

## State News for NSPE Members

### Florida Focuses on Critical Infrastructure Projects During Stay-at-Home Order

During the reduction in traffic throughout Florida while residents have been ordered to stay at home to control the spread of Covid-19, the Florida Department of Transportation is expediting crucial improvements to the transportation system as well as providing jobs. The order classifies all engineering services as essential services.

“The Governor understands that Florida’s transportation system is the backbone of our economy and FDOT is proud to accelerate projects, which will help expedite goods to market and provide much needed jobs throughout the state,” said Florida Department of Transportation Secretary Kevin J. Thibault, P.E. “Safety is our top priority, so we will continue to ensure that employees have the sanitation supplies needed to follow the guidance from the CDC and work with our industry partners to implement these same precautions to keep workers safe and healthy.”

**Projects include** Howard Frankland Bridge - Tampa, Southern Boulevard – Palm Beach County, I-95/I-395 Interchange – Miami-Dade County, and Sand Lake Road/I-Drive - Orlando.

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### Conference Call and Video Conferencing Etiquette

According to Zoom, 200 million people are now using its platform every day. This is an increase of more than 10 million people since before the pandemic. Before “zooming,” consider— is it necessary, or can a good old-fashioned phone call/conference do? First and foremost, be sure to try to schedule video conferences in advance, as video chats are as intrusive, or more so, than “just stopping by” an office in the old normal.

**Make sure you are in a quiet location where you will not be disturbed.**

## **Mute yourself when not speaking.**

### **Use appropriate equipment. And ensure it works correctly.**

- If possible, always use a phone with a handset that is hard-wired into the phone lines. Be sure to TEST the working condition of your equipment before an important meeting!
- Cellular or cordless phones are more likely to cause static or other distracting noise that they pick up on the airwaves
- Speakerphones pick up lots of background noise, and sometimes cause "clipping" because of the limitations of the equipment. If you are using a speakerphone, try to find one that is "full digital duplex"—this will allow all parties to speak at the same time with no clipping. And if no one in your room needs to speak, use the "Mute" button on the phone to prevent background noise from disrupting the meeting. When someone needs to speak, simply release the "Mute."

**Turn off your call waiting.** Some of our conferences are set to play a tone as an announcement of a new person entering the conference. If your line starts beeping with call waiting, it can be very confusing and disrupting to the meeting! Check with your local phone service provider if you are unsure how to deactivate this function on your phone.

**Be on time or early!** It is especially helpful for the host or chairperson of the call to arrive a few minutes early to greet each of the participants and let them know whether everyone is ready to start yet. Your presence in these opening minutes will also help you head off any premature discussions the participants might begin before you're ready!

**Introduce yourself when you begin speaking.** Others may not know your voice!

**Don't put your phone on HOLD to do something else.** Your hold music will play into the conference call and make it impossible for the other participants to continue the meeting in your absence. (Remember to un-mute yourself when you come back!)

**Try to stay on schedule.** Stick to the minutes per topic laid out in your agenda and be respectful of others' time!

**Video Conference?** Frame the camera correctly. Have the right light. Look into the camera. Pay attention.

[Download these etiquette tips in PDF.](#)

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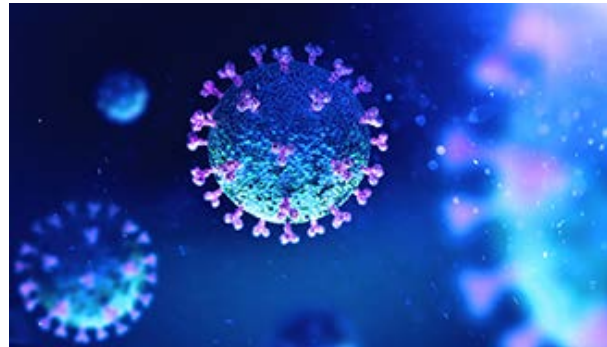
## Working Remotely? Update Your Mailing Address and Phone Number

If you're working from home or elsewhere out of the office, [log into your NSPE account](#) to ensure we have the most up-to-date information to continue to serve you. Please make sure to update both your phone number and mailing address.

If you haven't yet managed your e-subscription options, please make sure to do so as well.

## During Outbreak, NSPE's in Your Corner

The world finds itself today in a crisis unlike any in recent memory. While members of the engineering profession are facing the same uncertainties as everyone else, NSPE's volunteer leaders and staff are firmly committed to doing the very best we can to help you through this very difficult time.



