

Resources available for furloughed Dept. of the Army (DA) Civilians

Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Guidance on Shutdown Furloughs:

<http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/furlough-guidance/guidance-for-shutdown-furloughs.pdf>

Department of Defense Shutdown Furlough Guidance:

<http://www.cpms.osd.mil/Subpage/FurloughGuidance/>

Army Shutdown Furlough Guidance:

<http://cpol.army.mil/library/general/2013sequestration/FY14Lapse.html>

Benefits

Army Benefits Center

<https://www.abc.army.mil/>

Civilian Human Resources Agency Employee Benefits Handout

<http://www.chra.army.mil/hr/tools/gps/files/SAMPLE%20Employee%20Handout%20-%20Furlough%205-28-13~766.docx>

Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) at www.tsp.gov or TSP Fact Sheet at

<https://fcportal.forscom.army.mil/sites/g1/G1-HRD/Sequestration%20Information/Additional%20Benefits/TSP%20guidance%20on%20Furlough.pdf>

- Decrease or terminate TSP (implications for time savings)
- Apply for TSP General Loan, generally 30 day approval-current interest rate
- If you have a current TSP loan, amortize to decrease your payments during furlough period.

Financial Assistance

- Work directly with creditors to ask for reprieve or reduction on payments during furlough period b. Federal saving, bank, and credit union institutions are offering relief during furlough

Unemployment Compensation

<http://workforsecurity.doleta.gov/unemploy/unemcomp.asp>

State specific UI information can be found at:

<http://www.servicelocator.org/OWSLinks.asp>

More information about UCFE can be found at:

<http://www.dol.gov/sequestration/ucfe-faqs.pdf>

Notice to Federal Employee about Unemployment Insurance (SF-8) at:

<http://www.chra.army.mil/hr/tools/gps/view.asp?ID=781>

Additional Resources

1. Tax Withholdings - Decrease your tax withholdings by increasing the number of federal and state tax exemptions.

(See tax implications at www.irs.gov)

2. Employee Assistance Program Financial Training (see

http://archive.opm.gov/employment_and_benefits/worklife/healthwellness/eap/)

3. Army Community Service Financial Counselors (see

<http://www.myarmyonesource.com/default.aspx>)

4. American Red Cross:

<http://www.redcross.org/>

5. Army Chaplain Corps

<http://www.chapnet.army.mil/>

6. Army Emergency Relief at <http://www.aerhq.org/dnn563/> Army Career and Alumni Program

<https://www.acap.army.mil/default.aspx>

7. Youth and Childcare Centers

<http://www.armymwr.com/family/childand youth/default.aspx>

8. Public Affairs

<http://www.army.mil/info/institution/publicAffairs/>

9. Department of Labor

<http://www.dol.gov/dol/location.htm>

10. Behavioral Health Services

<http://www.behavioralhealth.army.mil/>

11. MEDCOM Health Care Service

<http://www.armymedicine.army.mil/>

12. Legal Office

<https://www.jagcnet.army.mil/Legal>

13. Morale, Welfare, and Recreation

<http://www.armymwr.com/>

14. Defense Financial and Accounting Service

<http://www.dfas.mil/>

15. MyPay

<https://mypay.dfas.mil/mypay.aspx>

(for changes to allotments, health savings account, Federal withholding and State Withholding)

FAQs for Military Personnel

Will my service member be paid?

Pay will be received on time. Military pay is protected for five of the seven Uniformed Services. The President signed Pay our Military Act into law which will provide pay and allowances to the service members who are part of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force and Coast Guard. Unfortunately, the new law does not cover pay for the Commissioned Corps of Public Health Services or the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

[DFAS](#) received final guidance from DoD and normal pay and allowances will be processed for the mid-October pay date.

Generally, activated or mobilized National Guard and Reserve will be paid. Guardsmen and Reservists who are in support of excepted operations will be paid. Drills are being cancelled and consequently, those Guardsmen and Reservists will not be paid for those drills. If you are a member of the National Guard and Reserve, please contact your chain of command.

Will military retirees be paid?

Yes, military retirees and survivor benefits are not dependent on regular appropriations. However, retirement checks could be delayed or reduced later in October when the federal government reaches the debt ceiling limit.

What family support and installation services will remain open during a shutdown?

(Military families are encouraged to verify with their local installations.)

- [Military OneSource](#) will remain open - available by [web](#) and phone (800-342-9647) 24/7.
- Commissaries are now open.
- Child Development Centers will remain open; however School Age Care (SAC) not attached to a CDC may close. Please check with your local installation to determine if alternative arrangements should be made.
- Tuition assistance will not be authorized or granted for new classes.
- Family support center staffing will be determined by installation commanders
- Family Advocacy Program staffing will be determined by installation commanders.
- Exchanges will remain open.
- Military and Family Life Counselors (MFLC) will continue to provide services.
- Morale, Welfare, and Recreation Programs (MWR) supporting "excepted activities" such as dining facilities, physical training, and child care activities will remain open.
- My Career Advancement Accounts (MyCAA) will not process new financial assistance requests. However, those with approved financial assistance accounts prior to October 1, 2013 will be processed.

