



Valerie Woodward

The City of Spokane

Weekly News Update for Aug. 10

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

Slowing the spread of the virus and limiting its impact on the healthcare system is once again a significant topic of conversation. Data trends on both fronts have taken a concerning turn locally.

That's why, after conversations with the Spokane Regional Health District and a review of state data, we are renewing our call to get vaccinated. Vaccination remains the best defense against the spread of the virus. Data shows a high degree of effectiveness against COVID-19 and the variants.

A Washington State Department of Health report published on August 4 evaluated data from February 1 to July 24 of this year and noted several key findings:

- 96.5% of COVID-19 cases were not fully vaccinated
- 96.0% of cases COVID-19 cases who were hospitalized were not fully vaccinated
- 94.6% of COVID-19 cases who died from COVID-19 were not fully vaccinated

The report went on to draw two other important conclusions:

- Unvaccinated individuals should get vaccinated and continue masking until they are fully vaccinated. With the emergence of the Delta variant as the dominant strain in Washington and the U.S., it is more urgent than ever to ensure that everyone who can, get vaccinated.
- The more than 4 million fully vaccinated statewide have a very strong degree of protection against COVID-19 variants, including Delta. They are overwhelmingly avoiding severe illness.

Masking, as the state report points out, is also a consideration. The decision to mask remains a personal one. People are making the choice to wear a mask regardless of vaccination status to protect vulnerable family and friends. That is a choice we respect, honor, and encourage for those concerned about inadvertently impacting friends and loved ones.

Vaccination, according to the state health report, offers the best protection for infection and serious illness. The case for renewed and continued urgency in getting vaccinated, and, at 51% vaccinated countywide,

there is room for improvement. We have consistently followed the data throughout the pandemic and the data is telling us to [get vaccinated](#).

City Facilities Are Open!

Welcome back! City facilities have reopened to the public and employees. It was a big first step, one that may have included a few anxious moments. City Administrator Johnnie Perkins and I discuss that and more in the following video.



Finally, regardless of vaccine status, employees in the workplace that have concerns about working around mask-free individuals can request an N95 or KN95 mask through safety. Please contact [Matt Lowmaster](#) for more information.

More Information to Assist Our Employees

Here are some more resources from our Employee Assistance Program:

- [Help With Your Dog's Separation Anxiety](#)
It's not fully understood why some dogs suffer from separation anxiety and others don't. But it's important to realize that the destruction and house soiling that often occur with separation anxiety are part of a panic response. Your dog isn't trying to punish you for leaving them alone.
- [Eco Anxiety: Everyday Strategies to Cope](#)
Eco anxiety is an individual's emotional response to real or perceived threats to one's environment, causing chronic fear of environmental doom and resulting in anxious behaviors. This could be due to natural disasters such as fires, tsunamis, hurricanes, flooding, or global warming. [Click here](#) for everyday strategies for adults and children to cope with eco anxiety.

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.