As you strive to stay on top of your professional and personal life, remember that NSPE is a resource for you.

First, watch this video message from NSPE Executive Director Mark Golden, "[Dark Days Shine New Light on Profession, Community.](#)" It is an early look at his column for the May/June *PE* magazine. ([Read it on the NSPE Blog and leave a comment](#)!)

And access [NSPE's dedicated pages of resources](#), including public documents from NSPE's Government Relations team that aggregate state-level legislation on

support for [small businesses](#) , and [changes to licensure renewals and requirements](#) . The documents update in real time.

Also:

- Read [NSPE's](#) and [NICET's](#) statements on COVID-19.
- Stay in touch with fellow members of the profession and share your experiences through the [Open Forum](#) in NSPE's Communities. Recent topics include [remote work](#) , [Coronavirus and engineering companies - best practices](#) , and [Coronavirus and engineers](#) .
- Plan to remotely attend our upcoming webinars on topics like [engineering ethics](#), [strategies for navigating unconscious bias](#), [the 2020 EJCDC engineering contract agreements](#), and [others](#) .
- Tap into the [15 free webinars that are included in your membership](#) .
- Connect with NSPE and your colleagues on [Twitter](#) , [Facebook](#) , and [LinkedIn](#) .
- Don't forget to check out what your state society is doing for you. Visit your [state society's website](#) so you can learn more about the local resources available to you.
- Look for coverage of how the pandemic is affecting NSPE members and affiliated organizations in the May/June issue of [PE magazine](#) .

NSPE members are truly unique. They share a deep commitment to the ethical practice of engineering in service to the public, they strive to make the most of their professional lives, and they aim to build a better profession. Your Society is here to help you meet those commitments.

If you would like to reach us directly, please visit our ["Contact Us" page](#) .

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## **Webinar Covers Pandemic and the Profession**

With the coronavirus spreading across the country, PEs are finding their professional lives filled with ambiguity, uncertainty, and improvisation. In a webinar on April 2, NSPE provided an overview of the quickly changing situation, including federal and state responses affecting professional engineers and their businesses.

"It's a very difficult situation we're all facing, and we're seeing a cascading impact in so many different areas," said Arthur Schwartz, NSPE's deputy chief executive officer and general counsel. Schwartz presented the webinar with Stephanie Hamilton, NSPE's government relations and advocacy manager.

Schwartz noted that state licensing boards are struggling. As state agencies, some are closing, and others are reducing staff. PEs are likely to find spotty phone and email service, Schwartz said. In addition, the timeliness of application approval for licensure by comity and reciprocity has “really been strangled in many ways.”

The pandemic has also forced [cancellation](#) of all paper-and-pencil licensing exams scheduled for April 2020. Computer-based licensing exams, such as the FE exam and the PE exams in chemical and environmental engineering, have also been halted. So, too, have [NICET technician certification exams](#) .

The most significant action on the federal front is the CARES Act. The law expands [Small Business Administration](#) loans; creates grants that can be put toward education, training, and advising of small businesses and their employees; and sets refundable payroll tax credits of up to \$5,000 for each employee.

States are also responding with legislation and executive orders. As of April 2, the District of Columbia and nine states had taken action specifically related to licensure: Alaska, Arizona, Indiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Ohio, South Dakota, and Texas. A [current and detailed list of legislative action](#) (not executive orders) is publicly available. Some states have also [enacted legislation or executive orders](#) aimed at helping small businesses.

The webinar, “[Federal and State Covid-19 Response: Effects on Licensure and Small Businesses](#) ,” is available free to NSPE members and for \$25 for nonmembers.

Tell other NSPE members how you’re adapting to the coronavirus pandemic or share your thoughts on other professional issues in NSPE’s [Open Forum](#) .

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## Learn and Engage With NSPE’s Upcoming Webinars



Professional development is crucial to maintaining a license, moving up the career ranks, and maintaining a sense of engagement during these challenging times. NSPE provides access to a variety of topics, including the Ethics Forum, from the

comfort of your home or office. All webinars are held 2 p.m. – 3 p.m. Eastern.

**April 15**

[Engineering Ethics – Conflicts of Interest, Licensure, Confidentiality, and Public Criticism](#)

**April 29**

[Navigating Unconscious Bias: Strategies for Success](#)

**May 6**

[2020 EJCDC Engineering Agreements](#)

**May 13**

[Engineering Ethics – Objectivity and Truthfulness, Public Health and Safety, Signing and Sealing of Engineering Drawings, and Misrepresentation](#)

[See the full list.](#)

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