



Julie Woodward

The City of Spokane

Weekly News Update for July 13

Information about 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

Fresh off of a historic heatwave, more uncharacteristically prolonged hot weather is coming. Forecasts call for highs in the upper 90s over the next several days.

City and community partner resources will again host drop-in cooling centers in central and neighborhood locations to give people relief from the heat when high temperatures are forecast to exceed 95 degrees on consecutive days.

Multi-purpose rooms at the Loeff Carrousel will again serve as the hub of an expandable network of resources in Riverfront Park. Spokane Public Library locations at Indian Trail, Hillyard, East Side, South Hill, NorthTown, and the STA Plaza will also serve as in-neighborhood locations. Collectively, those locations provide space for 1,000 people at maximum capacity.

Individuals and neighborhoods can also take steps to prepare for the high temperatures expected at times over the next couple of weeks.

- Drink plenty of water ahead of and during the heatwave.
- Check in with loved ones, friends, and neighbors ahead of the high temperatures and throughout the heat and develop a plan for managing cooling, hydration, and transportation needs.
- Those with underlying conditions that include heat sensitivity should consult a physician about needs related to extreme heat.
- Know the [signs of heat stroke and exhaustion](#) and seek medical assistance early if you have concerns.
- Check the list of available cooling center resources on websites for the [City](#) and the [Spokane Regional Health District](#).
- Identify the location of your nearest cooling centers, which may include City locations, community centers, and churches.
- Find additional nearby places you can go to cool off in the shade or inside businesses, such as neighborhood parks, malls, theaters, and restaurants for frequent, intermittent breaks.
- Contact 311 or 211 with questions about resources to beat the heat.

Spokane is a community that takes care of each other. Extreme weather is one of those times where it takes all of us working together to keep our community safe and healthy.

Masking and Reopening Plan

City policies have been updated to comply with current state guidance and be as consistent as possible with other organizational practices locally and statewide. **Beginning tomorrow, July 14**, the masking policy for employees and the public will change as follows:

- **Employees** – State Labor & Industries requires the City to have a process in place to accept voluntary verification of employee vaccination status. The updated City policy will allow employees who elect to confirm that they are vaccinated to go without a mask at work. Confirmation can happen voluntarily via one of several confidential methods, including an [electronic option on PeopleSoft](#) in the Employee Self Service section under the Benefit Details tile and COVID-19 Vaccination link on the left column (tutorial attached). The Safety Team also scheduled several in-person meetings with employee groups who do not regularly access computers or email to discuss other options to provide voluntary confirmation of vaccination status. Records will be maintained confidentially by human resources.
- **Public** – Members of the public entering City facilities will be required to wear a mask if they are not vaccinated, as is common practice at organizations and businesses throughout the community. Masking will be optional for vaccinated members of the public. Updated signage will reflect that policy.

Bullying and shaming

The City will have a zero tolerance policy for bullying or shaming behavior related to mask wearing and vaccination status. Each person has their own reasons for the choices they have made about vaccination and many will choose to continue wearing masks to protect family members regardless of their vaccination status. Employees violating applicable City policy will be subject to discipline. Concerns should be reported to supervisors or via electronic mechanisms.

Return to work

City Hall and other City facilities that have been closed will reopen to the public on Monday, August 2. This date was selected to provide employees in areas that require onsite employee and customer support time to prepare and make child care, transportation, parking, and other arrangements. Employees can begin returning to work onsite sooner, if desired. The expectation is not necessarily to require all staff to be working onsite by August 2. In all cases, employees are expected to work with their supervisors about their work arrangements – whether they return to the office, work remotely, or create a hybrid approach – to determine how best to continue offering services to meet public needs and expectations.

Communication

The Safety Team has been onsite at locations where employees who do not regularly access computers or emails to [use the PeopleSoft tool to voluntarily update proof of vaccination](#). Contact [Matt Lowmaster](#) with questions. Updated public signage will be in place by August 2.

More Information to Assist Our Employees

Here are some more resources from our Employee Assistance Program:

- [Use Water Efficiently](#)
Don't be a drip—fix that leak! Leaky faucets can waste thousands of gallons of water each year, and that's your money down the drain. Repair or replace old or damaged fixtures. If you're not sure you have a leak, check the water meter before and after a two-hour period when no water is being used. If the meter does not read exactly the same, you probably have a leak. For more water efficiency tips [click here](#).
- [Energy Savers: Save Energy And Money Today](#)
The 113 million residences in America today collectively use an estimated 22% of the country's energy. Unfortunately, a lot of energy is wasted through leaky windows or ducts, old appliances, or inefficient heating and cooling systems. The typical U.S. family spends at least \$2,000 a year on home utility bills. You can lower this amount by up to 25% through following the [long-term savings tips](#).

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.