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RE: COVID-19 Pandemic

Dear Clients and Friends,

We have been fielding calls related to the COVID-19 pandemic for over a week, addressing questions ranging from risk management issues (for both existing and new contracts), to employment issues, to business management issues as we all settle into working remotely. While we are available to address any specific questions/concerns you may have, we wanted to share the following thoughts to address the moment:

- **Take Care of Your Family and Yourself.** You will be better equipped to meet the present challenges if your family is safe and you are healthy. If you are concerned about the well-being of your family, this will affect your response to the pandemic.
- **Take Care of Your Employees.** There is uncertainty ahead related to how long we will be affected by the pandemic and how that might affect your practice. Your employees may be concerned about their compensation, their well-being (if asked to come into the office or make site visits), and their future with the firm. While recognizing the need to maintain flexibility given the uncertain times, we encourage you to be transparent and proactive in addressing your employees' concerns to the greatest extent practicable.
- **Take Care of Your Clients.** Each of your clients will react/respond to the pandemic differently; however, each of them is likely concerned regarding how the pandemic will affect their bottom-line. We encourage you to preemptively address and assess the impacts of the pandemic on your projects, and identify options for your clients to consider which may help to minimize the effect of the same. As always, it remains critical to document your conversations and recommendations with client (and contractors) to establish an accurate contemporaneous record of your discussions.
- **Take Care of Your Firm.** If you take care of your employees and your clients, this will provide a strong foundation for your firm to weather the current storm. While design professionals typically respond to challenges seeking to identify solutions, lawyers for owners and contractors are already publishing recommendations for how to recover costs associated with COVID-19 related impacts. We recommend that you review/understand your obligations under your on-going contracts, and adhere to any notice provisions that may be applicable, especially as it relates to schedule and add services. We also recommend that you account for the present uncertainty when entering into new contracts.

While there will be unanticipated challenges arising out of the pandemic, we are here to assist you however we can. Stay safe.

Regards,


Jonathan C. Shoemaker