

	POLICY NAME	APPROVAL DATE
	Extreme Weather Policy	
	RESPONSIBLE	SCHEDULED REVIEW
	Market Manager	1 year

PURPOSE:

In an emergency or extreme weather event, the foremost priority of the New West Farmers Market (NWFM) is the health and safety of our vendors, staff, volunteers, board of directors and customers. As extreme weather events are escalating in frequency and severity, the purpose of this policy is to create a framework for the development, maintenance, and implementation of effective emergency response strategies that ensure the health and safety of our vendors, staff, volunteers, and shoppers.

SCOPE:

This policy applies to vendors, staff, volunteers, the board of directors, contractors, community groups, market entertainers and sponsors.

DEFINITIONS:

In this policy,

“All relevant parties” refers to all parties addressed in the scope of this policy and any other presumably relevant parties.

“Emergency” refers to any incident or event in which a serious, unexpected, and often dangerous situation is caused by accident, persons, the forces of nature, or otherwise, and which requires immediate action to protect the health, safety or welfare of a person or to limit damage to property.

“Extreme Heat Emergency” refers to a declaration by [Environment Canada](#) made when *“Daytime and overnight temperatures are higher than seasonal norms and getting hotter every day. Heat Warning criteria have been met and forecast indicates that daily highs will substantially increase day over day for three or more consecutive days”¹*

“Extreme weather” refers to high winds, extreme heat, poor air quality, heavy snow, freezing rain, extreme cold or natural disasters.

“Heat warning” refers to an alert issued by [Environment Canada](#) based on their threshold criteria for Metro Vancouver: *“Issued when 2 or more consecutive days of daytime maximum temperatures are expected to reach 29°C or warmer and nighttime minimum temperatures are expected to fall to 16°C or warmer.”*

“**Humidex**” refers to the metric used to describe how the intersection of hot and humid weather *feels like* to the average person.

“**Support staff**” refers to all staff employed by the New West Farmers Market who are not the Assistant Manager or Market Manager.

“**Weather forecast**” refers to the online Environment Canada New Westminster BC forecast including the humidex and windchill factors (i.e., the “feels like” forecast), and air quality.

POLICY:

MARKET CLOSURE DUE TO EXTREME WEATHER OR EMERGENCIES

1. Considerations

The NWFM will cancel a market if circumstances outside its control make it unfeasible and/or unsafe for our shoppers, vendors, volunteers, and staff to operate. Factors that contribute to canceling a market include, but are not limited to:

- Condition and safety of the site
- Weather forecast in the 24 hours leading up to the market day
- The ability of City Staff to clear the site of snow, ice, fallen branches etc.
- The ability of vendors, customers, staff and volunteers to travel safely to the site
- If conditions are forecasted to improve or worsen

2. Notice and Communications

The NWFM will strive to provide at minimum 24 hours notice from time of market opening of a market cancellation, reduction of hours or change of location due to an emergency. However, as weather warnings or other unforeseen circumstances may emerge on the market date or during market operation, this is not always possible. In the event of a market cancellation, vendors will be notified in the following order:

1. Vendors will be notified via email at the moment cancellation is called. An email receipt will be requested. If email is acknowledged, no further correspondence will be given.
2. If no email receipt is received, vendors will be contacted by phone.
3. Notice of cancellation will be posted on www.newwestfarmers.ca
4. Notice will be made on social media platforms: Facebook and Instagram
5. Notice will be sent out to the New West Farmers Market mailing list.
6. If any vendors have not been contacted, a Market representative will be on site at the start of set-up time for one hour to redirect vendors.

3. Sudden Extreme Weather Event During Market Operation

In the event of a sudden extreme weather or emergency event during market operation, the decision may be made to close the market or reduce its hours, depending on the severity of the event. An Emergency Response will be carried out and communications will proceed as follows:

1. Customers, Vendors and entertainers will be notified immediately via megaphone. Customers will be instructed to exit and vendors will be instructed to start tearing down. Vendor cars will be let in 10 minutes after the cancellation has been announced.
2. Notice will be made on social media platforms: Facebook and Instagram
3. An email will be sent to the contacts of all present vendors.
4. Notice will be sent out to the New West Farmers Market mailing list.
5. Notice of cancellation will be posted on www.newwestfarmers.ca
6. A lawn sign will be put at main entrances indicating our closure to shoppers.
7. The NWFM Management Team will remain present until all vendors and volunteers have left safely.

