

Subject Line: The Governor’s “Stay Home, Stay Healthy” Order

Dear City Employees,

It’s been just over three weeks since the first COVID-19 case in King County was announced. I know each of you have been impacted by this global pandemic, both in your jobs and in the rest of your lives. It has created a lot of stress, fear, and anxiety for so many in our city.

Our city and region have already taken unprecedented steps to prevent the further spread of COVID-19, including the closure of schools, entertainment, and major events. Many of the initial actions impacted you and your jobs. For example, more employees than ever before are continuing to work from home.

While the Governor and others have encouraged individuals to stay at home and practice social distancing, it was clear we needed to do more to ensure residents stop the spread of the virus. This evening, Governor Inslee issued a [“Stay Home, Stay Healthy” order](#) for Washington state. I believe that this order is the next necessary step to protect the health and safety of our communities. But it’s important to remember that these changes are temporary, and they are in service of keeping more individuals healthy and protecting our health care system.

Effective for at least two weeks, the Governor’s order requires that:

- All Washington residents must stay home unless they are pursuing essential activities like getting food, going to a doctor’s appointment, or performing essential work functions.
- All gatherings for social, recreational, or spiritual purposes are prohibited.
- People can still participate in activities like bike rides, gardening, and dog walking — as long as they follow social distancing rules.
- Restaurants can remain open for to-go, delivery, and curbside pickup.
- All non-essential businesses must close unless employees can work from home.

I understand that many departments are evaluating this order in real-time, and we will provide additional guidance on what this means for our frontline employees and City workforce since many of the City’s services are essential. In the meantime, it’s critical to remember the following priorities.

All employees who can telework, should telework. Today, we saw an unprecedented 50 percent of our workforce telework. If you have been teleworking, please continue to do so. Managers have been instructed to be as accommodating as possible in allowing for employees to telework.

If you have been coming to work because you cannot telework, then you should continue to do so because most of the City’s services are essential. Your department is working to finalize its Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) and will have detailed guidance ready in the coming days for employees who cannot telework and must come to work.

Your department will provide specific guidance in the coming days. While many departments have already been impacted by some of closures, we are evaluating this situation in real-time and figuring out how to continue essential City function while protecting the health and safety of our employees. Thank you for your patience.

Many of you are showing why Seattle is the best city in the country. Despite this adversity, we have done incredible work to create grocery vouchers, help our artists and small businesses, and provide services for our most vulnerable including seniors and individuals experiencing homelessness.

And our first responders and many frontline workers are continuing to provide critical services to our residents, keep our bridges and individuals safe, and provide basic services like water, power, and garbage collection.

Please know that I am so grateful to every single one of you for the incredible work you've been doing under unprecedented circumstances. We will come through this largely because of your work and dedication.

Thank you for everything you're doing. And please stay safe and healthy out there.

Sincerely,

Jenny