

## KEEPING IT CLEAN AT THE CORONA COOP

April 26, 2020



Please read the Shopping Protocols and do your part to help the Coop provide a safe working and shopping environment. | Photo by Caroline Mardok

*By Jiwon Choi*

Seven weeks ago, when lines were beginning to snake up Union Street and items like toilet paper and frozen or canned goods started growing scarce, the Coop instituted policies to ensure a safer shopping and working environment. Sanitation safety protocols were posted at the entry check-in and on the Coop's website and social media platforms. Signs mandated hand sanitizer use upon entering, wiping down cart handles, and maintaining social distance. Shopping lanes displayed markers demonstrating the recommended six feet of separation. According to the Coop website, the number of shoppers allowed in the building would be limited to comply with Governor Andrew Cuomo's executive orders on social distancing. Restrictions would also apply to

those waiting outside. In this fashion, the Coop prioritized the health and safety of our paid staff and shopping members over sales.

The new hygiene protocols extended to member workers (before the work shifts were canceled), and now to the team of members who are working part-time paid shifts: no eating while working; wash hands before your shift; clean your work area; call in sick if you're feeling unwell.



Extended shopping hours are 10a.m.–7:30p.m., beginning Wed. 4/22. A big shout-out to Coop staff and temp workers. | Photos by Caroline Mardok

Karen Mancuso, Membership Coordinator, described the expectations for workers: “Checkout workers use the wipes we provide to clean their stations as much as possible during their shifts. We have a smaller number of checkouts in service to promote social distancing. Entrance workers are making sure all members use hand sanitizer before they enter the store, and making sure all wipe down their shopping cart handles.” Although the Coop has put out repeated reminders about not eating while working or shopping, checkout workers report having to “ring up empty food wrappers and half-empty beverage bottles.” According to Mancuso, as the weeks passed, and the waiting time to enter the Coop grew from one to two (or more) hours, members became receptive to these measures: “I think most members are just so grateful that the Coop is open that they will do just about anything to be able to shop here, including waiting outside in a four-hour line.”



Workers in action. | Photos by Lisa Guido and Karen Mancuso

Facilities Coordinator Crystal Goldenstein reiterated the importance to “adhere more closely to the spirit of the Governor’s executive order,” so as to limit the number of people working in the Coop. “For receiving coordinators, this is meaningful,” as it will cut down on interfacing with the estimated 14,000 members who show up for their monthly work shift. To that end, the Coop suspended work requirements for the first time in its 47-year history on March 23, and started running the Coop with “paid staff

and a group of temporary, part-time employees.” Other recent changes have included requiring all shoppers to wear a face mask; designating Thursdays for seniors/high-risk members; and limiting shopping. Seniors and high-risk members currently have the Coop to themselves on Thursdays. Check the Coop website for all the latest schedule changes, and for the most accurate shopping and wait times.

Members approval of these changes is signaled on social media, echoing Shopping Squad Leader Tom Paul’s feeling that “the Food Coop leadership has done an amazing job,” and has demonstrated thoughtfulness in “figuring out this process day-by-day, to determine what is working and what can be tweaked.”

#### Clean Communications

Although shopping at the Coop is less of a social experience, “sanitary” social engagement has moved online to the Coop’s Instagram and Twitter accounts, with a few notable themes: appreciation and gratitude for the Coop Coordinators and front-line staff, ideas and recommendations for how to make the Coop lines run more smoothly, and lamentations for the long, long shopping lines in “the good old days.” @lulax007 posted, “Keep up the great work @foodcoop staffers! We’re grateful beyond words for you #superheroes.” @guidoo wrote, “Big appreciation for the Coop staff! Everybody be super nice to the Coop workers! Let’s all double down on the precautions and act as if someone’s life depends on it. Because it does!” Members have also posted updates about where they are standing in line (e.g., Union & 7th Avenue), so that potential shoppers could judge wait times.



