

The City of Spokane

## Weekly News Update for Feb. 1

*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.*

### **UPDATE: Continuing Virtual Meetings**

*The number of employees testing positive for COVID remains high. While last week saw some improvement, the past four weeks have been the highest weekly totals since the pandemic began. The following directives remain in place to allow additional time for cases to trend downward. A return to in-person meetings and trainings will be re-evaluated at the end of the month. Thank you for your continued patience, understanding, and adherence to the directives put in place in the interest of employee health and safety.*

- **MEETINGS AND TRAININGS:** Effective immediately, meetings and training should continue in a virtual environment. Any in-person meetings that are not time sensitive should be postponed at least until next month.
- **MASKING:** Masking in the workplace is required except when you are alone in your immediate workstation or assigned work vehicle. Compliance will be strictly enforced. Repeated violations can result in a record of counseling and entering into the progressive discipline process. KN95 masks are available for City staff. Requests should be made to your supervisor, who will contact Thea Prince in Purchasing.
- **VACCINATION:** Per guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, [up to date](#) on [vaccination](#) is now defined as having received both doses of either the Moderna or Pfizer vaccine within the past 6 months or the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine within the past 2 months or you have received a COVID-19 booster.
- **TESTING:** Residential households in the U.S. can [order one set of four free at-home COVID tests](#) from [USPS.com](#). Orders will ship free starting late this month.

Please take every precaution to keep your colleagues and their families safe and free from illness.

## **Spokane COVID-19 Testing Sites**

Drive-up and walk-up [COVID-19 testing sites](#) are open to the community. These testing sites offer free testing and are open to anyone who is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms or has recently been exposed to someone with COVID-19.

### **Spokane Falls Community College**

3410 W. Whistalks Way, Spokane, WA 99224

**Hours:** Mon, Tue, Thur, & Fri, 8:30 a.m. – 6 p.m.

[Appointments are recommended](#) but not required.

### **Spokane County Fair and Expo Center**

5100 E. Broadway Ave., Spokane Valley, WA 99212

**Hours:** Mon, Tue, Thur, & Fri, 8 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

[Appointments are recommended](#) but not required.

### **Mead Union Stadium**

12509 N. Market St., Mean, WA 99021

**Hours:** Wed – Fri, 4 – 8 p.m.

Sat & Sun, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

[Appointments are recommended](#) but not required.

### **CHAS Health Denny Murphy Clinic**

1001 W. Second Ave., Spokane, WA 99201

**Hours:** Tue – Fri, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Sat, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

[Appointments are recommended](#) but not required.

## **COVID At-Home Test Reimbursement**

The Federal Government recently released guidance on insurance coverage for at home COVID-19 tests effective January 15, 2022.

- These tests can be found online or at different pharmacy locations
- Any testing that is considered “surveillance” (e.g., work, school, travel related, etc.) will not covered
- You may be asked to attest that the test(s) that have been purchased are for Member and/or family use and are for diagnostic testing

**Please note: Tests purchased prior to January 15, 2022 will not be covered by insurance.**

Below you will find how our medical insurance carriers are currently handling reimbursement to their Members.

### **Premera**

Members need to keep their receipt(s) and submit a claim to get reimbursed. [Click here for to the claim form.](#)

### **Kaiser**

Members need to keep their receipt(s) and submit a claim to get reimbursed. You must be logged into the [Member Portal](#). You will then follow the path to COVID-19 Resources and “Submit a Claim.”

## **More Information to Assist You**

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

- [Hoarding: The Basics](#)

Hoarding is the persistent difficulty discarding or parting with possessions, regardless of their actual value. The behavior usually has deleterious effects—emotional, physical, social, financial, and even legal—for a hoarder and family members. [Click here](#) to learn more.

- [How to Choose a Tax Return Preparer](#)

If you choose to have someone prepare your tax return, choose that preparer wisely. A paid tax return preparer is primarily responsible for the overall substantive accuracy of your return and, by law, is required to sign the return and include their preparer tax identification number (PTIN) on it. Although the tax return preparer always signs the return, you're ultimately responsible for the accuracy of every item reported on your return. Anyone paid to prepare tax returns for others should have a thorough understanding of tax matters and is required to have a PTIN. You may want to ask friends, coworkers, or your employer for help in selecting a competent tax return preparer.

## **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.