Will access to health care be impacted?

[TRICARE has issued a statement about the government shutdown.](#) If you normally get your health care in a military hospital or military clinic, you may find reduced hours. Each military treatment facility (MTF) will establish appointment hours and access to services including lab and pharmacy services. Depending on each military hospital or military clinic's staffing, there will probably be a different mix of available services. We advise families to call whatever phone number you would normally call for information or to make an appointment before you travel to your military hospital or military clinic for any reason.

As always, if you or a family member has an emergency medical situation, immediately go to the closest emergency room or dial 911. If the need is not an emergency, but you need urgent care and cannot get in touch with anyone at your military hospital or military clinic, we recommend that you call your TRICARE Regional contractor for information and instructions. Here is their contact information:

North: [Health Net](#) at 1.877.874.2273

South: [Humana](#) at 1.800.444.5445

West: [UnitedHealthcare Military & Veterans](#) at 1.877.988.9378

Overseas: [International SoS](#) and [Country-Specific Toll-Free Numbers](#)

If you normally get your care from civilian health care providers, you should not notice a disruption in service due to the shutdown. TRICARE contractors will continue to provide all of their services and their call centers will be operational.

Pharmacy coverage is available. However, if you receive your prescriptions from a military hospital or clinic, please check the pharmacy for updated hours. If you cannot access a military pharmacy, you may have your prescription filled at a [network pharmacy](#). Contact Express Scripts at 1.877.363.1303 if you need assistance obtaining access to a pharmacy.

Will PCS or temporary duty orders be cancelled or delayed?

Permanent Change of Station (PCS) orders may be canceled or delayed. Service members should talk to their command for specific information about your orders. Personnel who work at transportation offices may be furloughed.

The official [DoD guidance](#) is vague:

- Separation orders will continue
- Initial entry/recruitment moves will continue
- Other moves only TO an excepted activity
- Other moves only FROM an excepted activity if deemed essential to the mission or to enhance excepted activities (determined by command)

Bottomline – service members must check with their command.

Additionally, for those authorized to PCS, Dislocation Allowances and Advance cannot be paid until FY14 Appropriations become available.

Will the shutdown impact my VA benefits, such as VA healthcare, the Post-9/11 GI Bill payments, or disability claims?

[The Department of Veterans Affairs](#) has issued guidance on what services will be delayed and what services will continue. [Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America](#) have provided veteran specific government shutdown FAQs.

Some frequently asked veteran specific questions include:

Will I still be able to receive health care from a VA hospital or clinic?

Yes, in 2009 Congress passed a law to fund VA health care one year in advance. Additionally the [Veterans Crisis Line](#) will remain open.

What about VA disability, pension, or GI Bill payments?

All payments for October are already processed. VA benefits are protected and should continue during a shutdown. However, if the shutdown lasts longer than 2 – 3 weeks benefit payments for November could be impacted.

Will VA claims continue to be processed?

It depends on the type of claim. There will be delays for new claims and appeals. The Veterans Field Guide to Government Shutdown states, *Claims processing and payments in the compensation, pension, education, and vocational rehabilitation programs are anticipated to continue through late October. However, in the event of a prolonged shutdown, claims processing and payments in these programs would be suspended when available funding is exhausted.*

Please note some VA phone lines will be closed during the shutdown, including the education benefit line. Please check www.va.gov for updated information.

Will DoDEA schools remain open?

Yes. We have confirmed DoDEA schools are exempt from the shutdown and [will remain open](#).

Will Department of Defense (DoD) civilian employees be impacted?

On October 5, Secretary of Defense Hagel announced that DoD civilian employees “whose responsibilities contribute to the morale, well-being, capabilities and readiness of service members,” will return to work. The Secretary’s memorandum listed several activities where civilians would be called back from furlough, including health care, family support programs, commissary operations and installation support. Further legislation is necessary for employees to

receive retroactive pay for days lost to the shutdown. The amount of pay for October 1 – 5 will be dependent on whether an employee is exempt, excepted from furlough, or furloughed. Pay will be received on the normal pay date beginning October 11. Read what DoD has to say about [Furlough Questions on Civilian Leave and Pay](#).

Where can we go for financial help?

Do not turn to payday lenders – your military community has the resources to provide assistance. If your family experiences a hardship due to a reduced paycheck, we urge you to seek assistance from a [military aid organization](#) or [military bank](#) or [military credit union](#). Aid organizations, military banks, and credit unions have short-term loans available to help in this situation.