Waiting to enter the Coop. | Photos by Caroline Mardok

Another popular topic comprises suggestions and requests for the Coop to test for cutting down the long waiting time. These include calls for scheduling shopping time slots, online shopping, and pick-up/delivery options. As @irrrogo asks, “Have you considered creating a DMV-like scheduler for shoppers to book for shopping time?” And @helloesme suggests that it is “time to collaborate with delivery services or create our own to serve best our members and keep people safe.” The Coop staff has asked members to refrain from the constant stream of recommendations as they work to remediate the long lines. A recent post from the Coop on Instagram stated that, “The GCs have decided, for now, that our top priority is to stabilize the operations of the Coop and understand how the drop in sales and number of shoppers is having an impact on Coop finances, etc. All of the options members want us to pursue have drawbacks.”

It is clear that the leadership is working tirelessly and valiantly to keep the Coop open, but what is also clear is that the struggle to keep a balance between shopping demands and member/worker safety will be ongoing.



Workers wearing masks. | Photos by Karen Mancuso



| Coop Shopping                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                  |           |        |                                                                                        |               |                                                                                     |                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                      |                                                                    |                                                                                                                               |                                                                                            |                                        |                                                                                                                |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 5                                                                     | 6                                                                                                                                                                                                            | 7                                                                                | Back Wall |        |                                                                                        |               | 1                                                                                   | 2                                                                                   | 3                                                                                                                                    | 4                                                                  |                                                                                                                               |                                                                                            |                                        |                                                                                                                |
|                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                  | Meats     | Yogurt | Prep foods                                                                             | Cheese Olives | Drinks                                                                              | 1A                                                                                  | 1B                                                                                                                                   | 2 + Spices                                                         | Eggs/ Tofu cooler                                                                                                             | 3A                                                                                         | Freezer case/ Sandwich cooler          | Checkout line                                                                                                  |
| Pastas;<br>Canned sauce/<br>sauces;<br>tomatoes;<br>Tea;<br>Body care | Canned fish/<br>broth/beans/<br>anchovies/<br>vegetables;<br>Nutriment<br>batters;<br>crackers;<br>moneyspin/<br>Condiments/<br>Saladspices/<br>Dry season<br>Coconut milk,<br>dried<br>mushrooms/<br>chiles | Cereals<br>(hot/cold);<br>Cookies;<br>Chocolate;<br>Energy bars;<br>Chips/snacks |           |        | Hummus;<br>Dips;<br>Rutab.<br>Salad<br>dressings/<br>Noodle<br>salads;<br>More<br>yums |               | Rutab.<br>dairy and<br>non-dairy<br>milk/<br>cream;<br>liquid<br>yogurt;<br>Kombuch | Produce:<br>Herbs;<br>Mushrooms;<br>Garlic;<br>Roasting;<br>LG terribe<br>chip bags | Produce:<br>Onions/<br>Garlic;<br>Potato/<br>squash;<br>Fruit;<br>Peppers;<br>Cakes;<br>Olives;<br>LG bags<br>peppers/<br>Pinto chip | Bulk;<br>Coffee;<br>Baking<br>stuff;<br>Jars;<br>Packaged<br>bread | Eggs;<br>Tofu;<br>Tampers;<br>Plant-<br>based<br>dels;<br>Vegan<br>mayo;<br>Ketchup;<br>Miso;<br>Rutab.<br>Pickles/<br>sauces | Fresh<br>bread;<br>Sand-<br>wich;<br>Dried<br>mushrooms;<br>Nuts;<br>Oils;<br>Vinegar<br>a | Freezer<br>case/<br>Sandwich<br>cooler | Supplements;<br>Pet Stuff;<br>Kitchenware;<br>Cleaning<br>Supplies;<br>CBD<br>Endocap;<br>Ice Cream<br>Freezer |
|                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                  |           |        |                                                                                        |               |                                                                                     |                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                      |                                                                    |                                                                                                                               |                                                                                            |                                        |                                                                                                                |

An easy-to-print shopping list from member @salleykoo, now with better aisle info: [tinyurl.com/PrintCoopList](https://tinyurl.com/PrintCoopList). Spreadsheet in non-pdf format: [tinyurl.com/CoopShoppingList](https://tinyurl.com/CoopShoppingList). Daily produce updated: [foodcoop.com/produce](https://foodcoop.com/produce). | Photo by Cody McBurnett



Illustration by Tommy Kane