

From: [Mayor](#)
To: [Mayor](#)
Subject: COVID-19 Update: A safe, healthy season
Date: Tuesday, November 24, 2020 3:00:29 PM



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

The City of Spokane COVID-19 News Update for Nov. 24

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

We all could use something to look forward to right now, even if it is just a small bit of joy and holiday normalcy. This is the time of year we typically renew traditions with family and friends and celebrate the blessings in our lives with the hopes of even more in the New Year. As we look around, our neighborhoods are already starting to show the holiday spirit.

Lights are glowing on many houses. Trees are peeking out of living room windows. Decorations add holiday touches inside while the smell of favorite recipes wrap around families like a warm, welcome holiday hug.

The City of Spokane and its partners are also working together on a safe, healthy holiday full of celebration and giving. Our focus is on the positives to give you new ways to celebrate – safely. That includes creative approaches to traditional holiday activities, closer coordination with local small businesses and restaurants, and an emphasis on reinforcing desired COVID-healthy behaviors.

Public health has to come first. We all understand that.

So, we are working closely with the Spokane Regional Health District and local businesses all with our citizens and employees in mind. There will be tree walks and strolls through a trail of lights. A drive-through show at Manito Park. A winter marketplace under the Pavilion lights.

We will showcase businesses citywide to reinforce the behaviors that will lead us out of COVID and encourage you to carry those practices into your personal lives. A full list of activities and plans is available on the [City's web site](#).

Everything is based on the simple goal of creating a family-friendly environment that is consistent with current COVID public health guidance, supporting collective community health, and sustaining business districts citywide. The next four Saturdays are Small Business Saturdays to support our local neighbors in need with takeout, curbside retail, and safe in-store options.

Our wish for you and your loved ones is a safe, healthy holiday season and that out of this will come new traditions for you to enjoy for years to come.

Ideas for a Safe Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving is just around the corner! Many traditional Thanksgiving activities like attending or hosting a Thanksgiving gathering are simply high-risk for spreading coronavirus. In fact, until Dec. 14, [our state has prohibited indoor social gatherings](#) with people outside a household unit unless people quarantine for 14 days or quarantine for 7 days and receive a negative test result for COVID-19.

The safest way to celebrate Thanksgiving is to celebrate with your household unit. We can get creative and find new ways to celebrate. Check out holiday alternative ideas on [the City's web site](#).

Riverfront Park Virtual Tree Lighting & Holiday Lights

In partnership with Numerica Credit Union, Riverfront Park will host beautiful outdoor holiday tree lights to brighten the season.

Numerica Lights Up the Night begins with a virtual celebration November 27, to light up the iconic 65-foot green spruce along Spokane Falls Boulevard. Mayor Woodward will lead a countdown to the illumination of 2,400 lights and a giant bow provided by Senske. We ask the Spokane community to join us online for this virtual event, to ensure we meet COVID-19 guidelines. The livestream link will be posted at www.RiverfrontSpokane.org/TreeWalk.

From November 27 – January 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 will wind through the park, and each tree is decorated by a local non-profit or business

Your Feedback about Housing is Needed!

The City of Spokane is creating the [Housing Action Plan](#) to help increase housing options that are affordable and accessible for people and families of all incomes. **For the plan to be successful we need to hear from you. Please complete one of these short community surveys about your housing experience.**

Survey Options:

[Live in City of Spokane boundaries](#)

[Live outside of City of Spokane limits, however work within the city boundaries](#)

As Spokane grows, we are facing a gap in housing supply. The plan will provide a strategic approach to address current and future housing needs of the Spokane community. When completed, it will provide a coordinated vision that supports more people finding a home that meets their needs with access to opportunities, services, and amenities. This process builds upon previous community discussions and initiatives around infill development, housing quality, and affordable housing funding.

Spokane's Housing Action Plan will:

- **Encourage construction** of additional affordable and market rate housing that are accessible to a variety of income levels. This includes options accessible to people and families with low and moderate incomes and cost-burdened households.
- **Examine** population, workforce, and housing trends.
- **Assess** housing policies, development regulations, and other city programs that influence the development of housing.
- **Consider strategies** to minimize displacement, particularly in neighborhoods with communities at high risk of displacement.

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.

The document provides general guidance on the first page. The second page includes a Frequently Asked Question segment with expandable sections that provide more specific guidance for unique situations such as considerations for first responders or individuals with disabilities. If you have questions about how this applies to you in your particular role with the City, please reach out to our Safety Team.

New statewide COVID restrictions and City employees

The new restrictions implemented statewide will impact us at work at the City.

- Employees who have the ability to telework and have been doing so will be asked to continue the practice, provided the employee can establish a good home work environment that is safe and healthful. All staff who have moved back into the workplace should reevaluate with their supervisor the need to be physically present in the office.
- Employees who may suffer detrimental impacts by being mandated to telework (ex: reduced hours due to partial ability to telework) will be allowed to work in City facilities, as needed, provided they abide by all implemented safety protocols and have collaborated with their leadership on a schedule that best mitigates virus transmission risk and aligns with the relevant agreements and City policies.
- Meetings should be conducted virtually using IT-approved meeting tools whenever possible. Meetings with co-workers that must be held in-person must comply with 25% occupancy requirements.
- All city gym/fitness facilities will be closed until further notice. Locker rooms remain open to meet employee changing needs. In areas where there is a shared entrance to these facilities, we are leaving the doors unlocked. We ask that you are respectful of the new restrictions and do not access the gym equipment or workout area.

Purchasing has PPE, hand sanitizer, and cleaning supplies available for departments. Please contact Thea Prince to acquire supplies.

COVID in the Workplace

City employees have done a good job keeping COVID cases down. Most employees who have reported testing positive for COVID have gotten it outside of the workplace and haven't spread it to their co-workers. Mask wearing in all City facilities and job sites is mandatory, except when working alone or when the job involves no in-person interaction.

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: **CITSP0**. 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](#).

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.