



Julie Woodward

The City of Spokane

Weekly News Update for Aug. 31

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

The next several days mark a return to a tradition in our neighborhoods, once taken for granted, that was wiped out by the pandemic last year.

Students will start the year in classrooms with a set of safety standards put in place by school boards and administrators to protect students and their in-person learning. It's hard to believe this is already the third school year impacted by the pandemic. That means valuable learning, social development, and other traditions have been lost.

That makes the next several days extra special as the sights and sounds of students fill hallways, classrooms, and playgrounds from the beginning. The first day of school is a rite of passage for students, teachers, and parents filled with emotion, energy, and excitement of anticipation and promise of new beginnings, friendships, connections, and learning.

Educators have done an amazing job accommodating a continuation of learning over the past year and a half. Despite their massive efforts, there was still a void for students and teachers.

Students learn best in the classroom where they can interact with teachers and peers. Teachers are better able to deliver instruction, read non-verbal feedback, and meet student needs for learning and social emotional support.

Each year we talk as a community about how we can best support learning. The customary still applies. Slowdown in school zones and neighborhoods. Keep an eye out for stranger dangers. Pack healthy snacks and make sure students get a good night's rest.

This year, we need everyone's help making sure students can stay in school. That includes making choices consistent with public health guidance and talking to your trusted healthcare provider about how vaccination fits with your personal or family health situation.

The one thing we can all agree on is we have to do everything we can to make sure students continue to have the opportunity to learn in person, interact with their peers, and enjoy the things we grew up taking for granted.

Labor Day

In observance of the Labor Day holiday on Monday, Sept. 6, City facilities will be closed. Garbage pickup and curbside recycling will be a day late all week with Friday's pickup occurring on Saturday.

If you are looking for some family friendly activities the City's splash pads and golf courses will be open. The Spokane Symphony will perform a free Labor Day concert at the Riverfront Park Pavilion. The Loeff Carrousel, Numerica SkyRide, and Numerica Skate Ribbon will also be open Labor Day weekend. [Visit our website](#) for all the Labor Day holiday details!

Get Vaccinated For FREE

The COVID-19 vaccine is free for those with insurance and those who are uninsured. To find a vaccine near you visit vaccinelocator.doh.wa.gov.

Masking Guidance

Masking is required for all City employees, customers, and visitors in all City facilities when not sitting alone at your desk. Along with masking, we are reminding everyone to:

- Respect the 6-foot social distance rule
- Avoid large gatherings in conference rooms or other communal work spaces
- Refrain from any shared food, such as pizza, cakes, donuts, muffins, and other items that are not individually packaged, at all times

Washington Cares Fund

The Washington Cares Fund is a mandatory payroll tax effective January 1, 2022. You can opt-out of the program if you purchase a qualified private Long-Term Care Policy.

[Click here](#) to learn the following valuable information about the Program:

- Purpose
- Benefits
- Contributions
- Key Dates
- Live Webinar Dates

More Information to Assist Our Employees

Here are some more resources from our Employee Assistance Program:

- [Caregiver Stress: Part 1](#)
Caregivers care for someone with an illness, injury or disability. Caregiving can be rewarding, but it can also be challenging. Stress from caregiving is common. Women especially are at risk for the harmful health effects of caregiver stress. These health problems may include depression or anxiety. [Click here](#) for ways to manage caregiver stress.

- [Caregiver Stress: Part 2](#)

Some stress can be good for you, as it helps you cope and respond to a change or challenge. However, long-term stress of any kind, including caregiver stress, can lead to serious health problems. Some of the ways stress affects caregivers include: depression and anxiety, weak immune system, obesity, high risk for chronic diseases, and problems with short-term memory or paying attention.

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.