



Q&A For the DAF

Potential Lapse in Appropriations

29 Sep 2023

1. PURPOSE: To provide general answers to the Department of the Air Force (DAF) Airmen, Guardians, and civilians regarding how the potential lapse in appropriations on midnight 30 September 2023 may affect them and what resources are available.

2. BACKGROUND: The Department of the Air Force needs an enacted appropriation for Fiscal Year 2024 as soon as possible. We are hopeful that there is enough time for Congress to prevent a lapse in appropriations. However, at this time, we must plan for the possibility of a range of scenarios, to include another continuing resolution, a budget deal, or a government shutdown.

3. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

What is a furlough, and how will I know if I am furloughed?

A furlough is placing an employee in a temporary non-duty, non-pay status because of lack of work or funds, or other non-disciplinary reasons. Your supervisor will inform each employee individually if they have been placed in a furloughed or excepted status should there be a lapse.

How will this affect the civilian workforce?

If Congress fails to pass a Continuing Resolution (CR) or appropriation, all civilian personnel paid by appropriated funds will be furloughed, except for the minimum number necessary to accomplish excepted activities that by law, may continue to be performed during a lapse in appropriations. These are limited to activities essential to national security or other emergency work involving safety of human life or the protection of property. While they will be required to work, these civilian employees (as those that are furloughed) would not receive pay until an appropriation or CR is passed. Personnel to be furloughed will receive notification via their chain of command on the first duty day following the shutdown. Civilians paid from funds that have not lapsed and have sufficient resources to continue (e.g., Working Capital Fund, multi-year appropriation, etc.) will work and be paid as long as funds remain available.

How will this affect uniformed Airmen and Guardians?

Military personnel are not subject to furlough. Military personnel on active duty, to include reserve personnel on active duty, will continue to report for duty and carry out assigned duties. This includes duty involving excepted and, to the extent they can be performed without incurring new obligations, non-excepted activities. Military personnel on active duty may be assigned to carry out non-excepted activities in place of furloughed civilian personnel only to the extent that the non-excepted activity is capable of performance without incurring new obligations. While military members will not be subject to furlough, they will not receive pay for work performed after 30 Sep 2023 until an appropriation CR, or POMA is passed. Additionally, new requests for special pays and bonuses will not be processed. Those currently receiving pays under programs such as the Enlistment Bonus, Aviation Demo Program Bonus, and Assignment Incentive Pay may experience a delay in processing and payment.

How will this affect contract employees?

Contractors performing under a contract that was fully obligated upon entering the contract (or renewal or modification) prior to the expiration of appropriations will continue to provide contract services, whether in support of activities that are essential to national security and safety, or not. Airmen, Guardians, and civilians excepted from furlough would be required to provide appropriate contract oversight. New contracts (including renewals) may not be executed unless the contract is in support of an activity that is essential to national security and safety.

How will members of the Guard and Reserve be affected by the furlough?

Reserve component personnel performing Active Guard Reserve (AGR) duty will continue to report for duty to carry out AGR authorized duties. Reserve component personnel will not perform inactive duty training resulting in the obligation of funds, except where such training directly supports an excepted activity, and may not be ordered to active duty, except in support of those military operations and activities necessary for national security, including fulfilling associated pre-deployment requirements. Orders for members of the National Guard currently performing duties under 32 U.S.C. 502(f) will be terminated unless such duties are in support of excepted activities approved by the Secretary of Defense.

How will the government shutdown impact pay for Airmen, Guardians and civilians?

Detailed pay guidance for lapse-affected employees, to include furloughed employees and excepted employees, should refer to OPM Shutdown and Furlough Guidance.

