Greetings Researchers,

In light of the COVID-19 public health concerns, many organizations have converted to teleworking or closed their offices completely. ODOT’s Research Section, is still hard at work... remotely. Although we are not physically in the office, the entire staff is teleworking and available via email or phone during normal business hours. Unless you are informed otherwise by your ODOT Research Project Manager, all project status calls are continuing as scheduled.

While everyone is doing their part to slow the spread of COVID-19, we understand that the progress of your research project may be impacted. Laboratories at universities and some private facilities have either put in restrictions on the number of people that may have access at a time or are preparing to close. Access to project staff, such as students, may become limited. Obtaining essential supplies for testing/development, getting survey responses, and coordinating for field tests/data collection may have become more difficult.

While ODOT does expect work on research projects to continue, we do realize that due to these unique circumstances projects may be delayed at no fault of the researcher. Our office will take these events into consideration in regards to due dates and contract completion dates. It is essential that you keep your Technical Advisory Committee and ODOT’s Research staff informed of any issues you encounter that may lead to a delay in your project. Be proactive. Send an email to Research@dot.ohio.gov to help document these problems in the event adjustments to the contract may be needed. Don’t wait until your draft final report is due to let us know of issues affecting your project that are related to COVID-19 closures. It is not necessary to submit a project modification request for no-cost time extensions at this time (unless you have other issues not related to COVID-19 to make such a request). No-cost time extension requests should not be submitted until the full impact on the project is known. All delays associated with COVID-19 will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. If you are unsure of what you should do, contact your ODOT Research Project Manager for assistance.

We also understand that many accounting/billing departments are in the process of converting to teleworking. ODOT is currently making the same adjustment. Transitioning a paper-driven process into an electronic process quickly is difficult and will have unforeseen challenges. In light of this, ODOT’s Research Section is issuing a 30-day grace period on project billing for the quarter ending March 31, 2020 on all research projects. These invoices will be due by May 31, 2020 as opposed to April 30, 2020. We strongly encourage those organizations who are able to submit their invoices by the standard deadline to do so in order to reduced delays in reimbursement. If you have any questions about billing, please contact your ODOT Research Project Manager.

We thank you for your participation in transportation research in Ohio. Your efforts help ODOT provide an efficient and safe transportation network to the traveling public. If you have any questions, please contact our office. In the spirit of safety, keep washing your hands.

Respectfully,

Vicky Fout
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