

I continue to receive many questions regarding Tax Collectors Offices and tax collections. I have been trying to answer these questions the best I can while seeking official answers to all of your questions and have some additional information to report. On March 19, the PSTCA provided guidance to Tax Collectors with regard to in person collection and the need for compliance with recommended mitigation efforts. On March 20, Governor Wolf issued orders calling for the closure of all businesses that are not life sustaining.

Tax Collectors are local government officials and per the Governor's office are considered essential (life sustaining), we are not required to close under Governor Wolf's Order. That does not mean however that we are required to, or should, remain business as usual.

**Effective April 1, 2020:** The Governor has issued Orders to stay home in **All Pennsylvania Counties** across the state. This requires all persons to stay home "unless someone's life depends on it". ***This order is in effect until April 30.***

For many of us, discount collection period ends April 30, and many are asking how we handle our statutorily mandated hours with the stay at home declaration along with the necessary mitigation needs. You have been wanting specific direction from the State.

Recently, we received the following opinion from the Governor's Office:

*Your business must remain in compliance with the social distancing and other mitigation measures which have been established by the Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as currently in effect or as may be amended in the future. Virtual and telework operations (e.g. work from home) must be the primary option when available. In-person work at a business site is only to be performed on the most limited basis possible to deliver the services or goods of your life-sustaining business.*

*We appreciate your efforts to combat the spread of COVID-19*

This affirms what we told you in our earlier email. Please continue to:

- Accept tax payments utilizing non-personal contact. Examples might be credit cards by telephone, on-line payment, the U.S. Postal Service, or drop box or mail slot. Each office is different in terms of payment mechanisms but the goal is to reduce as much in-person contact as possible
- Be available to taxpayers by phone, fax, email--When taxpayers call your office, advise them that all forms of payment will continue to be accepted, but that they should utilize payment methods that would not require them to appear in person. If needed, make arrangements for taxpayers who require special accommodations.
- Take steps to notify your taxpayers of these changed circumstances. If you have taxpayer emails, send them a message describing your policies in this

time of crisis. Ask the taxing entity to post your notice to taxpayers by whatever means it uses to contact taxpayers, place a message on your answering machine explaining taxpayer options and of course put a sign on your door outlining any alternative procedures you have put in place.

Because each Tax Collector has a unique set of circumstances, it is important to follow the lead of one's Municipality, County, School District and Health Department. Please remember that you are performing an important role for the taxing districts, now more than ever.

Real estate tax revenues must continue to be collected and remitted on a timely basis. You must also continue to file all state mandated monthly reports and any reporting required by your taxing district.

Obviously, adhere to CDC guidelines of washing hands, sneezing in the elbow, disinfecting, social distancing, etc. Social distancing is a proven method of slowing the spread of the coronavirus and must be part of your mitigation efforts. The safety of you, your family, and the taxpayers are essential.

I will continue to report any new information when I receive it. Stay healthy!

*Sherry Labs*

President  
PSTCA.org