

**From:** [Mayor](#)  
**To:** [Mayor](#)  
**Subject:** COVID-19 Update: Looking Toward Phase 2  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 19, 2020 6:18:10 PM

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

## The City of Spokane **COVID-19 News Update for May 19**

*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 Poised for Phase 2**

Today, Washington Governor Jay Inslee rolled out [new guidance](#) to allow larger counties to move into Phase 2 of the Safe Start reopening plan earlier than other parts of the state. In addition to meeting requirements around testing, hospital capacity, isolation and quarantine information, and contact tracing, the new guidance requires counties to have fewer than 10 new cases per 100,000 in population in each of the last two weeks. Spokane County, as a result, appears poised to receive a variance.

Earlier, small counties with less than 75,000 population were allowed to move to Phase 2 if they didn't have any new cases for 3 weeks. Ten counties received a variance under the earlier criteria.

The Governor said that increasing the number of counties that can move to Phase 2 will "allow for increased economic activity around the state while also prioritizing the health and safety of workers to limit the spread of COVID-19." A discussion about the decision by the Governor is found [here](#).

### **Local Officials Commit to Seeking Variance**

In a separate news conference, Mayor Nadine Woodward and other local officials committed to submitting an updated variance application to the state Department of Health based on the new guidance. The Spokane Regional Health District is compiling needed additional information and will have the application ready to go in a day or two. The County Commission, meanwhile, already took an action today in support of the updated variance request.

Mayor Woodward said, "I couldn't be happier with the news today from our governor." She hopes the Spokane area will have approval to move into the second phase prior to the Memorial Day Weekend, saying that the community's request builds on what's already been submitted.

Local officials stress the importance of following social distancing guidelines, proper hygiene practices and wearing masks when distancing can't be accomplished. They said they expect our community to continue to show care and compassion for their neighbors.

### **City Departments Work on Reopening Plans**

While community leaders have worked on plans to reopen the Spokane area, our City department directors and program managers are working on plans to reopen the City for more in-person services and more work happening in our usual locations.

Many of our departments are full of essential workers, like Police, Fire, and the myriad of public works teams. Those departments are documenting their processes, while others—including many departments who operate primarily out of City Hall—are working with their employees to determine how to move people back from telework and into City facilities.

They are looking at cleaning regimes, new equipment at public counters like plexiglass dividers and distancing dots, reduced capacities in conference rooms, and a gradual return from telework, among many other things. Watch for more information in the coming days.

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

Just a little more information on unemployment claim fraud. The U.S. Secret Service reports that a well-organized Nigerian crime ring is behind most of the fraud, with potential losses in the hundreds of millions of dollars. Washington state is seeing the most fraud, with other states showing evidence of attacks including North Carolina, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Oklahoma, Wyoming and Florida. Many of the victims are first responders, government employees and school employees.

Remember, the department has [automated a reporting system](#) for fraud. 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, 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.](#)

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

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

- [Budgeting in Uncertain Times](#)  
The current global pandemic is affecting every aspect of people's lives, and for many, that includes finances. Inspecting your finances can help ease some stress around the impact of COVID-19. Budgeting for the current pandemic has many of the same necessary steps you would take if you were creating a budget at any other time.

### [Keeping Work, Home, Schools, and Public Places Safe from Coronavirus](#)

Practice good hygiene.

- Stop handshaking-use other non-contact methods of greeting
- Disinfect surfaces like doorknobs, tables, desks, and handrails regularly.
- Increase ventilation by opening windows or adjusting the air conditioning.

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.