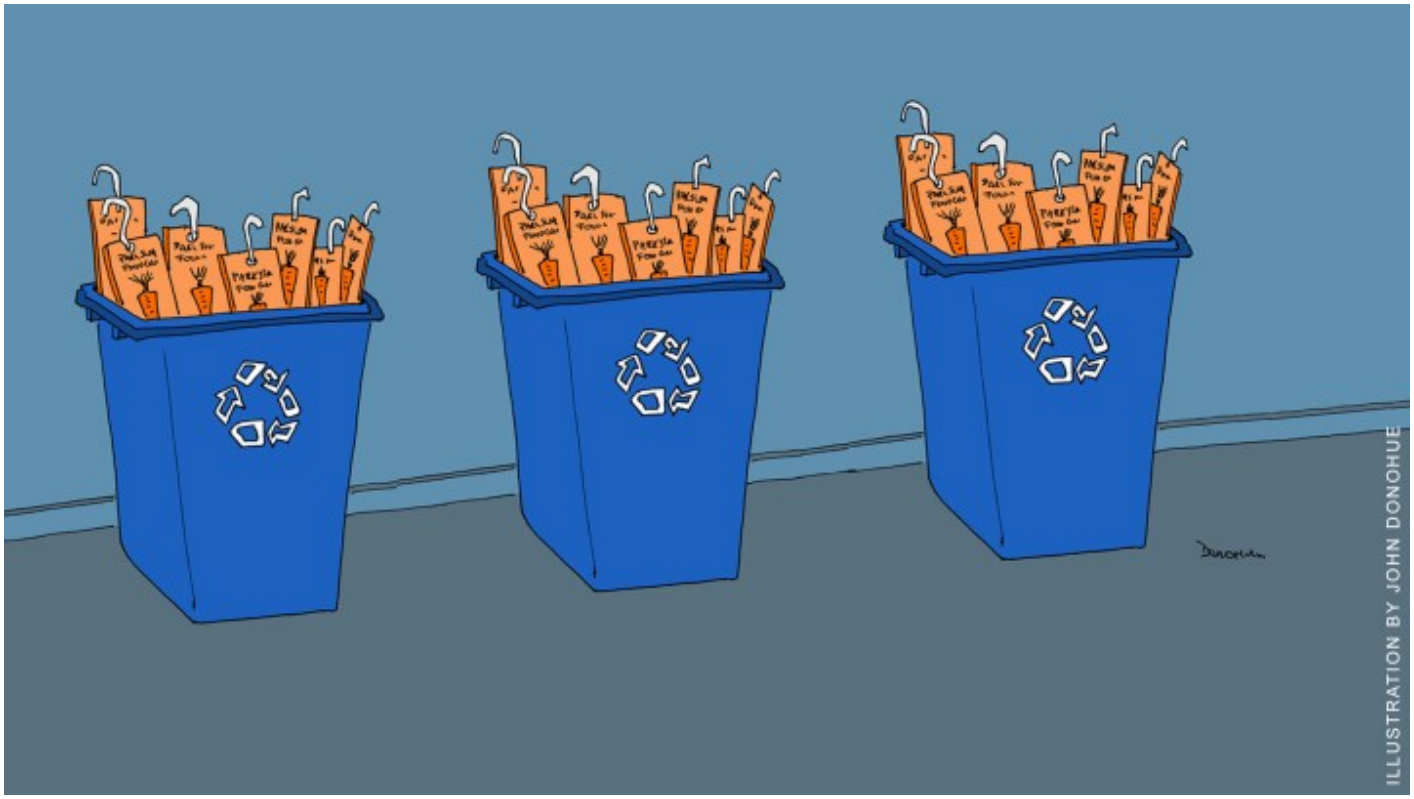
# COOP SHOPPING LIMITS AND MASK POLICY CHANGES

March 21, 2023




*By Travis Hartman*






Two of the most prominent COVID-19 pandemic provisions at the Coop, carrot tags that limit shoppers in the Coop and the masks they wear when inside, have been adjusted.

