

Municipal Association of SC Annual Meeting Goes Virtual

The 2020 Annual Meeting is no longer scheduled as an in-person meeting and instead will be a virtual meeting available online. The Municipal Association had planned the meeting to take place in Charleston July 16 – 18. However, the Centers for Disease Control COVID-19 guidance and recently released state hospitality industry standards for reopening confirmed that a meeting of this size could not be effectively planned and held for the Municipal Association's membership.

The Association is instead developing a virtual Annual Meeting, available online on Friday, July 17. Because the meeting will be virtual, registration is not necessary.

The virtual Annual Meeting will include a variety of video sessions — available on demand — bringing together South Carolina officials to discuss the ongoing ways that cities and towns can address the pandemic and help their residents and businesses recover from it. Here are some currently planned topics related to the pandemic and recovery, which are subject to change:

- Law enforcement procedures and COVID-19
- A discussion from the SC Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office on the state's economic outlook as a result of the pandemic
- A presentation from the SC Department of Administration on the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and



Economic Security Act, or CARES Act, and how cities and towns may use the funding dollars coming from it

- A panel discussion addressing other federal pandemic legislation
- A panel discussion, including the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control, on the COVID-19 responses and the future outlook of the pandemic in South Carolina
- A SC Election Commission presentation on conducting elections with COVID-19

Some material will not be directly related to the emergency. The Municipal Association's advocacy team will cover both the business license standardization

initiative as well as the status of H4431, the business license bill. So far in 2020, H4431 has progressed further through the State House than any other similar legislation. COVID-19 disrupted the legislative session in March and stopped the progress of most legislation at least until the General Assembly convenes for a planned September session.

Local leaders are facing a confluence of new challenges unseen in their lifetimes. A pandemic, a declining economy and communities demanding changes to combat racism will require honest, open leadership from local elected officials. In another session, join two mayors as they share their thoughts on how to lead in these challenging times.

Also, a slideshow will highlight the winners of the Municipal Association's 2020 Achievement Awards as well as the 2020 Main Street South Carolina Inspiration Awards.

Municipal Association Executive Director Todd Glover and Municipal Association President Cornelius Huff, mayor of Inman, will have a discussion about the pandemic and responses by cities and towns.

Given the continually evolving nature of the public health emergency, some Annual Meeting details may change. Final agenda information, as well as information on how to access the material, will be posted at www.masc.sc (keyword: Annual Meeting) as it is available.

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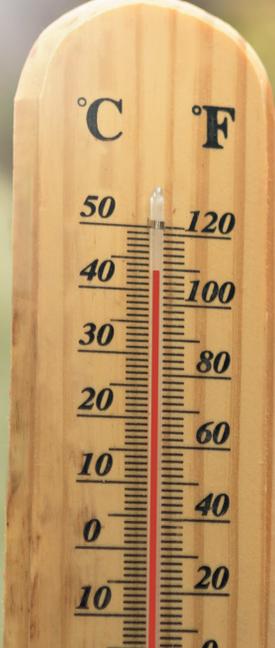
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Protect Employees From Summer Heat

South Carolina summers pose risks for city employees working long hours in the heat. The danger can be reduced with appropriate rest, shade and fluid intake, and there are even electrolyte popsicles and drinks that can reduce heat stress illnesses. Training staff to recognize heatstroke is also a critical precaution.

The traditional definition of heatstroke includes confusion, unconsciousness and convulsions, accompanied by a lack of sweating. Even so, this type of heatstroke is not the type that most commonly strikes workers. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health now indicates that “exertional heatstroke” is more common in workers — and profuse sweating is, in fact, one of its symptoms.

Exertional heatstroke comes from a combination of heat exposure and heavy physical exertion. It can lead to a condition called rhabdomyolysis. Symptoms of rhabdomyolysis include muscle pain and cramping, swelling, weakness and decreased range of motion. Fatigue, abdominal pain, back pain, nausea or vomiting and confusion may also occur. However, many cases occur with very mild symptoms that are mistaken for heat stress. This creates a potentially dangerous situation because these workers don’t receive the intensive medical intervention they require.

