

From: [Mayor](#)
To: [Mayor](#)
Subject: COVID-19 Update: A Word on Masks from the Mayor
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The City of Spokane **COVID-19 News Update for July 7**

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 the Mayor on Masks

Today marks the beginning of the governor's "No mask, no service" statewide mandate. If you have followed the conversation even a little, you know that masks have been met with strong opinions.

Here's the way I look at it. Masks protect and support others. They tell my coworkers, neighbors, friends, and loved ones that I care about them. They tell struggling employers that we need you in our community.

No one likes wearing a mask, but most people are quick to support others in need when asked. Well, the community is asking, and the good news with this illness is we can all help. Wearing a mask when physical distancing isn't possible is an easy way.

So the real question is who are you wearing your mask for?

I am wearing a mask for my mother whose immune system is compromised. I'm doing it for the restaurants I love to eat at, the stores I shop in, and the employers who keep our economy strong. I'm doing it for people at work who have worked right through this public health and economic crisis without the option of staying home to stay healthy.

These are people that need my help – and yours.

Wearing a mask does not have to prevent you from doing things you like. In fact, with the summer weather here, there are even more ways to enjoy our community. Be creative. Visit a park. Go for a walk, ride a bike, or take a hike. You can even enjoy small, infrequent gatherings with friends.

Just be careful. Socialize outside whenever possible. Remain physically distant. Keep moving. And wear a mask!

When Illness Comes to the City

Our employees have asked for additional clarity about keeping illness out of the work place and how notification will happen when a City employee does test positive.

We need everyone to work together to make this process successful:

- 1) If you are sick, please stay home and notify your supervisor as you normally would.
- 2) If you have specific COVID-19 symptoms or have had close contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19, you should consider getting tested. These symptoms include fever (100.4 degrees), chills or body aches, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, new loss of smell or taste, and gastrointestinal problems such as nausea, diarrhea and vomiting.
- 3) If your test comes back positive, we ask that the employee who has tested positive notify HR or their supervisor. A person with a positive test will need to stay home and follow the City's guidelines on safe return to work. (See below.)
- 4) In coordination with the Spokane Regional Health District's contact tracing work, HR will interview the infected team member to determine a list of potential co-workers who they had close contact

- with. (Within 6 ft for 15 minutes or more during time when they were likely contagious.)
- 5) Co-workers with close contact will be notified and provided guidance regarding testing, self-quarantining, self-symptom checks, etc. **Notification of close contacts is the number one priority** – HR starts calling and emailing immediately! If you are one of these people, it's highly recommended you seek testing and follow your physician's advice. Because of health privacy laws, only those with close contact to a positive employee will be specifically notified.
 - 6) Depending on the circumstances, work areas may be sanitized by a cleaning contractor.

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.

Contact Tracing

Contact tracing is part of the strategy to “Box in the Virus” and slow its spread.

Contact tracing is a routine process public health professionals use to help slow and prevent the spread of infectious diseases, such as COVID-19. The purpose is to find people who have a disease (cases) and then find the people they may have exposed (contacts). Public health professionals then notify contacts, assess their risk and provide guidance on how to take care of themselves and members of their household.

In Spokane, the Spokane Regional Health District is leading this effort, with the support of the Washington State Department of Health and its partners. At the City, our HR Department also will help. [Here are some helpful FAQs about contact tracing.](#)

Followup on Unemployment Fraud

As you know, several dozen of our employees were the victims of fraud—when criminal used their names and social security numbers to file for unemployment benefits. Some employees have recently received a letter from the state unemployment office saying that they will need to repay the benefits that were distributed as a result of the fraud. The HR Department has confirmed with the state that those letters are automatically generated, and are not accurate. Benefits will NOT have to be repaid. [Here is additional information.](#)

More Information to Assist Our Employees

Here are some more resources from our Employee Assistance Program:

- [Talking About Race at Work](#)
It's at work that most people are likely to find themselves with diverse groups of people and where a productive conversation about race might be most helpful. We may have coworkers who are in emotional pain and turmoil because of race-based events in the news, amplified by their own life experiences. But it can feel like a topic too dangerous to touch—the elephant in the room that, were we to acknowledge it, might rise and hurt us.
- [Addressing the Issue of Racism with Your Black Children](#)
How can we discuss these huge and disturbing issues with our children? Every parent will have a unique approach and a unique style, suited to who they are and their special relationship with their children. Did you know age and maturity matters, too? Kids at different ages have different levels of understanding of complex and difficult topics.

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.

