
March 30, 2020

Dear Team MDOT SHA:

As we continue to navigate the COVID-19 crisis, I want to assure you that your safety, health and well-being are my top priority.

If you were able to tune in to Governor Hogan's press conference this morning, Governor Hogan is enacting a Stay at Home directive effective at 8 p.m. tonight. Essentially, this means no Marylander should be leaving their home unless it is for an essential job or for an essential reason, such as obtaining food or medicine or seeking urgent medical attention. The change here is essential travel is no longer a request of the public, it is a requirement. The complete Executive Order can be found here <https://governor.maryland.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Gatherings-FOURTH-AMENDED-3.30.20.pdf>.

So, the immediate question I got from many was how will this new directive change what we do at MDOT SHA? **It will not change our operations. Our construction and maintenance work will continue, as these are critical functions essential to transportation.** We will continue to deliver on our core mission while following proper health practices, social distancing and working remotely as much as possible. The added advantage we have now is even fewer vehicles on our roads provides with even greater opportunities to accomplish more in shorter periods of time.

I am **extremely proud** of the hard-working team members of MDOT SHA for continuing the mission of delivering safe and efficient travel for those who are required to be on our roadways due to their essential job functions and for the post COVID-19 era. We are finding innovative ways to keep things moving during our "new normal." I'd like to highlight some of these efforts and will continue to do so in my emails as we move ahead:

To continue with our monthly Partnering & Progress Meetings for all construction projects, our construction staff had to make adjustments to meeting remotely using Microsoft Teams. This was not a software media that was not familiar for most of us. **District 6's e-Construction Liaison Field Coordinator Chunca Bittinger**, created a PowerPoint "cheat sheet" that included screen shots and showed field personnel how to create and participate in a meeting from the Portal and from an iPad. While Chunca created this for District 6 Construction Staff, it is now being shared with construction staff across the state. Great job, Chunca!

In **District 1**, lower traffic volumes have allowed for extended work hours in the Ocean City area. Crews have been able to pave US 50 on Fridays and Saturdays, which would not normally be feasible. It looks like these new timelines and extended work hours will allow crews to finish the work by the end of April – well ahead of schedule and before the peak travel season (we hope) gets underway! Great job, D1!

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Also, I can't say enough about our **IT team** for the exceptional job they have done to get a huge number of employees up and running from home with teleworking. This was a massive undertaking and is allowing us to keep our core functions up and running without a hitch. And thank you to our **Finance team** for keeping the bills paid and to our **HR team** for keeping our paychecks coming. While limited staff has had to report to the office, our IT capabilities have allowed us to keep our operations running as smoothly as possible during this unprecedented emergency. Hats off to you and your teams!

I have received a lot of emails sharing kudos about our coworkers. While there are too many to mention in this email, I will be sharing these kudos each week on Fridays. If you would like to **share with me the good work you see somebody doing, please submit your kudos to <https://onemdot/mdotsha/oc/Kudos/default.aspx>**. I also encourage you to **follow MDOT SHA on Facebook (@MDOTSHA) and Twitter (@MDSHA)** if you are not already doing so. We are continuing to share positive highlights of you working for Maryland and welcome you to "share" and "like" these posts to support your fellow MDOT SHA employees.

As we move into the third week mark of our temporary "new normal," with many of you working from your kitchen and dining room tables, I ask that you continue to do your part by social distancing and following Governor Hogan's latest Stay at Home directive. We must adapt to our new normal and figure out innovative ways to continue our core functions. While we do not know exactly how long the COVID-19 emergency will last, the actions being taken by Governor Hogan are necessary. Please check on your family, your neighbors and your coworkers frequently – and remotely. We're all in this together!

Stay safe and stay healthy.

Tim Smith, P.E.
Acting Administrator

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