

Office of the Secretary
CONTINGENCY PLAN
September 2023



**Department of the Interior
Office of the Secretary
Contingency Plan for a Potential Lapse in Appropriations
September 2023**

Overview

The Office of the Secretary (OS) contingency plan is provided in accordance with the requirements of Office of Management and Budget Circular A-11 Section 124. The OS contingency plan covers the offices included as part of the Immediate Office of the Secretary, the Assistant Secretaries for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, Land and Minerals Management, Water and Science, and Policy, Management and Budget. Separate plans have been developed for the Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs, the Assistant Secretary for Insular and International Affairs, the Office of the Solicitor, and the Office of Inspector General.

Orderly Shutdown

In preparing the contingency plan, staffing needs were carefully reviewed. The number of exempt, excepted, and furloughed employees can be expected to fluctuate from week to week as management adjusts to evolving needs and developments. The plan for actions to be taken during a short lapse (1-5 days) is as follows:

Lapse Plan Summary Overview

Short-Term Lapse

Short Lapse Plan (1-5 days) Summary Overview	
Estimated time (to nearest half day) required to complete shutdown activities:	0.50
Total number of agency employees expected to be on board before implementation of the plan:	2,807
Total number of agency employees expected to be furloughed under the plan (unduplicated count):	2,134
Total number of employees to be retained under the plan for each of the following categories (may include duplicated counts):	
Compensation is financed by a resource other than annual appropriations:	418
Necessary to perform activities expressly authorized by law:	3
Necessary to perform activities necessarily implied by law:	172
Necessary to the discharge of the President’s constitutional duties and powers:	0

Short Lapse Plan (1-5 days) Summary Overview	
Necessary to protect life and property:	80

Brief summary of significant agency activities that will continue during a lapse:

Individuals necessary to perform activities expressly authorized by law, such as the Secretary, the Deputy Secretary, and the Assistant Secretary of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, will not be furloughed.

Individuals performing excepted activities will not be furloughed. A minimum level of staffing for excepted activities has been identified to protect life and property and perform activities necessarily implied by law. Activities to protect life and property include: law enforcement and security, emergency management, wildland fire, aviation services, information assurance, telecommunications, data center management, and unified communications. Activities necessarily implied by law include minimal numbers of staff to provide Departmental direction, coordination and support for essential operations to the extent nonperformance would prevent or significantly damage the execution of otherwise continuing exempt or statutorily-authorized function within the following Department-wide areas: regulatory affairs, legislative affairs, communications, budget, finance, acquisitions, grants, human resources, facilities management, and other administrative functions.

Individuals where compensation is financed by a resource other than annual appropriations will not be furloughed. Exempted personnel include those that are funded from non-lapsing sources of funds. The exempt individuals include employees whose compensation is financed by other than annual appropriations including: the Interior Business Center (IBC); the Office of Natural Resources Revenue (ONRR); and the Appraisal and Valuation Services Office (AVSO).

The Interior Business Center is a Shared Service Provider of business management services including Payroll and Human Resources Services, Acquisition Services, and Financial Management Services that have been funded by customer agencies.

The Office of Natural Resources Revenue collects, accounts for, verifies, and disburses energy and mineral revenues. The discretionary budget for ONRR is partially funded with two-year funding for mineral revenue management activities.

The Appraisal and Valuation Services Office provides independent real property valuation and mineral evaluation services. AVSO operates two primary valuation programs which are funded by two different funding sources. Indian Country appraisals are funded from general fund appropriations and Federal land appraisal activities are primarily funded from the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Additional programs financed by other sources of funds include the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund.

Individuals that support and are funded by non-lapsing funded programs will not be furloughed, including: the Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration Program; the Great American Outdoors Act Program; the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Program, including the Orphaned Wells Program; the Inflation Reduction Act; the Land and Water Conservation Fund; and support from the Federal Emergency Management Agency for the Natural and Cultural Heritage recovery.

Lead timekeepers will be available to assist non-furloughed supervisors and managers so that hours are tracked correctly in the time and attendance system as exempt, excepted, or furloughed. This helps ensure employees are correctly paid during and after shutdown.

Brief summary of significant agency activities that will cease during a lapse:

Support for non-essential operations within the Office of the Secretary will cease during a lapse, only employees performing excepted activities will be retained. Interior Business Center activities that are not funded or not required to perform excepted activities would cease. Interior Business Center funded activities may vary depending on the nature of a shutdown and the funding status of customer agencies. The Office of Natural Resources Revenue will defer audit and compliance activities, as well as production meter verification, enforcement actions, royalty valuation, rulemaking, and appeals.

Shutdown activities that will not be completed within one-half day:

In preparing the contingency plan, staffing needs were carefully reviewed. The number of exempt, excepted, and furloughed employees can be expected to fluctuate from week to week as management adjusts to evolving needs and developments. The plan for actions to be taken during a long-term lapse (over 5 days) is as follows:

Long-Term Lapse

Extended Lapse Plan (over 5 days) Summary Overview	
Estimated time (to nearest half day) required to complete shutdown activities:	0.50
Total number of agency employees expected to be on board before implementation of the plan:	2,807
Total number of agency employees expected to be furloughed under the plan (unduplicated count):	2,144
Total number of employees to be retained under the plan for each of the following categories (may include duplicated counts):	
Compensation is financed by a resource other than annual appropriations:	416
Necessary to perform activities expressly authorized by law:	3
Necessary to perform activities necessarily implied by law:	163
Necessary to the discharge of the President’s constitutional duties and powers:	0
Necessary to protect life and property:	81

Actions to Resume Orderly Operations

Communications

The Department of the Interior will notify furloughed employees that it is permissible to take home computers and check emails periodically (e.g., twice a day) noting Shutdown Update in the subject line. This can provide valuable information to staff, such as, you are being called back as exempt or excepted status; information regarding benefits and pay; when the shutdown may end; time period of furlough is being extended; etc.

Flexibilities Available to Supervisors

If an employee has an issue returning to work, for instance, due to leave planned in advance, the Department encourages supervisors to allow employees to use normal leave, such as accrued annual leave, compensatory time, credit hours, etc. Employees should coordinate this approval with the supervisor when notified of the return to work.

Resuming Normal Operations

Furloughed employees are expected to monitor public broadcasts and the Internet, including but not limited to DOI.gov, for information and public notices relevant to any appropriation or continuing resolution for the Department passed by Congress and signed by the President. They will be expected to return to regular duty on the next workday immediately after the end of the lapse in appropriations.