

ANNOUNCEMENT



Vince's Market: Sharon



Vince's Market: Newmarket



Vince's Market: Uxbridge



Vince's Market: Tottenham



Vince's Market: Market & Co.,
Upper Canada Mall

(UCM location temporarily closed
until further notice)

Revised store hours follow Premier Ford's comments about Good Friday and Easter Sunday store closings

To Our Valued Customers

SHARON, ON, April 9, 2020: Since yesterday's announcement by Premier Ford regarding grocery stores closing on Friday and Sunday, we have seen an immense increase in store traffic. Our greatest fear was quickly realized within hours of the announcement, and further this morning with significant lineups forming outside of our locations.

Although only 48 hours ago, Premier Ford was telling the media that he hoped grocery stores would stay open all weekend, that position has now changed.

For the past few weeks, we had been preparing to be open with reduced hours (9am-5pm) on Good Friday and Easter Sunday. This was based on the understanding that we were being encouraged to remain open all weekend to ensure the accessibility of food for our customers – and provide them with the best opportunity to spread out shopping trips to ensure we can maintain best practices around safe operation during this pandemic.

Deliveries have been arranged, department schedules have been made, and we were prepared to operate.

Through our association with the Canadian Federation of Independent Grocers (CFIG), in which I am currently serving as the Vice Chair, we asked for clarification. The response was that the Premier was saying this weekend is 'status quo'.

Many municipalities have chosen to provide exemptions and allow openings. Both for the Friday and Sunday. So if we have exemptions from our municipality, for whatever days, then we can operate as we did last year.

As it relates to our Vince's Market locations, we are permitted to open by way of these exemptions, or by prior judgement in our favour, at the Sharon, Newmarket and Uxbridge locations.

The Province does have the authority to override municipal by-laws, but they did not do so.

We wish the province had provided clear guidance on this at a much earlier point, but this is the situation we have to deal with. And it is one that will, in our view, create problems and confusion for our employees and customers this holiday weekend.

As we envisioned what a Friday and Sunday closure would mean for our business and our staff, we quickly realized that a Good Friday closure would cause extreme challenges in receiving product, replenishing shelves, and being able to serve customers in any way other than what we would expect to be chaos on Saturday.

Being able to pivot this quickly is just not possible. If we were to close to the public, our staff would still be required as per their already scheduled shift, to attend and prepare for what would come on Saturday. That said, Easter Sunday is a day we can handle the full day closure, both for the public and for staff to provide some much needed relief.

So after much consideration and consultation with our Management Team, Store Department Supervisors and Department leads, the following is how we will move forward.

As we have prepared to be open and serving our communities, we will continue with our plan to remain open this Good Friday from 9am-5pm, and Saturday from 8am to 7pm. Sunday we will fully close at our Sharon, Newmarket and Uxbridge locations.

see next page

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from page one

We have decided to close our Tottenham location on both Good Friday and Easter Sunday, based on recent customer traffic indicators that show this location will not feel the effect of surge shopping, bottlenecks and customer frustration by being closed for both days.

For those team members from Tottenham that anticipated the opportunity to earn time and half pay from working on the Statutory Holiday, should they still wish to do so, we are offering this opportunity at our other locations.

I am providing this information and context above for the purpose of transparency.

I assure you we have not made this decision lightly, and understand very much the anxiety and fatigue that has come from this sustained increase in pressure that we face day after day. We are onboarding new team members daily and cannot express how proud we are of the hard work that everybody is putting in.

We feel this decision will best maintain good order and a consistent level of operational expectations this weekend, which is a better alternative than the immense uncertainty and problems that would arise from closing on Good Friday.

We are hoping a return to normal operation comes much sooner rather than later, as a whole.

The communities we serve are small in nature, and there are limited shopping options available to our customers. Being open on holidays is a service we have provided for over 30 years, and one that our customers have told us they appreciate. It is in this spirit, that we will continue to do so this Good Friday, and then on Sunday we will rest and recharge.

Stay Well!

Giancarlo Trimarchi

Partner, Vince's Market

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