Masks became optional for all working and shopping members, as of Monday, March 20th, following a survey of members.

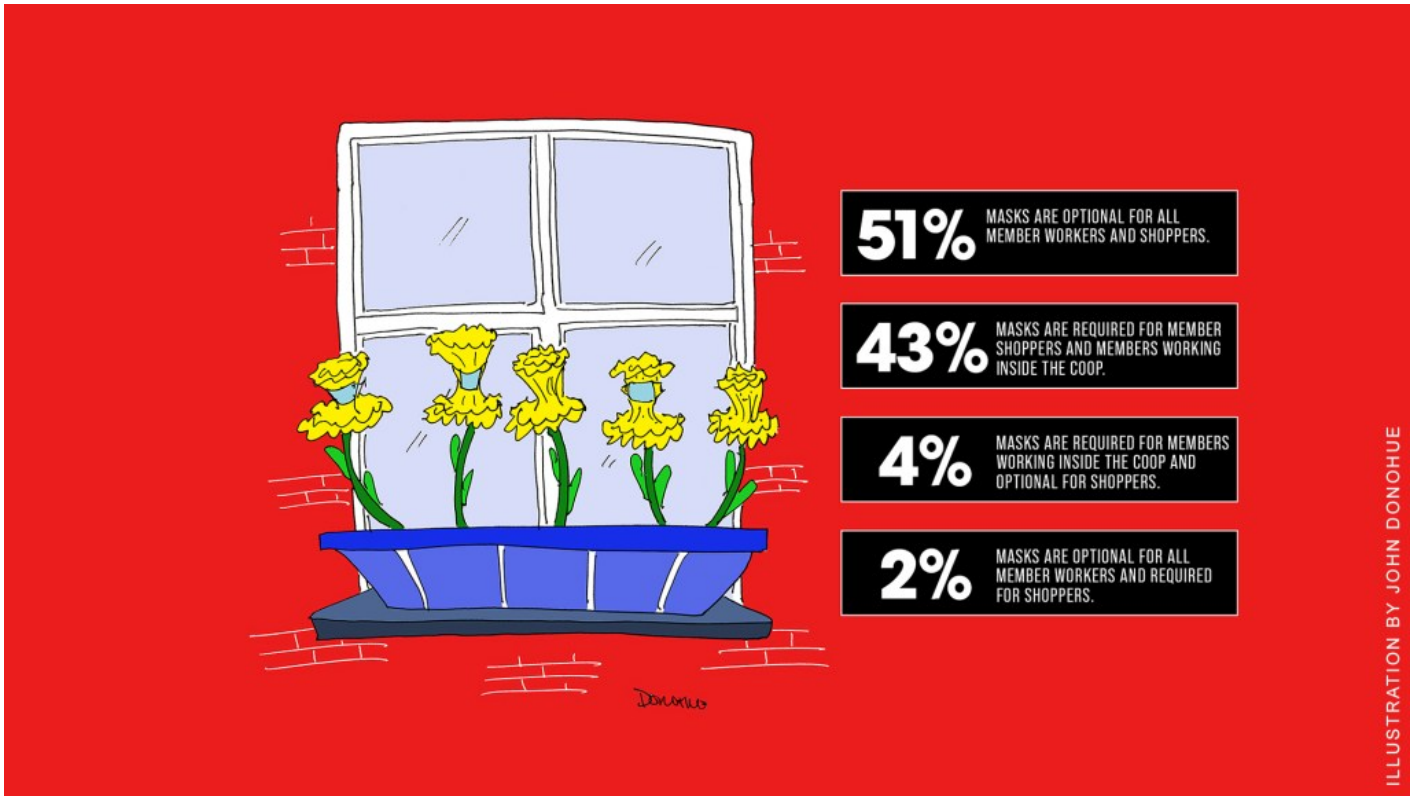
A poll regarding masks was run for the second time since the policy was enacted at the beginning of the pandemic. Almost 5,000 members participated in the 2023 survey. More than two thirds (68%) voted to make masks optional, with 32% preferring to retain the mask requirement for all working and shopping members, according to a post on the Coop website.

