

From: [Mayor](#)
To: [Mayor](#)
Subject: COVID-19 Update: A Message from the Mayor
Date: Tuesday, June 30, 2020 2:03:47 PM



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

The City of Spokane

COVID-19 News Update for June 30

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

Our community is dealing with tough issues that have long-reaching impacts to our physical, mental, emotional, and financial health. We are struggling with a virus that has sickened more than 1,000 people in Spokane, inflicted financial devastation on tens of thousands of friends and neighbors, and challenged our resolve. At the same time, Spokane has joined a national discussion about race and policing that has put our officers squarely in the middle of a difficult debate.

Everyone has personal experiences and truths. Our perspectives feel like reality.

It is time to listen. Really listen. To each other and to ourselves.

Many have rationalized their behavior, explaining away hurtful comments as not personal by pledging support for the community. It is not *you* that I'm frustrated with, it's *them*, the reasoning goes. We must acknowledge that words and actions matter. Things said in the heat of the moment can be personal. Very personal.

- To the members of our community who have experienced racial divide.
- To the officers who for weeks have listened to horrible things being said about them all while working non-stop to defend and protect the rights of their very critics.
- To people most at risk of contracting the virus who are listening to people refusing to wear masks.
- And, to the public health officials committed to limiting the spread of disease and protecting our healthcare system.

I understand the reluctance to yield even a little ground and frustration over things seemingly beyond our control. We are a country that enjoys great freedoms – and responsibilities.

It is time for healing and we can only do that by listening. Closely. To others who may not share our viewpoints. And, most importantly, to ourselves and what is coming out of our hearts and minds. Because in times like these, when the pressure is greatest, we have to remember words, delivery, and context matter.

When an Employee is positive for COVID-19

You may hear in the media that an individual who works for the City has tested positive for COVID-19. Within the guidance of the Spokane Regional Health District, coworkers identified as potentially having close contact with the employee already have been notified.

The City is limited in the amount of information it can share because of confidentiality rules around medical information. HR addressed this in its guidance to employees. Here is that information.

Q: Will employees be informed if a coworker has tested positive for COVID-19?

A: Yes. If an employee discloses to their supervisor or Human Resources that they have tested positive for COVID-19, the **work group will be informed they may have had possible exposure**. Employees exposed to a sick coworker should monitor themselves for symptoms, practice good hygiene and go home/stay home sick if they display any symptoms of illness. The **confidentiality of the sick employee will be maintained** as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and HIPAA protections. Under no circumstances is it appropriate to disclose an employee's medical condition with anyone other than Human Resources. Workplace rumors about an employee's COVID-19 status are inappropriate, and unacceptable. Just as it is not appropriate for management to discuss or disclose an employee's medical condition, it is equally inappropriate for employees to speculate, discuss or otherwise gossip about a coworkers medical condition or status. If employee gossip does not cease after it is addressed, further action may be warranted, including discipline.

Additionally, employees may have the following question.

Q: When can a person who tests positive for COVID-19 return to the workplace?

A: If an employee tested positive for COVID-19 **and had symptoms**, they can return to work after: 3 days with no fever and symptoms improved **AND** 10 days after symptoms first appeared **OR** as recommended by their healthcare provider – whichever is longer. If an employee tested positive for COVID-19 **but had no symptoms (asymptomatic)**, they can return to work after: 10 days have passed since the positive test **OR** as recommended by their healthcare provider – whichever is longer. If an employee reports that they have tested positive for COVID-19, HR will work with the department/work group to make sure that appropriate communication is shared with coworkers who may have been exposed and to ensure appropriate cleaning of the work space.

Neighborhood Fireworks

The Parks Department has teamed up with a number of partners and community sponsors to deliver Fourth of July Drive-In Fireworks shows at four locations around the community!