4. Refunds

Affected vendors will be issued a refund for any stall fees they have prepaid if a Market day is canceled due to extreme weather or an emergency. If the market must close mid-operation or must reduce its hours to prioritize the safety of its community, (with 50% or more operational hours canceled) a refund will be issued to affected vendors. Markets that close or reduce hours less than 50% of its operational hours that day, may receive a refund, at the discretion of the Board of Directors. The Market Manager will contact those vendors within 24 hours to arrange a credit or a refund, which will be reimbursed within the week following our final market of the season.

SEVERE WEATHER

1. Wind

Strong winds can not only make cold weather feel colder, but they pose a huge threat to the overall safety of the market. Gusts of wind can occur at any time, without warning and can cause tents and other objects to go flying. Most tents are rated to withstand winds only up to about 16 KM/h, or 30 KM/h if they are properly weighted. Wind speed risk is calculated using the [Beaufort Scale](#)

39 KM/H - The market will be canceled if sustained winds are expected to reach or exceed 39 KM/H.

30-38 KM/H - The market will proceed. No tents, umbrellas, large signs/banners, or other objects that could catch wind will be permitted to set-up. Any vendors, volunteers, or market entertainment will not be penalized or charged for canceling their date if they communicate their nonattendance via email before 10am on market day. Market fees and late fees will be levied after this time.

20-30 KM/H - Preventative precautions will be taken. No umbrellas, tent walls, A-frame signs or other objects that could catch wind will be permitted to set-up. Tents will not be permitted to set-up if wind gusts are expected to reach or exceed 30 KM/h.

2.1.1 Tent Weight Policy

All vendors must use and *secure* their tents with tent weights of a *minimum* 20 lbs per each tent leg, with a total *minimum* weight of 80 lbs. The NWFM strongly recommends tent weights of 40 lbs per tent leg (total 160 lbs) to withstand strong gusts. Vendors without proper weights will be charged a tent rental fee or asked to leave until proper equipment is acquired.

2. Air Quality

Air quality is a growing and significant safety concern. Risk is measured using the [Air Quality Health Index \(AQHI\)](#). At-risk individuals include those with breathing or heart concerns, as well as those who are pregnant, seniors and children or otherwise advised by a medical professional that they are at risk due to poor air quality.

AQHI 8 or higher - The market will be canceled.

AQHI 4 - 7 - Market will proceed. Any vendors, volunteers, or market entertainment will not be penalized or charged for canceling their date if they communicate their nonattendance via email before 10am on market day. Market fees and late fees will be levied after this time. Precautionary market procedures will be enacted.

3. Extreme heat

Extreme heat is a growing and significant safety concern that can lead to heat rash, heat exhaustion, or heat stroke, which can be life threatening. People over 65, people with multiple health conditions, people who use substances, people on certain medications, people who are pregnant, infants and young children are more susceptible to these health risks. As volunteers, staff and vendors participate in rigorous exertion during the portion of the day with the highest UV exposure, all of these factors contribute to deciding whether it is safe to operate.

Extreme Heat Emergency declared or a humidex rating of 40C or higher - The market will be canceled.

Heat Warning issued or a humidex rating of 25C - 39C - The market will continue, but operational hours may be reduced, as determined by the Market Manager. Vendors

and volunteers will not be penalized or charged for canceling their date if they communicate their nonattendance via email before 10am on market day. Market fees and late fees will be levied after this time. Heat safety procedures will be enacted, including extra cooling supplies dispersed, extra breaks for folks to cool off in city hall, and safety notices posted.

