



OHIO TOWNSHIP ASSOCIATION

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Stay at Home Order, OTA Office Situation and Ohio General Assembly Update

STAY AT HOME/SHELTER IN PLACE

On Sunday, March 22, Governor DeWine and ODH Director Dr. Amy Acton issued an official Stay at Home/Shelter in Place order for Ohioans. Read the official order [here](#), and for frequently asked questions about what the order means for specific situations, [click here](#).

RESOURCES

The best resource for information on Ohio's response to and orders regarding the COVID-19 pandemic is coronavirus.ohio.gov.

OTA OFFICE

Today (Monday, March 23), the OTA office officially began working remotely in order to comply with the Stay at Home order. The staff's goal is to function with little or no discernible interruption in resources and services offered to you, our members.

You may still call the office, at which point your call will be forwarded to OTA staff. Emails will be checked daily and will most likely be the best way to reach a staff member. Please feel free to reach out as you normally would with any questions or concerns.

TOWNSHIP OPERATIONS & LEGISLATION UPDATE

In the Stay at Home order issued yesterday by the Governor, it states that essential services include township services and activities related to maintain the operation of townships. It is up to the board of trustees as to whether or not you want to meet in person, meet remotely or cancel your meeting but if there is business that needs addressed, the township is permitted to meet. As a reminder, all public actions or decisions must still be done in a public meeting and this includes paying bills and approving purchases. [Click here to view the letter of guidance by AG Yost](#) (which has also been provided in previous emails regarding COVID-19).

The Ohio General Assembly has been asked by the Governor to take up the issue of meeting remotely in the time of a pandemic. The OTA is working with several members of the Ohio House on this issue and others that have been brought forth by members during this pandemic.

DECLARING AN EMERGENCY

The OTA has been receiving calls and emails regarding a township taking the action of declaring an emergency. As we understand it, there are some benefits relating to competitive



bidding during a state of emergency and other very limited instances in a township (see ORC [505.08](#) and [505.82](#)). The OTA is aware of several townships that have taken this step.

However, the OTA has been told by the Ohio Emergency Management Agency that a township does not have to declare a state of emergency to receive funding that may come as a result of the President's or Governor's declaration. We have been told that it will be organized through your county EMA and you should be receiving information from them soon.

NEW WEBSITE FOR BUSINESSES DEALING WITH COVID-19

Businesses and workers can now access resources related to COVID-19 via a section on the [State's COVID-19 website](#). These links include information on unemployment benefits, the Small Business Administration's Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program, the Liquor Buyback Program, modified rules for trucking to help ship critical supplies into the state, the delay of BWC Premiums, etc.

BWC PAYMENTS DEFERRED

Ohio BWC announced that public and private employer insurance premium installment payments due for March, April and May for the current policy year may be deferred until June 1, 2020. See more information in the BWC updated [FAQs document](#) for details.

CONGRESS PASSES LEGISLATION TO ADDRESS COVID-19

[Click here](#) to view a summary of the *Families First Coronavirus Response Act* (P.L. 116-127), the second Coronavirus response package signed into law last night. The multi-billion dollar law provides paid sick leave, food assistance for vulnerable populations, and financial help for coronavirus testing. The law excludes local governments and public entities from receiving a payroll tax credit even though local government employees are eligible for both the emergency paid family and sick leave programs. The OTA is working to eliminate or change this exclusion in pending coronavirus legislation.

The Ohio Township Association is a statewide organization dedicated to the promotion and preservation of township government in Ohio. The OTA was founded on June 28, 1928, and is organized in 87 Ohio counties. OTA has more than 5,200 active members, made up of trustees and fiscal officers from Ohio's 1,308 townships, and more than 4,000 associate members.