Another potential complication of rhabdomyolysis is compartment syndrome, or swelling in a specific type of muscle, usually in the lower extremities, that blocks blood flow. Compartment syndrome is often delayed — it may take several hours to develop — and can lead to permanent loss of function in the affected limb.

Symptoms of compartment syndrome include pain, pallor and pulselessness. They also include paresthesia — a sensation of tingling, numbness, or burning, usually felt in the hands, feet, arms or legs — and paralysis. Pain is the most common symptom and tends to be extremely severe. Workers who experience these symptoms must go to a hospital immediately.

Both types of heatstroke come with extremely high body temperature, and both types are a medical emergency requiring immediate medical attention. First aid includes cooling the worker as quickly as possible by any means available, including an ice bath, circulating air around the worker, and placing cold packs on the head, neck, armpits and groin. For exertional heatstroke, oral hydration is vital.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration has a heat safety webpage at www.osha.gov/heat with helpful resources, including a heat safety app.



Association Highlight: Field Services

The Municipal Association of SC has two field services managers who travel among the state's 271 municipalities to help officials address their issues of local concern.

Identifying and resolving minor difficulties early often prevents them from growing into major problems later. When officials identify significant questions or

challenges, field services managers are available to provide hands-on technical assistance. Beyond keeping in touch and answering questions, they attend city and town council meetings and conduct informational sessions and goal-setting workshops.

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Savannah councils of government areas. Reach him at jshacker@masc.sc or 803.354.4750.

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Test yourself monthly quiz

True or False:

Emergency ordinances can outline procedures for emergency meetings of a city or town council.

Answer: True

The statement raises two issues: emergency ordinances and emergency meetings. First, emergency ordinances are permitted by SC Code Section 5-7-250(d), may be passed on a single reading, and require the affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of council members present. An emergency ordinance automatically expires on the 61st day after adoption.

Second, emergency meetings of council are permitted under SC Code Section 30-4-80(a), which provides that the requirement to post notice

and an agenda 24 hours before ordinary meetings "does not apply to emergency meetings of public bodies." Such emergency meetings must be limited to matters pertaining to the emergency.

Combining these two provisions, councils may call an emergency meeting for the purpose of adopting an emergency ordinance. Furthermore, the emergency ordinance may provide methods by which council will continue to meet during the emergency period, including the right of

council to participate in such meetings by phone or other electronic means.

The Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government offers in-person and online courses. To register for the on-demand courses, go to the Municipal Association's website at www.masc.sc and log in with your user identification number and password. The on-demand courses can be accessed 24/7 from any computer, tablet or mobile device that has internet connection and may be taken in any order.

Helping Businesses Navigate the Pandemic

As the coronavirus pandemic entered South Carolina, anxiety swept through businesses facing shut-downs, layoffs and revenue losses. At the same time, cities and towns stepped up to help with answers to questions and pathways to financial support.

Some cities were able to offer loan programs, redirecting money budgeted initially for other projects. Others set up drive-thru farmers markets, and some have worked as conduits between business owners and state and federal programs.

At the beginning of the economic shut-down, Tim O'Briant, Aiken's economic development director, said social distancing "was voluntary except for restaurants, but we anticipated that would expand. We wanted to act quickly."

Aiken City Council passed an emergency ordinance on March 23 to create a \$1 million loan program to provide relief for local merchants. The City of Aiken joined with local community development organizations including the Aiken Corporation, the local Security Federal Bank and the Aiken Chamber of Commerce to offer loan guarantees to help local merchants.

"We were able to get this rolled out before the payroll protection program



Tim O'Briant, right, Aiken's economic development director, reviews loan applications with Sabina Craig, development project manager. Photo: Shiann Sivell, Aiken Standard.

was passed by Congress and before they had initial Small Business Administration loans," O'Briant said. "People were nervous about what to do with employees, about whether they should close their doors."

