



October 21, 2020

Latest News

Administration Restates That Municipalities Are Exempt from Current Gathering Limits

After requests for clarification from PSATS, the Wolf Administration has restated that municipalities were exempt from the original COVID restrictions/orders and remain so. Accordingly, they are not required to comply with the commonwealth's current gathering limits. Townships should, however, consider following the guidance in the current [worker safety orders](#), such as reducing capacity by 50%.

[Pennsylvania Residents Discouraged from Visiting New York](#)

Yesterday, New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo added Arizona and Maryland to New York's COVID-19 travel advisory. In addition, Cuomo stated that Connecticut, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania now meet the criteria for the N.Y. travel advisory. [Read full story.](#)

[Cumberland County Cat Tests Positive for COVID-19](#)

State Veterinarian Dr. Kevin Brightbill has confirmed Pennsylvania's first COVID-19-positive cat. [Read full story.](#)

[Townships Eligible for USDA Grant Program](#)

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is accepting applications for its Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant Program. [Read full story.](#)

Funding for Lawn Conversion is Available from DCNR

DCNR will have a small amount of funding available in 2021 for lawn conversion practices, including conservation landscaping (converting lawn to native managed meadow) and forest planting (converting lawn areas to trees/forest). Lawns must be at least a quarter-acre. For information, contact Kelsey Miller at c-kelmille@pa.gov. And visit the new [DCNR](#)

[Lawn Conversion website](#) to learn more and sign up for the newsletter.

Legislative & Policy



The House and Senate will convene for voting session today, October 21. Watch session live [here](#).

EMS Operating Fund Legislation

On October 20, the House concurred on Senate amendment to HB 1838 which would require 30 percent of the money from the Emergency Medical Services Operating Fund be allocated to provide training to underserved rural areas. HB 1838 would also require that not less than 10 percent of funds be provided to emergency medical services agencies to assist with medical equipment purchases for ambulances.

HB 1838 has passed the House and Senate and will be presented to the Governor.

House Passes Workers' Compensation Coverage Legislation

On October 20, the House unanimously passed SB 94 which would extend workers' compensation coverage to all active volunteer firefighters and volunteer ambulance personnel if injured in the performance of their duties.

SB 94 has passed the Senate and the House and is before the Senate on concurrence of House amendments.

Senate Passes Comprehensive fire & EMS Reform

On October 20, the Senate unanimously passed HB 1673 which would rename the Volunteer Fire Company, Ambulance Company and Rescue Squad Assistance to Fire and Emergency Medical Services Loan Program and expand the program to include municipal fire companies and emergency medical services companies. HB 1673 would authorize a referendum to implement the expanded use of the funds to municipal fire departments or companies that provide services through paid personnel and would give the office of the state fire commissioner the authority to establish rules, in consultation with the fire advisory committee, for the eligible uses of the funds and require an annual report. This legislation

would also rename the Fire Safety Advisory Committee as the State Fire Advisory Board and direct them to review and make recommendations for the fire relief funding formula and fire relief services.

HB 1673 would clarify that fire relief associations include both volunteer and combo companies and that funds may be used for:

- necessary training;
- activities and materials to help with the recruitment and retention of volunteer firefighters;
- establishment of length of service awards;
- facilities to store vehicles and equipment and for training and meetings;
- vehicles and equipment for emergency response,
- defrayment of the cost of obtaining or renewing a CDL for volunteer firefighters that operate fire or emergency vehicles registered to fire companies or municipalities and
- stipends to volunteer firefighters not to exceed \$1,500 per year.

Counties and school districts would be authorized to provide property tax credits to volunteer first responders.

Finally, this legislation would eliminate the 20 % cap on real estate tax credits and authorize intermunicipal cooperation of tax credit programs.

HB 1673 has passed the House and the Senate and is before the House on concurrence of Senate amendments.