Aid organizations are ready and willing to help service members and their families.

- [Air Force Aid Society \(AFAS\)](#)
- [Army Emergency Relief \(AER\)](#)
- [Coast Guard Mutual Assistance \(CGMA\)](#)
- [Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society \(NMCRS\)](#)
- [Reserve Aid](#)

If you are not located near an aid organization, you may contact your local [Red Cross](#) to be connected with aid organization resources. Each aid organization has an agreement with the Red Cross to provide the same type of financial assistance to military families who do not live near a military installation.

Our Association has contacted a sampling of military banks and credit unions. [Military banks](#) and [credit unions](#) have a variety of programs to assist federal employees and service members.

Here is the statement from the [Association of Military Banks of America](#):

"In the event of a government shutdown, the military banks will respond, as they have in the past when faced with natural disasters and pending government shutdowns, by providing tailored, case-by-case assistance to their military and civilian customers. They are well aware of the impact of a government shutdown on the Department of Defense, and understand that service members and civilian employees will be affected. A similar shutdown was threatened in April 2011 and the military banks stood ready then to support their military and civilian customers. If you are in need of assistance, please contact your military bank for more information."

Military families who use automatic payments are encouraged to contact their bank and make alternative arrangements. For example, families may transfer money from a savings account to a checking account to cover the automatic payment.

[The National Association of Federal Credit Unions](#) has compiled a list of credit unions that will offer assistance to members in event of a shutdown. Credit union members must contact their credit union directly to get complete details. Examples of support include interest free advance credit of direct deposit, loan payment deferment, payment reductions, etc.

We urge military families to contact their bank to review their individual situation and the guidance established by their financial entity. Below are links to banks and credit unions with specific government shutdown plans:

[Air Force Federal Credit Union](#)

[Marine Federal Credit Union](#)

[Navy Federal Credit Union](#)

[USAA](#)

Can a service member take leave during a government shutdown?

Normal leave rules apply in this situation. If a service member is already on leave status and the government furloughs employees, then it is the organizational leadership's decision on whether to recall individuals back from leave status based on mission requirements. The unit may be required to pay for all travel costs associated with the recall to the duty location. If military personnel are planning leave, and the government furloughs employees, then it is the organizational leadership's decision on whether to cancel the scheduled/planned leave and have those military members report for duty, or allow them to continue on leave. Again, the mission requirements should inform decision makers. Military commanders will evaluate each leave request on a case by case basis.

Will nutrition assistance programs such as WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) and SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) still be available? What about free and reduced price school lunches?

The [Department of Agriculture](#) has announced that the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) will continue operations and eligible households will still receive monthly benefits for October. Child Nutrition Programs, which include free and reduced price school lunches, will also continue to be available for eligible families at least through October. However, no funds are available to support the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), which provides nutrition assistance to low income mothers and children. Some states may have reserve funds that allow them to continue administering the program for a limited time. Military families receiving assistance through the WIC program should check with their local office for updates.

Military families who are eligible for WIC and who reside overseas will continue to receive this assistance. Visit [TRICARE's website](#) for more information on the WIC Overseas Program.

REFERENCE GUIDE

Pay and Leave During the Fiscal Year 2014 Shutdown Furlough

Pay and leave provisions for Department of Defense civilian employees during the Fiscal Year 2014 shutdown furlough will vary by individual, from those originally exempt or excepted, those recalled under the provisions of the Pay Our Military Act (POMA), and those remaining on furlough.

Exempt from Furlough:

Department of Defense (DoD) employees who are exempt from the shutdown furlough (e.g., Non-appropriated Fund employees) will receive their regular pay and allowances since they are not affected by the lapse in appropriations. Exempt employees may also take annual and sick leave during the furlough period; normal Federal holiday rules apply for Columbus Day.

Excepted from Furlough:

DoD employees originally subject to, but excepted from, the shutdown furlough will receive their regular pay and allowances on time via the authority and appropriation in the "Pay Our Military Act" (POMA). These employees will receive a normal paycheck for the pay period that includes October 1-5. These employees may now also take annual and sick leave; normal Federal holiday rules apply for Columbus Day.

Employees Recalled under POMA:

DoD employees furloughed on October 1, 2013, then recalled to work based on the POMA, effective October 6, 2013, will receive their regular pay and allowances through September 30, as they were affected by the lapse in appropriation and were furloughed from October 1-5. They will receive their regular pay and allowances for subsequent pay periods via the authority and appropriation in POMA. Until and unless Congress passes legislation to restore their pay and allowances for October 1-5, AND there is a 2014 appropriation for the Department, these employees will not receive pay or allowances for the days upon which they were furloughed. These employees will be paid for the time they spent conducting orderly shutdown activities on October 1, but they will not receive that pay until there is a 2014 appropriation for the Department by which they may be paid. Employees recalled under POMA may take annual and sick leave; normal Federal holiday rules apply for Columbus Day.

