

**From:** [Mayor](#)  
**To:** [Mayor](#)  
**Subject:** COVID-19 Update: More on Fraud  
**Date:** Friday, May 15, 2020 6:19:44 PM

---



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

## The City of Spokane

# COVID-19 News Update for May 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.*

---

### **Spokane County's Variance Application Status**

Mayor Nadine Woodward and officials throughout Spokane County are continuing their efforts to reopen Spokane's economy at a different pace than the rest of the state. Because the state has yet to define early reopening criteria for counties with larger populations, like Spokane County, state officials have initially denied the request. Counties around Spokane have already moved to Phase 2.

However, conversations are continuing and guidance for larger counties is under development at the state level. We are awaiting word on that guidance, and Spokane County will work to renew its variance application once that option is available. Spokane's low case counts, available capacity at local hospitals, and development of a system to provide "contact tracing" around people who test positive, among others things, demonstrate that Spokane is positioned well to move onto the next phase of opening.

The Mayor says she remains hopeful that Spokane's request for a variance ultimately will be successful. For reopening to succeed, our citizens and employees will have to do their part. Basic hygiene measures, including hand washing, covering coughs and sneezes, and staying home when sick, will be critical.

Maintaining appropriate distance between people will be a centerpiece to reduce the spread of the virus. Keeping space between you and others is one of the best tools we have to avoid being exposed to this virus and slowing its spread in Spokane—and really across the state and beyond. Wearing masks also will continue to become more commonplace.

### **Unemployment Claim Fraud Affecting Our Employees**

Since our last update, more of our employees have become victims of fraud, with criminals using their names, social security number, and related information to file fraudulent claims for unemployment.

Attention to this issue has changed some policies at the state Department of Employment Security. The department has [automated a reporting system](#) for fraud. And, unemployment recipients will need to wait a couple of days to get checks to allow for improved vetting.

Human Resources continues to identify fraudulent claims and inform employees of how to challenge the

claim and then proceed with steps to protect their personal information from continued misuse. HR has put together [this information sheet detailing those steps](#). We also have [additional guidance from our EAP program](#) on how to manage identity theft.

And finally, our EAP program offers a voluntary program called ID Shield that will provide credit monitoring and assist people who become victims of identity theft. [Here is information on the program and its costs](#).

### **City Continues to Help!**

Our employees are continuing to their part to make a difference for our citizens. Check out some recent videos of success stories:

- Our [affordable loan program](#) for small businesses is already making a difference.
- The [Waste-to-Energy Facility team](#) reopened the facility for clean green, recycling and household hazardous waste this week.
- And [our team at the Water Department](#) is continuing to provide essential drinking water to our citizens.

### **More Information to Assist Our Employees**

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

- [Face Stress: Get Mentally Fit!](#)  
Lots of people live 24/7, where work and other responsibilities are never-ending. People try their best to keep up and not get swamped. They frequently use every possible trick to manage their time and stress, yet many still end up overwhelmed, behind, and feeling negative and distressed.
- [Stress and high blood pressure: What's the connection?](#)  
Your reaction to stress may affect your blood pressure. There are options for managing stress.
- [Coping with Stress Without Smoking](#)  
Stress is a normal part of life in moderation; it can help you reach your goals, but too much pressure creates more problems. Managing stress is a vital part of quitting smoking.

To access more topics related to COVID-19 visit: [EAPHelpLink.com](#), using company code: **CITSP0**

### **Employee Information Portal** ([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.