The program offered loans to brick-and-mortar small businesses located within the city limits that had 25 or fewer full-time equivalent workers. Those with a business license and an ability to meet some creditworthiness and underwriting standards were able to borrow up to

\$10,000, with payments deferred for either six months or a year. The loans offered a two-year payback with 2% interest.

The application asked owners to explain the impact of COVID-19 on their business and give the same documentation required by the SBA. Of the 50 applications received by late April, 45 were approved.

The \$500,000 share of the funding provided by the city came from a master economic development plan already in the works. The original, prepandemic plan aimed to spur residential and business expansion.

O'Briant spoke with more than 300 representatives from local businesses — some who needed the loans and some who had questions about the emerging economic climate.

"We wanted to be a resource that could counsel businesses financially and emotionally," he said. "We posted a link on our website, and we set hours where we had counselors available. You could go in and self-select your time," he said. "We did that for two and a half weeks, nonstop. We were making sure we were the experts locally, although the city has no connection to the SBA, but we could guide people

Camden is one South Carolina city where municipal staff has helped small businesses understand assistance opportunities and other resources during the pandemic. Photo: City of Camden.

through our knowledge. I've very proud of the help we were able to offer, and we've gotten a wonderful reaction from the business community."

City staff in Camden also helped small business owners understand the available funding and other assistance they may be able to access during the pandemic. Emails and direct mail were sent to business owners to inform them about SBA disaster loans and the process for applying for help. Main Street program manager Katharine Spadacenta and city staff made themselves available to small business owners who had questions or needed help applying for SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loans and the Kershaw County Small Business Stabilization grants administered by Kershaw County.

"We also walked business owners through the application over the phone, by video chat or Zoom meeting and even in person. Some of our business owners do not have access to computers or the internet, or were not familiar enough with the technology to complete the EIDL application, and so staff also made ourselves and the necessary technology available to business owners who needed that access in order to apply for an EIDL," she said.

The Downtown Camden marketing budget, which was intended to promote spring events and tourism, shifted to instead support a campaign that promotes ways for people to support small businesses and help them keep their doors open. The campaign suggested alternatives to in-person support, including online and over-the-phone shopping, takeout or delivery from restaurants, maintaining memberships at businesses and purchasing gift cards to be used in the future.

"The majority of our eating establishments went straight to curbside pickup and local delivery when their dining rooms were closed down by the governor's executive order," Spadacenta said. "Some of our lunch locations also began preparing family-style 'heat and eat' meals for people to take home. Our retail boutiques took their inventory to social media, offering Facebook Live sales and FaceTime or video chat tours of their shops. Many offered front-porch delivery to Camden residents. Our bookstore recorded a 'story time' with a local author



The Kershaw County Farmers Market began providing social distancing precautions to allow residents to continue accessing fresh produce and other essential products. Photo: City of Camden.

who was scheduled to have an in-store event, and published it to Facebook. And, our locally owned athletic club began offering its classes online, with instructors posting videos on YouTube and going live on Facebook."

Like many cities, Camden waived late fees for utility bills and worked one-on-one with residents and business owners who are losing income because of hardships related to COVID-19. The city also worked to get fresh food to residents through the Kershaw County Farmers Market, a nonprofit, weekly market in downtown Camden. The market asked the city for guidance and approval to operate an "Essential Market" so residents could access fresh, locally grown produce, meats, other food items, and soaps and other hygiene products. In the first few weeks, it offered a drive-thru lane for those who didn't feel comfortable getting out of their cars.

Many South Carolina municipalities have pulled together directories of resources available to their small businesses and residents and shared those through websites. In Abbeville, the city put together a comprehensive list of federal resources, along with other tools available to help businesses and residents.

"The main thing we try to do with all resources and information out there is to



be a resource conduit," said Mike Clary, Abbeville's community development director. "We created this repository of different information, whether federal, state or local, where businesses and residents can go to that one site. Everything from SBA loans, if local banks are offering mortgage deferments, things like that."

Abbeville has also used its social media channels to communicate with residents, offering details on restaurant hours for takeout service and other updates on retail shops.