- Military members and non-furloughed civilians (those that are excepted because they are performing work that, by law, may continue during a lapse in appropriations) will continue to work and will continue to earn pay for the period of the shutdown but will not receive it until Congress provides appropriations and will be placed in a non-pay status. Civilians whose salaries are paid from a DoD appropriation or fund that has sufficient funding authority (e.g., multi-year appropriations with available balances from prior years), are exempted from being furloughed and their pay is not impacted by a lapse in appropriations.
- Furloughed civilians will not work during a lapse in appropriations. They will not receive pay until Congress provides appropriations.
- When a lapse in appropriations occurs, all employees, except those who are teleworking or remote workers, are expected to report for duty on their first duty day after the lapse, where more information will be given. Teleworking or remote work individuals can be emailed their furlough notification and return it digitally signed or acknowledge receipt of the notification.
- Civilian employees who are on pre-scheduled leave will need to be notified that all leave is cancelled, and furlough has been implemented.
- Military Commanders or non-furloughed supervisors are authorized to continue to approve leave for military members depending on mission needs of the unit.
- Unless otherwise authorized by law, an agency may not accept the voluntary services of a furloughed employee.

If the shutdown occurs, when will civilian employees and military members receive their last paycheck?

Civilians:

- Upon an orderly shutdown, timesheets will be coded as furlough beginning October 1. Civilians will be paid for hours worked Sep 24 – 30 on their normal pay date.
- Once a continuing resolution or appropriations act is signed, employees affected by the furlough will receive retroactive pay and leave accrual.

Military:

Military (Active, Reserve, and Active Guard Reserve) -

- September month-end pay (through Sep 30) will be paid Friday, Sep 29, but no further pay until appropriations are enacted.
- October mid-month military pay will be delayed if a CR or appropriation is not passed by Oct 11, and Leave and Earnings statements will not be released.
- October Reserve Component interim weekly drill pay will be delayed until a CR or appropriation is passed.

Retired Military and Annuitants -

Pay and entitlements will continue as normal. These payments are made from trust funds not impacted by the government shutdown.

What resources are available to those who may face financial hardship as a result of the government shutdown?

Those experiencing financial difficulties should contact their chain of command (supervisor, first sergeant or commander) who can provide information on financial aid organizations which specifically support military members such as Military One Source or Air Force Aid Society. If Airmen, Guardians, or their families are not near an aid organization, they may seek financial assistance from the Red Cross.

For civilian members, several resources and support mechanisms have been outlined by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), Department of Defense (DoD), and Department of the Air Force to aid these individuals.

- **Unemployment Benefits:** Furloughed employees might be eligible for unemployment benefits, with eligibility depending on individual state laws and regulations.
- **Financial Assistance Programs:** Various charitable organizations and federal employee associations might offer emergency financial aid, grants, or loans to those affected by the government shutdown.
- **Employee Assistance Programs (EAP):** EAPs are available to provide counseling and support services to employees dealing with stress, anxiety, or other issues related to the furlough.
- **Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) Loans:** Employees may have the option to access funds from their TSP accounts through loans or hardship withdrawals, adhering to applicable rules.
- **Credit Union Assistance:** Several federal credit unions may offer low-interest loans, loan extensions, or other forms of financial assistance to affected members.
- **Communication with Creditors:** OPM provides sample letters for employees to communicate with creditors, mortgage companies, and landlords, seeking flexibility on payments.
- **Mortgage and Rent Flexibility:** Affected employees are encouraged to discuss potential payment adjustments or temporary forbearance with their mortgage lenders or landlords.
- **Bill Prioritization Guidance:** The DoD and Air Force can offer guidance on managing finances and prioritizing bills during periods of reduced income.
- **Financial Counseling Services:** Financial counseling services might be available to help employees navigate the financial challenges posed by the furlough.

All Airmen and Guardians should remain engaged with their chain of command and continuously monitor legislative developments, as there could be additional available support and potential pay adjustments post-shutdown.

How will medical and dental care be affected?

Civilian healthcare coverage will continue during the period of lapsed appropriations. Premiums to cover healthcare benefits will be deducted once pay is restored.

Military private sector care under TRICARE will continue, as will inpatient, acute and emergency outpatient care in medical/dental treatment facilities. Elective surgery and other elective procedures in DoD medical and dental facilities would be suspended. We encourage all personnel to contact their local treatment facility to confirm services and appointments.

What about education and training?