In the post announcing the change, the General Coordinators encouraged members "to make the decision about mask-wearing that best suits your needs or preferences." They also urged people to "respect other Coop members' personal choices regarding masks," and noted that masks will continue to be available in the Coop office.

The GCs emphasized that members should not come to work or shop if they have COVID symptoms or test positive for the virus.

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2022 MASK POLL RESULTS



51%: Masks are optional for all member workers and shoppers.

43%: Masks are required for member shoppers and members working inside the Coop.

4%: Masks are required for members working inside the Coop and optional for shoppers.

2%: Masks are optional for all member workers and required for shoppers.

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The 2023 results were a shift from the first poll, in 2022. That round garnered a total of 4,615 responses between September 28 and October 12. The Coop had around 14,300 members at the end of September, so about one third of our members participated in the survey.

The 2022 survey resulted in a bare majority for relaxing the policy, with 51% of members taking part in the survey for the masks to be optional for all shoppers and member workers and 43% of members voting for masks being required. Although the optional mask vote has the majority, the General Coordinators considered it too close to change the policy.

The recent poll started in mid-February and required a member ID number.

“We wanted the results of the survey to fairly represent member opinion. Eliminating duplicate responses would be the best way to accomplish that,” said General Coordinator Ann Herpel in an email.

MEMBERS’ COMMENTS

Fahima Islam and Sonia Park were stocking yogurt during their work slot and had slightly different opinions on the future of the mask policy.

“I’m a fan of the masks,” Islam said. “I think it falls under the idea of safety. I still wear masks on the train and indoors around people I don’t know—lots of people have feelings around it, and I’m not trying to impose my will on others.”




Park said, “I honestly don’t care. I would probably wear the mask while doing my shifts but not while shopping,” she said, noting that she spends much less time in the Coop shopping than working, but that she would be happy to comply with the poll no matter the result. “The whole point of this place is community, so I’ll do whatever the Coop decides.”

