

**From:** [Mayor](#)  
**To:** [Mayor](#)  
**Subject:** COVID-19 Update: Compassion & Love  
**Date:** Tuesday, September 15, 2020 5:22:01 PM

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A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Julie Woodward".

## The City of Spokane **COVID-19 News Update for Sept. 15**

*Information about Coronavirus Disease 19 (COVID-19) is evolving rapidly. We want to make sure our City employees have up-to-date information. We will provide this update, as needed, to communicate what you need to know, while we work to reduce the spread of this disease in our community and continue to provide critical public services.*

### **A Message from Mayor Woodward**

This year has seen no shortage of opportunities for the community to step up.

Global pandemic. A courageous conversation about race relations in Spokane and nationally. And, now hazardous wildfire smoke. These are just some of the challenges that have come our way this year.

Our community has handled every one with grace, dignity, and a sense of pride and respect for our neighbors. Each time, you have selflessly put the needs of others before your own. To reach out to those who need a healthy space, a voice, a hand, or a shoulder to cry on.

This time it was the Public Facilities District working the weekend to finalize details for the Convention Center to become a temporary, short-term regional Safer Air Center for guests who needed relief from the dense smoke – regardless of housing status. HEART of Spokane provided kennels for guests with pets. SCRAPS supplied pet food. The Civil Air Patrol rallied with several volunteers to staff the center.

Community Organizations Active in Disasters and United Way of Spokane assisted with volunteer recruitment. Second Harvest coordinated food and water donations and worked with the Washington National Guard to get the 22 pallets delivered. Spokane Street Medicine did wellness checks for guests. Starbucks on Main Street donated coffee. Project Beauty Share put together 300 pounds of personal hygiene items. MultiCare contributed backpack care packages. AmeriGroup dropped off hand sanitizer, band aids, and snacks. Women and Children's Free Restaurant is preparing meals.

And, let's not forget the countless others who have offered assistance to our friends in Malden devastated by fire in their community.

People and businesses continue to help out in a time when many have already given and lost so much. It has been humbling to see first-hand how the community has taken turns contributing what it could to be part of making a big, collective difference. This is what Spokane is all about.

Thank you to everyone for the love and compassion you have shown. We continue to be so impressed by the resiliency and generosity.

## Tele-health Services

Virtual tele-health benefits and appointments are available to City of Spokane employees. Employees with [Premera insurance have access to these services](#) through the end of the year to help support our employees and their families through the end of the year. Meanwhile, Kaiser Permanente offers tele-health services regularly. Here is [information on their offerings](#).

City employees have their cost shares for COVID-19 testing and treatment waived from Jan. 1, 2020, through Dec. 31, 2020, under both health plans.

## Air Quality Concerns

What hasn't happened in 2020? Throughout the week, we have been watching the air quality readings provided by Spokane Clean Air Agency. You can access up-to-date information through this link: <https://spokanecleanair.org/current-air-quality>. The Air Quality has reached into the Hazardous level (300 and above) for the last several days. Readings at this level result in modifications and suspensions in some of our operations.

On Monday and Tuesday, all work outside of buildings and vehicles was suspended except for emergency calls or repairs. Employees who are required to drive were asked to keep the windows rolled up and set the air conditioner to recirculate. We have **suspended some garbage pickup** for routes that use rear-loader trucks that require employees to be outside the vehicle. And, we have opened a **Safer Air Center** at the Convention Center for citizens who need to escape poor air quality.

This is a unique event, but one for which we will be developing new policies and protocols. Every one of you has a different situation and we will have to address individual concerns on a case-by-case basis.

## More Information to Assist Our Employees

*Here are some more resources from our Employee Assistance Program:*

- [Balancing Working from Home and Homeschooling](#)

*"I had the worst dream last night. In my dream, my husband and I were both working from home, and (this is the wacky part) all of the schools closed, so we were also trying to homeschool our child. Then I woke up and realized it wasn't a dream. It was my life."*

Over the last few months, COVID-19 has turned the world upside down. With many schools focused on distance learning or hybrid models, working parents are in uncharted territory.

Many working parents are doing their best to keep their children on track academically while also keeping up with work assignments. While today's technology makes it possible, it's not easy.

- [Healthy Eating and COVID-19](#)

Early in the pandemic, restaurants closed and offered takeout only, prompting many to eat at home more and more. You may have even started cooking your meals regularly for the first time. Cooking at home helps to limit large portions, extra sodium, and unhealthy fats and sugars that are often associated with eating out at restaurants.

This can be an excellent opportunity to explore new recipes and make changes to your diet for the

better. Taking on new cooking challenges can help alleviate boredom, and a well-balanced diet can help you stay healthy.

To access more topics related to COVID-19 visit: [EAPHelpLink.com](https://EAPHelpLink.com), using company code: **CITSPO**

**Employee Information Portal** ([covid19.spokanecity.org/](https://covid19.spokanecity.org/))

Remember, this Employee Information Portal is a great resource for employees to stay current on what's happening with the COVID-19 response. The [Employee Information Portal](#) can be accessed from work or home, using a computer or mobile device. All of the emailed information we have sent to employees is archived here.