4 Snow and Extreme Cold

Specifically during our Holiday Market, extreme cold is a concern. Hypothermia, frostbite and frostnip are concerns, especially in wet, sweat-inducing conditions where one is sitting alone for long periods without movement or access to warming. All of our vendors, staff and volunteers are particularly vulnerable given the conditions of the market.

“Feels like” 6C to 1C - Cold mitigation strategies will be implemented, including passing out hand/feet warmers to staff, volunteers and vendors, distributing heaters to volunteers, staff and musicians.

0C “Feels like” -9C - the market will be canceled, unless warming centers are available for vendors, staff and volunteers.

“Feels like” -10C or lower - The market will be canceled.

Snow accumulation during market operation - If snow begins accumulating at an operational market, the market will be canceled, as tents are unable to withstand it, roads may ice over and vendors may struggle getting home.

Snow accumulation prior to market - If snow falls before the market opens, the market will continue if road conditions are sufficient for driving and City Staff have been able to plough the market site for use. If a vendor is impacted by an extreme weather event occurring outside the market area, such as icy roads, a blizzard, etc. market fees will be waived if the need for cancellation is made via email 5 hours prior to market day operation.

EXTREME AND SUDDEN WEATHER EVENTS

1. Thunder/Lightning Storm

Considering the tree-sheltered market location and that it is generally unsafe to be outdoors in a thunderstorm, if a thunderstorm weather alert is issued within New Westminster, the market will be canceled. If one develops during the market and thunder is audible, the market will be immediately closed for tear-down.

2. Other Extreme Weather Alerts

All weather alerts and travel advisories for New Westminster will be monitored closely and handled on a case-by-case basis. If a vendor is impacted by an extreme weather event occurring outside the market area, such as a forest fire, flood, atmospheric river, etc., market fees will be waived if the need for cancellation is made via email before 10am on market day.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

The NWFM recognizes that everyone at the market has a shared responsibility in ensuring an effective emergency response, has a duty to comply with emergency response procedures and takes every reasonable step to prevent potential emergencies by protecting the health and safety well-being of themselves, others, and the environment.

1. Board of Directors

The **board of directors** must review this policy on at least an annual basis to ensure that appropriate and comprehensive emergency response practices, which align with the organization's priorities, plans, and capacity are upheld.

2. NWFM Management Team

The **Market Manager** is responsible for developing, maintaining, communicating and implementing [Emergency Response Procedures](#). In the event of an emergency, the Market Manager acts as the primary director and initiates an emergency response. The Market Manager maintains Level 1 First Aid certification and reserves the right to restrict and remove persons from the market premises following noncompliance of NWFM policies, procedures, Vendor Guidelines or Codes of Conduct.

The **Assistant Manager** is responsible for upholding the [Emergency Response Procedures](#) and acts as the secondary director in supporting the implementation of an effective emergency response. In the event of the Market Manager's absence, the Assistant Manager assumes the role of the Market Manager. The Assistant Manager maintains Level 1 First Aid certification.

3. Vendors, Support Staff, Volunteers, Sponsors, Community Groups, Market Entertainment Groups and Contractors

All **vendors and other persons' or organizations accepted to the NWFM** have a duty to comply with all relevant health and safety policies and procedures, including but not limited to the NWFM Vendor Guidelines and Codes of Conduct and take every reasonable step to prevent potential emergencies by protecting the health and safety well-being of themselves, others, and the environment, reporting promptly, to the Market Manager, any suspected hazards to the health and safety well-being of themselves, others, or the environment and following the direction of the NWFM management team in the event of an emergency response.

4. Members of the Public

For the safety of the entire NWFM community, **members of the public** within market grounds during operational hours as per the NWFM Letter of Agreement with The City of New Westminster, must abide our Code of Conduct and follow the direction of staff and volunteers in the event of an emergency response, up to and including; forgoing market purchase and leaving the market area immediately, following an evacuation protocol.

RELATED LAWS, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

[Occupational Health and Safety Regulation](#)

[Emergency Response Procedures](#)

[Vendor Guidelines](#)

[Health and Safety Policy](#)

[Code of Conduct](#)