4/6/2020. Starting Tuesday, 4/7/2020, we will enforce number of people allowed inside based on number of carts available: 1 person per cart (except for single parents).
- Publicize social distancing requirements with signs and tape markers.
- Assign employees to patrol and enforce social distancing, especially in high traffic areas like service counters and register lanes.
- Announce reminders regularly over the PA system.
- Sanitize carts religiously. Ensure that the cleaning stations are always stocked and have employees wipe down carts for customers.
- Install plexiglass barriers at all register lanes.
- Allocate special elder hours M-F from 7AM-8AM for the elderly and immunocompromised.
- Temporarily ban reusable bags.
- Offer online delivery options through our partner Instacart.
- Prohibit self-serve buffet options and sampling.
- Provide PPE for our employees, including sanitizer, masks, and gloves.
- Empower our employees with training and knowledge on COVID-19 and prevention tips.
- Begin temperature checks for all employees before clocking in.
- Provide our employees with hazard pay.
- Deep clean the store every night, and consistently disinfect high traffic areas throughout the day.

What We Will Ask Our Customers To Do To Protect Our Stores

- Send only one family member to the store at a time.
- Practice social distancing while in the store, specifically at high traffic areas like service counters and register lanes.
- Refrain from coming to the store if you are feeling ill.
- Wear your own PPE (e.g., masks and gloves) if you have access to it.
- Do not touch products you don't intend to buy.
- Respect our temporary store hours of 8AM-9PM, especially the Elder Hour M-F 7AM-8AM.
- Understand that we cannot legally sign your signature on the credit card reader and be in PCI compliance at the same time.
- Be economically aware. It does not help to continue sharing those same misleading photographs or continue spreading rumors about price gouging. There are nationwide shortages, so prices will not look normal. That is not Pete's taking advantage; it is simply the laws of economics. We are not a big box retailer with hundreds of stores and our own manufacturing facilities. We are a small, LOCAL, family run company and simply do not have the buying power of other nationwide brands.
- Be understanding and reasonable. It does not help having to divert our attention to respond to complaints via phone, email, social media and at the customer service desks about things we cannot control. This is hard enough for everyone.
- Be kind. Please. This is NOT business as usual. Our employees are risking their lives for you, so please be kind to them and to each other.
- And finally, stay calm and hopeful. We will get through this together.