Personal Delivery Device Legislation

On October 20, the Senate concurred on House amendments to SB 1199. This legislation would provide for the operation of personal delivery devices, or autonomous robots, designed to deliver packages to consumers in Pennsylvania. SB 1199 would authorize local governments to prohibit such devices on local roads and pedestrian areas if they would constitute a hazard.

SB 1199 has passed the House and the Senate and will be presented to the Governor.

Senate Passes Posting & Bonding; CDL Exemption Legislation

On October 20, the Senate passed SB 793 which would exempt municipal vehicles as well as vehicles operated by a person under contract with a municipality from posting and bonding requirements when operating on a state road while constructing or maintaining a

local road.

SB 793 would also create an exemption from commercial driver's license (CDL) requirements for a driver, employed by a political subdivision, operating a commercial motor vehicle within the boundaries of the political subdivision for the purpose of removing snow or ice from a roadway by plowing, sanding or salting, if one of the following conditions are met: the properly licensed employee who ordinarily operates a commercial motor vehicle is unable to operate the vehicle; or the political subdivision determines that a snow or ice emergency exists that requires additional assistance.

SB 793 has passed the Senate and is awaiting committee assignment in the House.

Learn

[Webinar - Analyze Your Curves - Township Roads And Warning Signs - 10/28/20](#)

Are you sure which of your township roads have curves that require warning signs? Did your township comply with its obligations to implement the new requirements in the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices requirements by December 31, 2019? In this webinar, Joseph Fiocco, P.E., PTOE with SAFE Highway Engineering will cover the MUTCD requirements, with a particular focus on the requirement to conduct an evaluation of roads to determine which curves require warning signs. This course is eligible for 1 PMGA Public Works Point. [Click here](#) to register.

[2020 PAAZO Virtual Fall Seminar -11/4/20](#)

In the PAAZO Virtual Fall Seminar, learn from experts on a wide variety of topics from the comfort of your office or home. Among the topics to be covered include agritainment, zoning enforcement, and a recent case update. You will also have an opportunity to interact and network with colleagues. Eligible for 5 PMGA Planning/Zoning points. Eligible for 5 CZO continuing education points. [Click here](#) to register.



[Webinar - A Primer On Municipal Water Well Ordinances - 11/4/20](#)

Pennsylvania is one of two remaining states without water well construction standards for privately owned drinking supplies. PA DEP only has authority to regulate public water wells. As a result, the property owner takes on full responsibility for something they aren't experienced with and have little resources to draw upon. Some municipalities have taken it upon themselves to implement an ordinance to remedy this situation. This presentation will discuss the purpose, application, standards and reporting to the elements of a water well ordinance. Some fundamentals of well construction in addition to the geology of groundwater will be included. Perhaps it's time to consider implementing something for your township. This presentation will be given by an experienced licensed professional geologist who has intimate knowledge of groundwater and well construction techniques. Qualifies for 1.0 PMGA Public Safety Point. [Click here](#) to register.



[Strategic Planning For Fire Service Operations In Townships - Virtual - 11/18/20](#)

This virtual session will review the top 10 challenges facing volunteer fire departments and identify the responsibilities of the township when it comes to volunteer fire companies. Methods for assessing community expectations will also be discussed. Participants will be provided “show and apply” methods to conduct a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis of their current fire service operations and how to develop a standard of response based on public expectations. Qualifies for 4 PMGA Public Safety points. [Click here](#) to register.



[Webinar-How To Assure Your Township's Families Benefit From PA's Child Development Account-11/18/20](#)

Learn about Keystone Scholars and the PA Saving Pledge and working with the PA Treasury. We'll share ways you can make sure your residents are aware of both new programs, how to gain access to their Keystone Scholar account and how to win money for their child by taking the PA Savings Pledge. [Click here](#) to register.



For full list of webinars and classes please visit <https://learn.psats.org>.

Missed yesterday's PSATS Morning News? No problem! A [PSATS Morning News Library](#) is available online for your viewing pleasure!

We're excited about this new concept and want to hear what you think. Email comments and suggestions to morningnews@psats.org.



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