



*Valerie Woodward*

The City of Spokane

## Weekly News Update for Aug. 3

*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

Welcome back! City facilities reopened yesterday 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](#) at for more information.

## 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.

- **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. 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.

## 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 have reopened to the public.** This week 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. The expectation is not necessarily to require all staff to be working onsite. 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

Employees wishing to speak to the Safety Team regarding vaccination status are welcome to contact [Matt Lowmaster](#) with questions.

## WA Cares Fund

In 2019 Governor Jay Inslee signed into law the creation of the nation's first Long-Term Care Trust Fund, called the WA Cares Fund. The Fund will raise money, through payroll taxes, to provide Long-Term Care Benefits for eligible Washington Residents. [Click here to learn more.](#)



WA Cares Fund  
(Washington Long-Term Services and Supports Trust Act)

## More Information to Assist Our Employees

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

- [Make Time for Yourself](#)  
Making time for yourself is probably the last thing on your list, and probably one that you rarely ever get to. There's always someone or something that needs your attention, and taking care of others is more important than taking care of yourself, right? You might feel like it's hard enough to get everything done as it is and that you'll never find the time. But there are some very compelling, and important, [reasons to try](#).
- [Mindfulness Exercises](#)  
Try breathing exercises, belly breathing, focused breathing, alternate-nostril breathing, or mindfulness meditation to bring yourself into a more mindful state.

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