Education and training necessary to participate in or support activities that are essential to national security and public safety will continue. Military members on PCS orders attending training and educational activities may continue to attend classes only if the instructor is military or is a contractor paid with prior year funds. DoD Education Activity (DoDEA) education activities will continue. Air University courses will adjust schedules with military faculty; prolonged shutdown could impact student progress.

How will furloughed employees know when to return to work?

Continuous monitoring of legislative developments via the news and communication with the chain-of-command are encouraged for employees to stay abreast of when action has been taken by the Congress which would allow affected Government workers to return to work. For the Department of Defense, legislation passed appropriating funds could be in the form of a Continuing Resolution (CR), Defense Appropriations Act, or a Pay our Military Act (POMA). Employees should return to work on the first duty day after the passing of legislation providing funding. You are encouraged to monitor local public media outlets, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) web site and the Department of Defense main web page and consult with your supervisor for information about when you should report back to work.

What if I'm a civilian or a military member who is TDY?

All TDYs will be cancelled or terminated unless they fall into excepted categories: travel directly related to safety of life and protection of property; or travel directly related with foreign relations of the United States (e.g. negotiating international agreements). Civilian employees TDY supporting non-excepted activities, or attending non-essential training or education, will return to home station as part of orderly closedown of operations in a timely manner. Military members on PCS orders attending training and educational activities may continue to attend classes only if the instructor is military or is a contractor paid with prior year funds.

What impact will government shutdown have on individuals who are due to PCS?

Permanent change of station activities already in progress will continue until completion. PCS not yet in progress will be limited to 1) moves TO an excepted activity, 2) moves FROM an excepted activity will continue only to the extent the commander of the excepted activity determines it is essential to mission, 3) accession and training moves associated with recruitment and initial entry will continue and first station moves to excepted activities, 4) movement to comply with separation instructions will continue only if the funds were obligated prior to the appropriation lapse; no costs may be incurred unless included in the PCS order. PCS moves for civilians will continue only when chargeable to a funded PCS order issued prior to the lapse of funds. Expenses chargeable to lapsed appropriations will continue only if they fall in category 1 or 2 above.

How will services available to Airmen and Guardians at their local installations be impacted by a government shutdown?

We encourage all personnel to contact their local installations for specific guidance, procedures and operating hours. Generally, Child Development Centers may limit support to many families, giving priority to single/dual military personnel. Check with your local CDC for information, procedures, and requirements. Youth Programs, to include youth centers and youth sports, may be suspended. Dining Facilities and Fitness Centers will remain open, although operating hours could be limited. Check with your local facility manager for updated information. AAFES outlets will remain open, but DECA operations could be affected. Check with your local commissary for updated information.

4. **MORE INFORMATION:** For more information, refer to the United States Office of Personnel Management [Guidance for Shutdown Furloughs](#).

Helpful links:

OMB DEPARTMENTS/AGENCIES: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/information-for-agencies/agency-contingency-plans/>

OPM PAY AND LEAVE FURLOUGH GUIDANCE: <http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/furlough-guidance/guidance-for-shutdown-furloughs.pdf>

OSD SHUTDOWN GUIDANCE: <https://media.defense.gov/2023/Sep/12/2003299418/-1/-1/1/GUIDANCE-FOR-CONTINUATION-OF-OPERATIONS-DURING-A-LAPSE-IN-APPROPRIATIONS.PDF>

OSD PAY GUIDE: <https://www.dcpas.osd.mil/policy/compensation/furlough>

FURLOUGH FAQ: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Agency-Lapse-FAQs-12-2-21.pdf>

AFPC TOTAL FORCE SERVICE CENTER: <http://www.afpc.af.mil/>

MILITARY ONE SOURCE: <http://www.militaryonesource.com/>

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE EAP: www.AFPC.AF.MIL/EAP

CIVILIAN ONE LINK FOR SUPERVISORS:

[https://usaf.dps.mil/teams/OneLink/SitePages/Emergency Shutdown Furlough.aspx](https://usaf.dps.mil/teams/OneLink/SitePages/Emergency%20Shutdown%20Furlough.aspx)