

The City of Spokane

Weekly News Update for April 19

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.

Bloomsday Is Back!

Bloomsday is back Sunday, May 1! We are so excited for this signature Spokane event to be back in-person.

Help us celebrate! Email your Bloomsday photos to [Jessica Fisher](#) to be featured on the City of Spokane's [Instagram account](#).



Updating Telework Guidelines: Effective May 15

As data continues to show a decline in positive COVID case trends in our area, the City of Spokane will be phasing back into a work environment that more closely resembles pre-pandemic operations at City Hall and other City facilities. As such, along with lifting the masking mandate and relaxing social distancing restrictions, the following approved guidelines for teleworking will be in place effective May 15th to better align the City's operational posture with post-pandemic conditions. These guidelines are meant to support a positive working environment while maintaining mission effectiveness. The guidelines include:

- Up to three days of combination telework/flexible work schedule per week at an alternate work location, typically the employee's home. This means that an employee must be onsite at least 2 days/week regardless of regular day off. For example, an employee on a 4/10 flex schedule must be onsite 2 days/week, and they could telework the other 2 days/week.
- Management has the right to adjust the number of weekly telework days to meet specific operational needs or unique circumstances.
- Management has the right to approve/disapprove telework requests though every effort should be made to accommodate the request if employee eligible.
- Requests for a greater number of telework days per week should be exceptionally rare, made on a case-by-case basis and vetted through HR.
- All employees seeking approval of a regular telework schedule should have an updated Telework Agreement in place by end of 2022. HR will take the lead on this process and maintain the document repository. Guidelines forthcoming.
- A new and improved Telework Agreement form is forthcoming.
- Telework training will be available for supervisors and employees.
- These guidelines apply to in-state teleworking (as well as Idaho).
- Employees must ensure dependent care is in place while teleworking.

Your leadership will be working with you on implementation shortly. We hope these approved guidelines provide assistance for a successful transition to post-pandemic operating conditions. As always, Human Resources is available for clarification on the information provided. Please reach out to your supporting Human Resources Analyst if you need further assistance.

Continuing to monitor COVID in the workplace

As data continues to show a significant decline in positive COVID case trends in our area, the City of Spokane will be phasing back into a work environment that more closely resembles pre-pandemic operations at City Hall and other City facilities. We will continue to monitor the CDC's COVID-19 Community Level and will make adjustments as necessary. Additional guidance from the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries and potentially the Washington State Department of Health could cause future adjustments to the following guidelines.

- As previously communicated on March 12, 2022, City employees and visitors are no longer required to wear masks inside City facilities.
- Social distancing is no longer a basic requirement for workplaces. It is still encouraged where practicable at meetings and social gatherings.
- Departments are encouraged to conduct group meetings using hybrid formats to include virtual/telephonic options; be cognizant of the number of people in attendance for face-to-face meetings and training; and where practical, hold face-to-face meetings and training in open, well-ventilated spaces.
- Sneeze guards or plexiglass barriers can remain in place.
- Employees and visitors who prefer to wear a mask are encouraged to continue that practice. We will continue to respect the individual needs, comforts, and choices of our team members. As a reminder, there will be zero tolerance for any incidents of hazing, shaming, or other harassment related to mask wearing.
- As always, continue to practice safe health hygiene and proper safety measures. This includes, but is not limited to: monitoring your health, staying home if you are sick, washing your hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds, using hand sanitizer, and practicing proper safety etiquette when sneezing or coughing.
- Should an employee require a medical accommodation for COVID-related concerns, they should contact Human Resources.

More Information to Assist You

Here are some more resources from our Employee Assistance Program:

- [Building Social Bonds](#)
Strong, healthy relationships are essential throughout your life. Social ties with family members, friends, neighbors, coworkers, and others impact your mental, emotional, and even physical well-being.

"We can't underestimate the power of a relationship in helping to promote well-being," says National Institutes of Health (NIH) psychologist and relationship expert Dr. Valerie Maholmes. Studies have found that having various social relationships may help reduce stress and heart-related risks. Strong social ties are even linked to a longer life. On the other hand, loneliness and social isolation are linked to poorer health, depression, and an increased risk of early death.

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.