



American Council of Engineering Companies
Maryland

April 1, 2020

ACEC/MD, in Conjunction with MDQI, Initiates Weekly Dialogue with MDOT SHA to Address COVID-19 Crisis

The current health crisis is providing us all with new stresses and reasons to work differently. This is no different for our clients. In response to our members wanting more updates from our state clients AND in response to requests from our clients to not get dozens of individual calls from industry, ACEC/MD suggested a regular partnering call between our MDOT clients and industry, both consultant and contractor. In response, MDOT-SHA Acting Administrator, Tim Smith suggested we use a weekly call with the MDQI Steering Committee. **IMPORTANT:** We want to respect Tim's request, so please funnel your questions through ACEC/MD, so we can raise them to be addressed during these calls.

The first of the weekly calls was held on April 1st, and ACEC/MD Vice President and MDQI Steering Committee representative Tony Frascarella and ACEC/MD President Alan Straus, along with MDOT-SHA's Tim Smith and other representatives of the transportation industry, kicked off a weekly discussion on important COVID-19 related items.

*Please note that information is being distributed to you as ACEC/MD's official representative. We encourage you to distribute this information within your firm, as you see fit.

Items discussed included:

- MDOT-SHA and the other TBUs are continuing to focus on delivery of their Core Mission. The industry's work is considered essential to support Marylanders during this public health crisis. As of this past Monday, Governor Hogan issued a Stay at Home Order unless it is for an essential job or reason. Tim related that state employees possess a state ID badge if questioned at or between job sites. Member firms are encouraged to consider providing their employees with credentials on company letterhead that states that they are operating as essential employees in support of MDOT and the transportation industry. For more direction, please consult with your legal counsel.
- MDOT-SHA does NOT anticipate the need to modify any A/E or Construction contracts due to the COVID-19 outbreak. General Provision 8.08 in the standard state contract includes directives on operating during an epidemic/pandemic. There will be no contract addendum. Tim recommended that any issues raised should follow the proven MDQI Issue Resolution process.
- Payments/Processing
 - a) MDOT-SHA acknowledges that there has been a little bit of a slowdown in payments. To rectify this situation, they have expanded their resources and guidance has been provided to MDOT staff on how we all should operate for the foreseeable future.
 - b) Invoices are now being accepted electronically in PDF format. The PDF must be indexed to ease searching
 - c) Electronic approval signatures, email, etc. are now acceptable
 - d) Payments are now being made ONLY via wire transfers. Firms are reminded that they must be set up for a wire transfer through the Comptroller's Office
 - e) Firms can check on the status of payments through the Comptroller's Office web portal.

- Firms should continue to follow the Governor's directives and CDC safety guidance.

- Reporting Obligations - While neither our clients or consultants have a legal obligation to report if anyone is sick, both parties agreed that it would be the appropriate thing to do. Firms are encouraged to visit the Governor's and WHO websites for guidance on obligations. Specifically, we all need to be vigilant if self-reporting WITHOUT violating any privacy issues.

We very much appreciate strong two-way communications during this crisis, and compliment the state on the positive steps being taken to maintain business as usual. Please let me know if you have any questions, and do not forget to submit your questions through ACEC/MD.

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