Other cities around the state have put together resource pages to offer technical assistance, alerting small businesses and residents to help available from state and federal channels. York, Isle of Palms, Liberty, Florence and other municipalities have cultivated resource pages and technical assistance.

"We always try to offer information to businesses and residents, but certainly the pandemic has changed how everyone operates to a degree," Clary said. "The suddenness of all this made us reconsider how we put out that information."

KNOW THE CORRECT WAY TO

FLY THE FLAG

With Flag Day on June 14 and Independence Day in July, summertime brings out many displays of the United States flag. Here are some key points to consider that will keep a city's flag displays in accordance with Public Law 94-344, known as the Flag Code.

Times for flying the flag

Flags are customarily flown only from sunrise to sunset, but flying them after dark while properly illuminating them is also considered appropriate.

Determining if a flag should be flown in weather conditions such as rain or high winds depends on how it is made. Weather damage to the flag should be avoided, but all-weather flags can be appropriately displayed in bad weather.

Lowering the flag to half staff

When raising a flag for a half-staff display, first hoist it to the peak of the pole before lowering it halfway. When taking the flag down, raise it to the top of the pole again, then lower it.

The right to order half-staff displays is reserved for the President of the United States and for governors, who can make the order for their states. The governor of South Carolina may order half-staff observances in tribute to firefighters and law enforcement officers who die in the line of duty or after a South Carolina resident and member of the military dies in combat. A half-staff display is also appropriate based on reliable information that the current or former president, current vice president, current or former U.S. Supreme Court chief justice, or current speaker of the house has died.

The SC Department of Administration's Division of Facilities Management and Property Services (www.admin.sc.gov/FacilityManagement_RealEstate) offers

email alerts for half-staff observances. This can be useful both for knowing when to take the flag to half-staff and when answering residents' questions about why the flag is lowered on any given occasion.

Customary days to fly half-staff include:

- Peace Officers Memorial Day, May 15, unless it coincides with Armed Forces Day (sunrise – sunset);
- Memorial Day, last Monday in May (sunrise – noon);
- Patriot Day, September 11 (sunrise – sunset);
- National Firefighters Memorial Day, typically a Sunday during Fire Prevention Week in October (sunrise – sunset); and
- Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day, December 7 (sunrise – sunset).

Displaying a flag indoors

Position the national flag to the right of a speaker or a stage area. Place other flags, such as the South Carolina state flag, to the left. When hanging the national

flag on a wall, always position the star field, an element known as the union, at the top and to the left. When hanging the flag vertically, this can make the flag seem backward from its usual appearance, but this is actually correct.

Disposing of a flag

A ceremonial retirement in which the flag is burned should take place when a flag becomes too soiled or worn out for display. The most common example of excess wear is when the fly — or loose portion facing away from the pole — becomes shredded. Many veterans' groups and Boy Scout troops will provide flag retirement services.

A popular misconception holds that any flag that has touched the ground must be destroyed. While care should be taken to keep the flag from touching the ground, contact with the ground does not require destruction.

Find rules and an infographic on flying the flag correctly at www.usa.gov/flag.



Workers' Compensation Basics

Workers' compensation aims to provide for medical care and financial assistance to employees injured on the job. It pays approved medical bills for job-related injuries. It also covers lost wages, permanent disabilities, disfigurements and death benefits.

South Carolina Code Title 42 sets out the workers' compensation law. Cities and towns are among the employers who are required to provide workers' compensation as a benefit.

Here is some basic information about workers' compensation in South Carolina:

Notification and claims

Injured employees must notify their employers of their injuries as soon as possible. When they do not give notice within 90 days of the injury, their workers' compensation claims may be denied.

Once notified, employers must immediately file a "First Report of Injury" form with their workers' compensation insurance carrier, within 10 days of becoming aware of the accident.

Waiting period

When injuries keeps employees from working for more than seven days, they become eligible for payment for lost wages. Employees out of work for more than 14 days can be compensated for lost work time beginning with the day of the injury.

