

From: [Mayor](#)
To: [Mayor](#)
Subject: COVID-19 Update: Support businesses in a healthy way
Date: Tuesday, December 1, 2020 3:31:21 PM



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

The City of Spokane

COVID-19 News Update for Dec. 1

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

The holiday season carries its own energy and electricity. Family traditions make our neighborhoods come alive with anticipation.

Small businesses are a big part of setting the spirit and mood for the holidays. The glow of seasonal lighting, unique local gift ideas, and holiday scents create a joyful atmosphere heading into a new year.

For retail and restaurant owners, the holidays, like the rest of the year, is a labor of love and living out the dream of owning their own businesses. This year, more than ever, your favorite neighborhood spots need our help. They have not been immune to the struggles COVID has inflicted on everyone.

The City will feature a business in a different neighborhood every day for the next couple of weeks on social media. It is a special edition of the 12 Days of Spokane Giving, which is traditionally a time for giving back in our community. The idea is simply to show off our city through a spotlight on small businesses and neighborhoods as a way to give back to those that are such a big part of our community charm, character, and charisma.

Here's how you can help.

- Stop by and make a quick purchase or order up food from Spokane restaurants. It's a great way to show your support.
- Watch for the small business stories this month and share them with your families and friends. You can also send us your suggestions on Facebook or Twitter of businesses to feature.
- Shop in a retail store or use their online and curbside options as a safe way to support local small businesses while following the current health guidance. Wear a mask. Limit the time you spend browsing in stores. Keep your distance from other shoppers.

Thank you for putting health first as you support Spokane businesses.

Riverfront Park Holiday Lights & Winter Farmers Market

In partnership with Numerica Credit Union, Riverfront Park will host beautiful outdoor holiday tree lights to brighten the season. Through Jan. 3, the community is invited to come to Riverfront Park to explore the

Numerica Lights up the Night Holiday Tree Walk. Forty sparkling holiday trees encourage visitors to wind through the park, and each tree is decorated by a local non-profit or business.

Additionally, join us at Riverfront's Winter Farmers Market located at the Pavilion Central Plaza and shop local! Market operations will follow Spokane Regional Health District Farmers Market COVID safety protocols. The first day for the market will be Wednesday, Dec. 2, from 3 to 7 p.m. [Find more information here.](#)

State Launches new COVID Tracking App

Washington Exposure Notifications (also known as WA Notify) is a new tool that works through smartphones, without sharing any personal information, to alert users if they may have been exposed to COVID-19. It is completely private, and doesn't know or track who you are or where you go.

How does it work?

When you enable WA Notify, your phone exchanges random, anonymous codes with the phones of people you are near who have also enabled WA Notify. The app uses Bluetooth Low Energy (BLE) technology to exchange these random codes without revealing any information about you. If another WA Notify user you've been near in the last two weeks later tests positive for COVID-19 and adds their verification code to the app, you'll get an anonymous notification that you've had a possible exposure. This lets you get the care you need quickly and helps prevent you from spreading COVID-19 to the people around you.

More information on the app, including instructions on how to add it to your smart phone is found on the [Washington State Department of Health web page.](#)

Tracking City Work Time Spent on COVID-19 Concerns!

As the City continues to respond to COVID-19 in our community, it is as important as ever for our employees to track the time they spend working on this issue in the HRMS system. That might be creating and managing programs to help businesses and residents, revising operational plans and procedures, responding to questions and concerns, making purchases, distributing supplies, providing training, and so much more. Employees should be using the Activity Code 0096 on hours spend on such activities.

Keeping track allows the Finance team to seek reimbursement for that work, easing the strain on our local citizens. Revenues to the City are down, as you know, so the **time tracking is critical.**

[Updated Mask Guidance](#) for City Employees

We have recently updated [mask guidance](#) for our employees based on the change in restrictions at the state level. Safety protocols that have been in place for more than eight months have limited workplace spread, so it is important to continue your practice of closely following safety guidance. Take a moment to get familiar with this information.

Coping with COVID: Regulating Emotions during a Pandemic

The Washington State Department of Health provides this help:

We're about eight months into the COVID-19 pandemic, and there's a lot going on around us. We're balancing a lot — work, school, family, and the upcoming holidays — during a time of great uncertainty. If you find yourself reacting more negatively to things you're experiencing, you're not alone. Feeling angry or frustrated is a normal response during a pandemic, but there are things you can do to manage those emotions.

[In this episode of our Coping with COVID podcast series](#), Kira Mauseth, PhD and Doug Dicharry, MD discuss the causes of strong emotional reactions and what we can do to feel more in control during stressful times.

Policies to Help City Employees

Remember, we have policies in place to help our employees during this time:

- Access to tele-health services: [Providence](#) & [Kaiser Permanente](#).
- No co-pays for COVID testing and treatment through year's end. 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.
- Access to [emergency paid sick leave](#) if you or a close contact tests positive for COVID.
- Access to the **Employee Assistance Program** to help with stress and other mental health concerns during this unprecedented time. Access Employee Assistance Program (EAP) materials at [EAPHelpLink](#) code: **CITSPO**. Employees also can call for assistance at 1-800-999-1077.
- Access to flexible work schedules to accommodate family needs. Talk to your supervisor or HR.

Finally, here are the updated [FAQs on COVID in the workplace](#).

More Information to Assist Our Employees

Here are some more resources from our Employee Assistance Program:

- [Suicide and suicidal thoughts](#)

Suicide warning signs or suicidal thoughts include:

- Talking about suicide — for example, making statements such as “I’m going to kill myself,” “I wish I were dead” or “I wish I hadn't been born”
- Getting the means to take your own life, such as buying a gun or stockpiling pills
- Withdrawing from social contact and wanting to be left alone
- Having mood swings, such as being emotionally high one day & deeply discouraged the next
- Being preoccupied with death, dying or violence
- Feeling trapped or hopeless about a situation
- Increasing use of alcohol or drugs
- Changing normal routine, including eating or sleeping patterns
- Doing risky or self-destructive things, such as using drugs or driving recklessly

Whether you're considering suicide or know someone who feels suicidal, learn suicide warning signs and how to reach out for immediate help and professional treatment. You may save a life — your own or someone else's.

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

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.

