

## Want to get more involved and meet your co-workers?

### Openings exist on equity and employee engagement teams

Get involved in the water utility and get to know your co-workers from across divisions better.

Become a member of the equity team or the employee engagement team.

Each of these groups typically meets monthly to discuss ideas and members often get involved in related projects throughout the year.

The two groups are different in their goals.

#### Equity Team

The equity team works to improve workforce equity to better reflect the communities we serve. They try to create a culture of equity at SPRWS to help eliminate institutionalized racism and work towards equity. They also continue outreach and public engagement with a more focused intent on being inclusive and examine existing programs, services, policies, and procedures with an equity lens to look for improvements, and work to improve immigrant and refugee access to SPRWS services.

#### Employee Engagement Team

The employee engagement team plans events and activities that help to bring employees together to increase organizational awareness, acknowledge employee contributions, and improve employee engagement/morale.

Some events this group has worked on in the past include:

- Safety picnic
- Saint Paul Saints baseball outing
- Holiday potluck
- Cooking contests

## Job simulation testing



**A potential new water utility worker shovels sand in the foreground while another applicant digs out a water main in the background as part of a set of job simulation situations used to test incoming and returning water utility workers. Tests also including lifting cement blocks and moving them. The tests took place on Feb. 21 and were overseen by Lisa Peirson from Minnesota Occupational Health, seen talking to the applicant in the background. Another round of applicants underwent the testing later that afternoon. Tests were also conducted earlier in the week.**

- System tours
- Employee conference

If you don't want to be a permanent member of the employee engagement team, but want to help out on specific events or outings, your help is welcome there, too.

If you are interested in participating in either of these two groups, or both, contact Racquel Vaske or Sandy Kimbrough. Vaske can be reached at 266-6815 and Kimbrough at 266-6510.

## Century College courses still available this spring

SPRWS' partnership with Century College offering continuing education classes to water utility staff is ongoing. Courses are still available in March and April.

To find out what is still available and to sign up for course(s), please contact Sandy Kimbrough. You can email her at [sandy.kimbrough@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:sandy.kimbrough@ci.stpaul.mn.us) or call her at 266-6510.

You must obtain management approval prior to signing up for the course(s) you are interested in.

## Keep the cold and flu bug at home, minimize spreading germs

Subzero temps might be on the way out for the year, but warming temperatures are not chasing away the cold and flu bug yet. The flu is still roaming the state and coughs and colds are still par for the course.

If you are feeling particularly ill or are running a fever and are contagious, it's in everyone's best interest if you stay home until you are feeling better.



If you must come into the office, consider

your co-workers when dealing with your symptoms.

Your first line of defense is getting the flu shot. Even though it's no guarantee against getting the flu, it's the best protection available and can help shorten the length of the flu if you do get it.

Did you know you can spread the flu to others from up to six feet away? The Center for Disease Control says that is possible when you cough, sneeze or talk. You can also spread the flu by touching surfaces and then a co-worker touches that same surface.

To protect your co-workers and to be considerate of them, think about these things:

**Stay home and seek medical attention** – Don't go to work; go to the doctor. While a virus must run its course, other treatments or medications may still be required to help fight against whatever ails you.

**Wash your hands or use a hand sanitizer often** –

## Comp time to be used or cashed out by March 31

Do you have more than 40 hours of compensatory time on the books?

You have until March 31 to use the hours over 40 or the overage will be cashed out for you.

You can accrue up to 150 hours of comp time a year and use 120 hours. The reporting year ends on March 31 and you are only allowed to carry over 40 hours into the new reporting year.

If you have any questions, you can always ask your supervisor or Racquel Vaske.

Especially after blowing your nose.

**Use disinfectant wipes at your desk** – Clean up your phone, keyboard and mouse. Wash thoroughly your eating ware and your coffee mug.

**Keep a supply of cough drops** These will help keep your coughing to a minimum. It can be very distracting to listen to constant coughing. If you can't help but cough, make sure to cover your mouth.

**Sneeze into your left arm or shoulder** – This is a must do! Keep germ spreading to a minimum. And if you're meeting with people, it leaves your right hand sanitary and free for handshaking.

**Stay connected with technology until you are fever free for 24 hours** – Just like school children are not supposed to return to school until they are fever free for 24 hours, you should do the same.

Keeping up communication via email and text allows you to respond to urgent matters and stay on top of your work until you are back in the office.

### Difference between cold and flu symptoms

Some of the general differences between colds and flu are listed below. Know what to look for and how to help prevent the flu:

Symptom	Cold	Seasonal flu
<b>Fever</b>	Rare with a cold.	Usually present with flu. A 100°F temp. or higher for 3 to 4 days is typical.
<b>Coughing</b>	A hacking, productive (mucus-producing) cough is often present with a cold.	A non-productive (non-mucus producing) cough is usually present with the flu (sometimes referred to as dry cough).
<b>Aches</b>	Slight body aches and pains can be part of a cold.	Moderate to severe aches and pains are common with the flu.
<b>Stuffy nose</b>	Commonly present.	Not commonly present with flu.
<b>Chills</b>	Uncommon with a cold.	60% of people who have the flu have chills.
<b>Tiredness</b>	Fairly mild with a cold.	Moderate to severe with the flu.
<b>Sneezing</b>	Common with a cold.	Not common with the flu.
<b>Sudden symptoms</b>	Cold symptoms tend to develop over a few days.	The flu has a rapid onset within 3-6 hours. Flu hits hard with high fever, aches, pains.
<b>Headache</b>	Fairly uncommon with a cold.	Very common with the flu, present in 80% of all flu cases.
<b>Sore throat</b>	Usually present with a cold.	Not usually present with the flu.
<b>Chest discomfort</b>	Mild to moderate discomfort.	Often severe with the flu.

Source: [www.UtahFluFighters.org](http://www.UtahFluFighters.org), Utah Department of Health