Compensation

Injured employees receive $66 \frac{2}{3}\%$ of their average weekly wage, subject to minimum and maximum rates. Benefits are payable for a maximum of 500 weeks for most injuries. Certain injuries — brain damage, paraplegia or quadriplegia — may have benefits payable for life.



The SC Municipal Insurance Trust and SC Municipal Insurance and Risk Financing Fund will have an online training session, "Workers' Compensation Nuts and Bolts" for their members August 5. Information will be sent to members in August.

Regional Advocacy Meetings Going Virtual

The Municipal Association's Regional Advocacy Meetings will take place virtually this year as a COVID-19 precaution. They remain scheduled for their usual time in August and September. All meetings begin at 11 a.m. and will end by noon. The meetings serve as a time to learn about the past and upcoming legislative sessions, and to plan out the Association's future advocacy initiatives.

There will be no charge to take part in the meetings, but registration will still be required. Registrants will receive an email closer to the meeting date with information on how to participate. The meetings will make use of GoToWebinar, the same virtual conference platform to be used for the Municipal Association's Annual Meeting on July 17.

As in past years, there will be a Regional Advocacy Meeting for each of the council of governments areas, but officials may attend any session.



Here's the full schedule:

- **August 18** – Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments area
- **August 19** – Lower Savannah Council of Governments area
- **August 20** – Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments area
- **August 25** – Appalachian Council of Governments area
- **August 26** – Lowcountry Council of Governments area
- **August 27** – Upper Savannah Council of Governments area
- **September 1** – Pee Dee Regional Council of Governments area.

- **September 2** – Catawba Regional Council of Governments area
- **September 3** – Santee-Lynches Regional Council of Governments area
- **September 9** – Central Midlands Council of Governments area

"Virtual meetings are not always the ideal way to gather and share information, but to keep everyone safe, this year it's the way to go," said Scott Slatton, the Association's director of advocacy and communications. "These meetings are important for local elected officials to share their opinions on state legislative priorities to bring success at the local level especially with the General Assembly returning in late September to finish out the 2020 session."

To register, visit www.masc.sc (keyword: RAM). For more information, contact Ashleigh Hair at ahair@masc.sc or 803.933.1288.



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Calendar

For a complete listing of the Association's training opportunities, visit www.masc.sc to view the calendar.

Please note that the schedule for meetings in June and July is subject to either the removal or reduction of mandatory social distancing standards.

JULY

17 Municipal Association of SC Annual Meeting. Online only. The Annual Meeting will have a shortened schedule and agenda focused on COVID-19 recovery. Find more information as it becomes available at www.masc.sc (keyword: Annual Meeting).

AUGUST

5 SCMIT and SCMIRF Workers' Compensation Nuts and Bolts training. Online only.

11 Main Street South Carolina New Director Orientation. Municipal Association of SC, Columbia.

11 SC Business Licensing Officials Association ABL Exam. Municipal Association of SC, Columbia.

18 Regional Advocacy Meeting. Online only. Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments area.

19 Regional Advocacy Meeting. Online only. Lower Savannah Council of Governments area.

20 Regional Advocacy Meeting. Online only. Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments area.

25 Regional Advocacy Meeting. Online only. Appalachian Council of Governments area.

26 – 28 Municipal Court Administration Association of SC Annual Meeting. Hyatt House Charleston.

26 Regional Advocacy Meeting. Online only. Lowcountry Council of Governments area.

27 Regional Advocacy Meeting. Online only. Upper Savannah Council of Governments area.

SEPTEMBER

1 Regional Advocacy Meeting. Online only. Pee Dee Regional Council of Governments area.

2 Regional Advocacy Meeting. Online only. Catawba Regional Council of Governments area.

3 SC Association of Stormwater Managers Third Quarter Meeting. Seawell's, Columbia.

3 Regional Advocacy Meeting. Online only. Santee-Lynches Regional Council of Governments area.

9 – 11 Municipal Clerks and Treasurers Institute – Year 2, Session B. Hyatt Place Columbia/Downtown/The Vista.