## CARROT TAG CHANGE

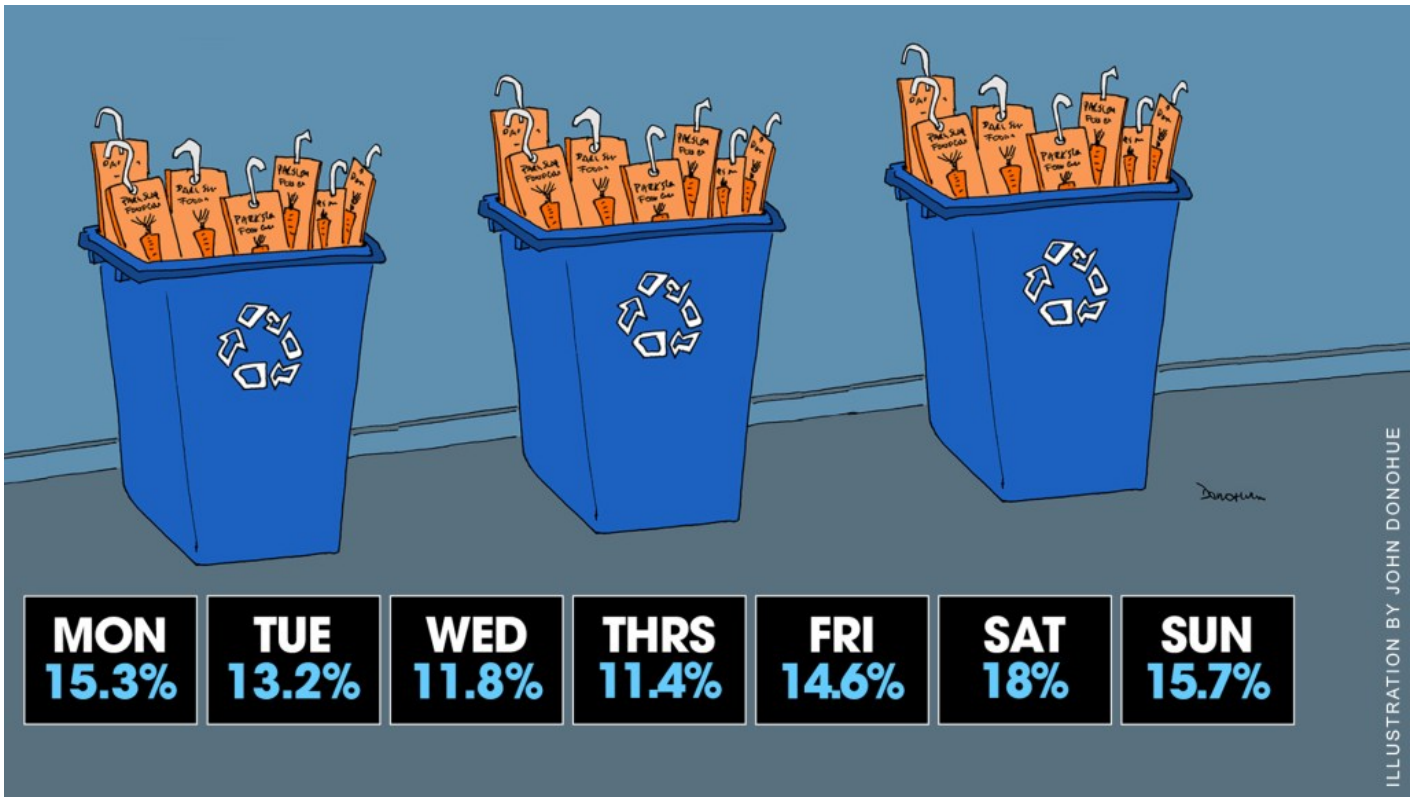
The removal of mid-week shopping limits via carrot tag was adjusted in mid-February. As of February 17th, members “no longer need to wait outside to enter the Coop or receive a carrot tag to shop,” according to an email sent to members.

The topic wa**s** discussed by General Coordinators and Membership Coordinators for some time. The Coop currently allows between 72 and 77 members to shop at any given time, and the staff has noticed tags are regularly available during the middle of

the week for the last year or so.

The data backs this up as well, with dollar volume per day being a good indicator of the number of people shopping. The average weekly sales amounts to just over $1 million and the breakdown by day shows Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday significantly lower than the other four days.

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PERCENTAGE DOLLAR VOLUME BY DAY

Monday, 15.3%

Tuesday, 13.2%

Wednesday, 11.8%

Thursday, 11.4%

Friday, 14.6%

Saturday, 18%

Sunday, 15.7%

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“These figures are pretty consistent per season. During the summer, the sales distribution might skew more to Friday and Monday and less on Saturday and Sunday, for example,” said Herpel.

Receiving Coordinator Brian Robinson said his first thought when he heard of the change in the removal of shopper limits was that it might be a way to ease the long-standing problem of shifting some shoppers from the weekend to weekdays to ease congestion. “This is an opportunity to use what we’ve learned over the pandemic—we can use the good stuff that worked.”

While working a shift, Vicky Rodriguez said she thought it was good to try and get out of the adjustments the Coop made for COVID. “I like the tags on the weekends, pre-pandemic it was hectic and really crowded on weekends,” she said.

The Coop has no plans to remove the shopper limits from the other days. Herpel said that members have told the Coop that they appreciate the less crowded shopping and are willing to stand outside as opposed to fighting crowds inside.

*Travis Hartman has been a Coop member for over ten years and likes looking for the why behind the who, what, when and where.*