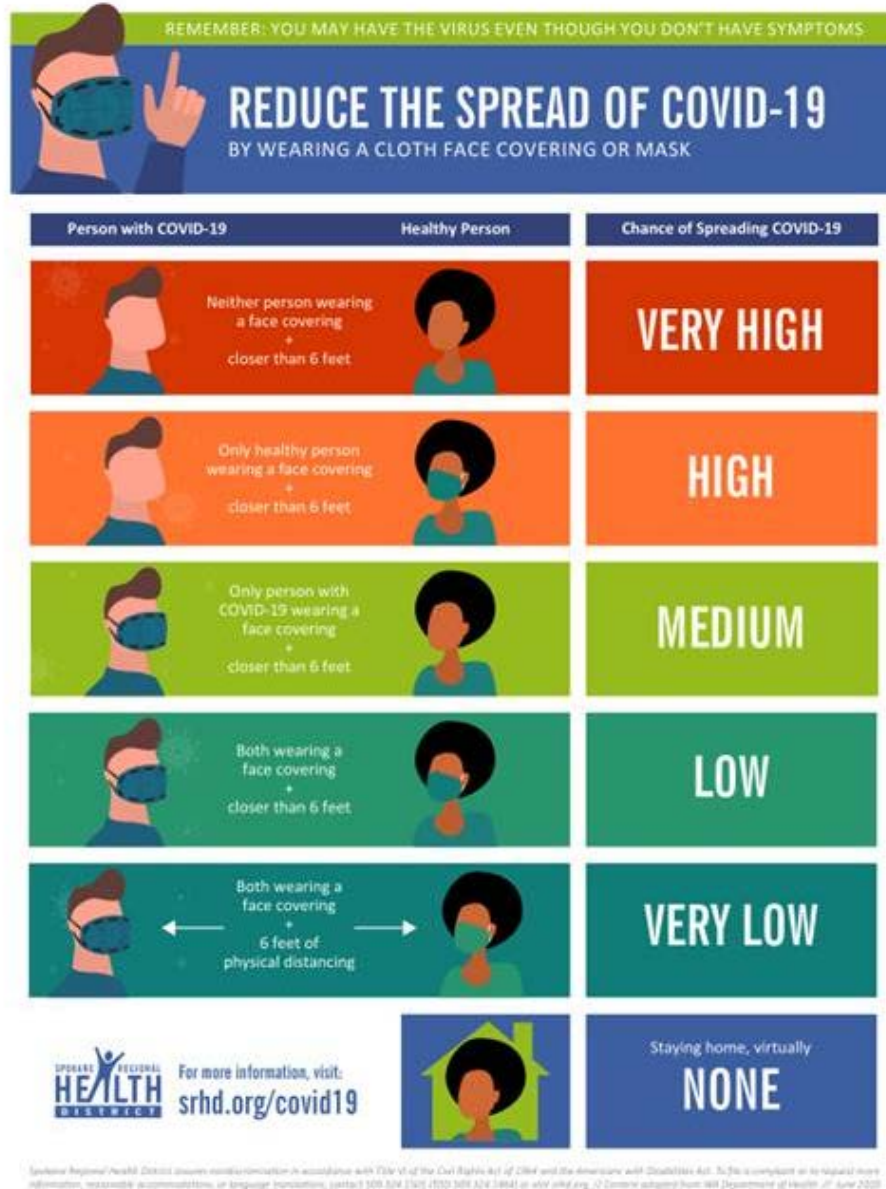
- Avista Stadium [602 N Havana St., Spokane Valley, WA 99212](#)
- Ferris High School [3020 E 37th Ave., Spokane, WA 99223](#)
- Merkel Sports Complex [5701 N Assembly St., Spokane, WA 99205](#)
- Plante's Ferry Sports Stadium [12320 E Upriver Dr., Spokane, WA 99216](#)

The shows will be held on Saturday, July 4. Parking lots open at 9 p.m., and the fireworks show begins at 10 p.m. at all locations. People also should consider viewing from home. SWX will broadcast the fireworks live on television. Tune into 93.7 FM The Mountain beginning at 9:30 p.m. for continuous patriotic music.

More information on the shows and the requirements to reduce the spread of COVID-19 are on the [City's web site](#).

Masks are the Best Way to Move Forward

The conversation lately has focused on masks, with lots of mixed opinions about them and the state requirement to wear them in public. As the number of cases and hospitalizations rise significantly in our community, the best way to move forward and toward more normalcy is through wearing masks. Check out this [blog from the State Department of Health on the top 10 reasons to wear a mask](#).



STA to Resume Fare Collection and Front Door Boarding July 1

Spokane Transit Authority (STA) has returned to full service levels and will [resume fare collection and front-door boarding](#) on Wednesday, July 1. Remember, City employees have access to free bus STA bus passes. Increased disinfectant protocols, PPE, and other safety practices remain in effect on STA buses. Masks are required to ride the bus. [Where would you like to go?](#)

More Information to Assist Our Employees

Here are some more resources from our Employee Assistance Program:

- [Teleworking during the coronavirus: Tips for coping](#)

If your office is closed because of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, you might work from home for the first time. While teleworking can offer many benefits, teleworking during the epidemic poses unique challenges.

- [You Can Save Your Coworker's Life](#)

When a person is distressed, depressed, or has suicidal thoughts, it is the people who are closest to the person who can pick up cues from his or her behavior. In most workplaces, people spend more time with their colleagues than they do with their team leaders or HR managers. They are the first to know when a colleague is feeling out of sorts or has some problems at home or work. Being sensitive to these situations can help you play a critical role in helping your colleagues and preventing suicide.

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

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

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.