



*Valerie Woodward*

The City of Spokane

## Weekly News Update for May 4

*Information about Coronavirus Disease 19 (COVID-19) is evolving rapidly, and our important work as a City is continuing. We want to make sure our City employees have up-to-date information on both COVID and employee news. 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**

I am encouraged for our community, which has endured so much and worked so hard time and again to push back on the illness. Pausing in place is certainly a relief and gives us hope as we continue the push to get widespread vaccination.

We urged the Governor's Office to pause in place while the recently-expanded pool of the vaccine-eligible had time to make an impact. Two weeks simply was not enough time to see the results of the fully expanded access to the vaccine and he agreed.

Most of the state's population became eligible to receive the first dose of vaccine just over two weeks ago. The vaccine, according to health experts, begins to show some protections after 14 days.

Community members who just became eligible and received their vaccines on the first day they were eligible just began receiving some protection last Thursday. The health metrics being used to evaluate community progress does not yet include the newly vaccinated who became eligible when access expanded.

A pause in place gives time for the thousands of newly vaccinated – and therefore the community – to realize some benefit in case counts and hospitalization, even while the second dose for that group begins to be part of the data.

This was undoubtedly a difficult decision with devastating impacts to the collective psyche of our community and economy. Two weeks was not enough time, especially for those who are doing the right thing by getting vaccinated and we appreciate the governor's consideration.

Today is a day for hope and encouragement. This is an opportunity for us to refocus our efforts on getting more people vaccinated, especially those under 40 who are currently experiencing the greatest percentage of cases. We are extremely fortunate to keep moving forward as a resilient community while enjoying the choices that have been available to us for a few weeks.

## Gov. Inslee Announces Two-Week Pause on Phases

Today Governor Jay Inslee announced a two-week pause on movement in the [Healthy Washington: Roadmap to Recovery](#) reopening plan. Under the pause, Spokane County will remain in Phase 3. At the end of two weeks, each county will be re-evaluated.

## Vaccines: Paid time for appointments

The City would like to ensure that employees have flexibility in obtaining the vaccine.

Similar to the flu vaccine, employees will be allowed to get the COVID-19 vaccine during their shift or normal working hours, without use of their leave accruals.

- Use of paid time must be pre-authorized by the employee's supervisor and arranged for a mutually agreeable time that creates the least impact to the workplace.
- Proof of appointment is required. Proof of appointment can be obtained through the online scheduling system. Employees can either print, email or show proof of appointment to their supervisor on their smart phone.
- Employees are only authorized paid time to obtain the vaccine. If they show signs or symptoms following the vaccine administration, they must use their personal leave accruals for additional time off.
- Paid time is only authorized for employees who are able to get their vaccine during their normal shift. Employees will not be eligible for overtime if they obtain the vaccine on personal time.

To find a vaccine near you visit [vaccinelocator.doh.wa.gov](http://vaccinelocator.doh.wa.gov).

## More Information to Assist Our Employees

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

- [Couples and COVID-19 Confinement](#)  
Establish your space, and keep things structured. This pandemic is a situation that appears to fluctuate day-to-day. When you're working from home with your partner, this could be a challenge. Establish your own respective spaces for work or leisure, so you both do not feel like you're working on top of each other. While having separate rooms is essential, so is keeping a structure to your day. Set your alarm and wake up at your standard time. Walk your dog, brew your coffee, get dressed, or make your breakfast.
- [Fixing a Fractured Friendship](#)  
A friendship can take years to develop, yet it can be destroyed in a few careless moments. So don't let annoying pet peeves, thoughtless words, or actions ruin your relationship. As American historian Henry Adams said, "One friend in a lifetime is much; two are many; three are hardly possible." In the long run, most people have only a handful of good friends, so don't give them up without a fight.

To access more topics related to COVID-19 visit: [EAPHelpLink.com](http://EAPHelpLink.com), using company code: **CITSP0**

## Employee Information Portal ([covid19.spokanecity.org/](http://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.