

## COVID-19 Q&A for County Officials

This document will be updated daily as questions are asked by county officials with the most current information appearing at the top.

If you have questions for ACCG, the Governor's office or a state agency, please submit them to Beth Brown at [bbrown@accg.org](mailto:bbrown@accg.org).

March 18, 2020	
COVID-19 Testing through Local Health Districts	<p><b>Q: Testing is being established in each of the Public Health Districts. Do people have to live in the District to get the test in that district? Do they have to be referred by their physician? What are the chances of getting mobile labs for Districts with travel issues?</b></p> <p>A: The Georgia Department of Public Health, under the direction of Dr. Toomey, is coordinating all regional testing. Please contact your District Health Director or your County Board of Health Chairman for more information. Testing guidelines (who should be tested, how to get tested) continue to change, so they will have the most current information.</p>
County Tag and Title Operations	<p><b>Several counties have had questions regarding county tag and title offices. Following is information ACCG has received from the Georgia Department of Revenue (DOR):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• DOR has conducted <a href="#">a survey of county tag and title offices</a>. In addition to disclosing each county's operating status, it also provides an overview of each county's capabilities to conduct business electronically. If your county's information changes, please update DOR.</li><li>• The state does not have any plans to grant extensions or suspend any deadlines required by law.</li><li>• Please visit <a href="#">DRIVES e-Services</a> page for the list of online services available to motor vehicle customers, which include the following:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Renew vehicle registration</li><li>○ Pay insurance fines</li><li>○ Change address</li><li>○ Cancel or replace registration</li><li>○ Get an estimate of TAVT or Ad Valorem taxes</li><li>○ Look up information such as vehicle information, title status, insurance status, registration status, and prestige plate inquiry</li><li>○ Go-Green (Renewal email notification)</li></ul></li><li>• Most counties offer online renewals, but 50 counties have not set this option up. DOR has provided this information to your tax commissioners as recently as March 18, 2020.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most counties offer online fleet renewals, but 25 counties have not set up this option.</li> <li>• There currently are 44 counties participating in the <a href="#">kiosk program</a>. Most of these <a href="#">kiosks</a> are located in Kroger grocery stores which enables customers much more flexible hours to renew their registration and walk out with their decals.</li> <li>• The state office is taking the public by scheduled appointment only and limiting the number and proximity of people in their office.</li> </ul>
<b>Property Tax Operations</b>	<p><b>Several counties have had questions regarding property tax operations. Following is information ACCG has received from the Georgia Department of Revenue (DOR):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The state does not have any plans to grant extensions or suspend any deadlines required by law.</li> <li>• For late personal property payments, the county governing authority can waive penalty and interest (48-5-242).</li> <li>• Personal property returns can also be accepted by email if there is a local policy of the assessors authorizing it.</li> <li>• Freeport – Applications that are mailed are accepted based upon the postal stamp received date. These can also be received by email if there is a local policy of the assessors authorizing it.</li> <li>• Homestead Exemptions – This is the most likely reason someone would need to come into the office before the April 1 deadline. One suggestion is to take the application by mail, email or secure drop box before the deadline and follow-up with any needed document verifications at a later date.</li> <li>• Special Assessments (e.g. CUVA) – If the application deadline is missed there is a second opportunity to apply during the appeals process.</li> <li>• Mobile Home Tax – Due April 1 but the county governing authority can waive late penalty and interest (48-5-242).</li> <li>• Assessment notices must be sent before July 1, but there is not a penalty in the law for sending them after this date.</li> </ul>
<b>Federal and State Income Tax</b>	<p><b>Following is information ACCG has received from the Georgia Department of Revenue (DOR) regarding federal and state income taxes:</b></p> <p>All returns must still be filed by April 15. There has been discussion of allowing a 90-day grace period for late federal tax payments, but the IRS has not made this official. Once the 90-day grace period is official, the state will consider a similar policy for late state payments.</p>
<b>May 19 Primary &amp; Presidential Primary Elections</b>	<p><b>Q: Is there any insight into potential approaches to the primary?</b></p>

	<p>A: At the present time, the May 19 primary is scheduled to go on as planned. It will also incorporate the March presidential primary that was cancelled. The Secretary of State's Office is communicating with county elections offices for preparation and planning purposes and has promised to inform ACCG if and when anything changes in this regard.</p>
<p><b>PPE for First Responders</b></p>	<p><b>Q: Governor Kemp said that emergency medical supplies and personal protective equipment (PPE) are going to be released. How can we make sure we get these supplies?</b></p> <p>A: All requests for supplies should be routed to GEMA through your EMA Director. As the Governor indicated, GEMA has ordered more supplies and will organize and prioritize distribution as they come in.</p>
<p><b>Emergency Declarations</b></p>	<p><b>Q: Is it necessary for Georgia counties to do an emergency declaration to be eligible for State and Federal assistance?</b></p> <p>A: In general, the Governor's declaration of emergency is enough for a county to receive state and federal assistance, so long as the county meets the requirements of that assistance.</p> <p>For state assistance, the county must comply with O.C.G.A. 38-3-27(c)-(f), O.C.G.A. 38-3-31 and O.C.G.A. 38-3-57(d) and (e).</p> <p>In the past, FEMA assistance required counties to comply with several requirements that necessitate good record keeping and compliance with the county's established procedures and ordinances while responding to an emergency.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counties should check their ordinances, including their emergency management ordinances in case the county's ordinance requires the county to declare a local state of emergency.</li> <li>• In the midst of a disaster, there may not be time to bid out emergency supplies or services according to the county's regular purchasing ordinance or policy. If the county has an established exception in its ordinances for emergency purchases and the county follows it when buying emergency supplies, the county may be entitled to FEMA reimbursement. If the county does not have an exception and does not follow its regular procedures, then it may be very difficult to receive FEMA reimbursement.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FEMA also requires that a mutual aid agreement be in effect in order to reimburse the county for money paid to other governmental entities for assistance during an emergency.</li> </ul> <p>ACCG has prepared a list of <a href="#">State Laws Impacting Counties during a Public Health Emergency</a> for your reference. In addition, ACCG also has a publication called <a href="#">Model Emergency Management Ordinances and Agreements</a>. While much of the guidance is for actions that should be taken before an emergency, it may still have some helpful information for you.</p>
<p><b>Childcare Centers</b></p>	<p><b>Q: Is there any guidance in place for childcare centers?</b></p> <p>A: Childcare centers are currently operating under their own discretion. Governor Kemp’s office issued a <a href="#">press release</a> on March 18, 2020 announcing a partnership between the Department of Early Care and Learning and the YMCA of Atlanta to provide childcare for medical workers.</p>