Employees Recalled under POMA (continued):

Furlough affects leave accrual. Most employees already have taken six furlough days (48 hours); when they reach a total of 10 furlough days or 80 hours (on/about 4 October), they will lose the sick and annual leave they would have earned for the pay period. Once an employee reaches 80 hours of non-pay time during a calendar year, no leave is accrued during the pay period that threshold is reached. A new 80-hour threshold begins the following pay period, and employees will again lose leave in each pay period in which the employee reaches 80 hours in a non-pay status. If Congress restores pay to furloughed employees, any lost leave will also be restored.

Furloughed Employees:

Employees furloughed on October 1, 2013, and not recalled to work, will receive their regular pay and allowances for the hours worked through September 30, 2013. These employees will receive a partial paycheck for the pay period that includes October 1-5. They will remain in a non-pay, non-duty status until recalled to duty; if they are in a non-pay and non-duty status on the days before and after Columbus Day, they will not receive pay for the holiday. Congress must pass legislation to restore their pay and allowances for all days spent in a furlough status before any such employee may be placed in a "pay status." If such legislation is passed, these employees will be paid for the time they spent conducting orderly shutdown activities on October 1, but they will not receive that pay until there is a 2014 appropriation for the Department by which they may be paid; they will receive pay for the Columbus Day holiday at that time.

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Frequently Asked Questions

Emergency Furlough – Lapse in Appropriations

Pay Our Military Act (POMA)

1. Q: What is POMA?

A: The Pay Our Military Act (POMA) is a bill passed by Congress and approved by the President which provides pay and allowances to certain members of DoD's civilian employees who provide support to members of the Armed Forces. The passing of POMA allowed to recall employees who fall within the scope of this provision.

2. Q: How do I know if/when I should return to work?

A: Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel on October 5 announced the recall of most of the DoD civilian employees who had been furloughed due to the government shutdown. Many supervisors contacted their employees where possible to recall them to work. Employees with questions on whether to return to work should contact their supervisor to determine if they are an employee covered by POMA who may need to return back to work.

3. Q: What is my work schedule when I return to work?

A: Returning employees should resume their normal schedule.

4. Q: How does POMA affect my pay during the furlough?

A: Furloughed employees recalled by POMA will get paid for the days worked since the employee was recalled back to work. (For many employees, this began on October 7.)

5. Q: Will employees get back pay for the time they were furloughed between October 1-4?

A: There is legislation proposed to provide back pay for civilian employees impacted by the shutdown furlough. If that bill is approved, then employees will receive back pay for their furlough time. The back pay would be paid after approval of an FY14 appropriations bill or a Continuing Resolution.

6. Q: What about my leave - I didn't earn any annual leave or sick leave due to the furlough?

A: If the retroactive pay legislation (noted above) is approved, leave, along with back pay, will be restored after the approval of an FY14 appropriations bill or Continuing Resolution.

7. Q: How does POMA affect my annual leave, sick leave and other forms of leave?

A: Excepted employees recalled to work are allowed to take annual and sick leave as well as other leave upon approval by the employee's supervisor.

8. Q: Can excepted employees take annual and sick leave during the shutdown under POMA? How should they code their time card?

A: As a result of DoD guidance related to POMA, excepted employees may take annual and sick leave during the partial shutdown. Employees should record their time as they normally would absent a partial shutdown (e.g., LA for annual leave and LS for sick leave).

9. Q: Why do some people get to come back to work but not me?

A: The Department of Justice has advised that POMA does not permit the DoD to recall all civilian employees from furloughs. Based on this advice, the Department's leadership has spent a significant amount of time in identifying civilian personnel who meet the definition of POMA based on the functions they perform.

10. Q: Who is not returning to work?

A: Employees who are performing the following are not recalled at this time:

- CIO functions, unless they support service members or perform operational work
- Deputy Chief Management Office functions at the OSD and Service levels
- Legislative Affairs and Public Affairs functions not previously excepted or required in support of internal communications to members of the Armed Forces in active service
- Auditor and related functions not previously excepted - this does not include those positions in support of FIAR (audit readiness) support

11. Q: In the case of the excepted employees for 1-4 October (coded RG), will they be paid on time for those 4 days in the 11 October pay period?

A: Yes, excepted employees (since the beginning of the furlough) should receive compensation in the 11 October pay period.

12. Q: Will Columbus Day be a paid holiday?

A: Excepted and exempt employees should receive pay for this holiday.

13. Q: Since most employees have already taken 6 furlough days (beginning as early as April for some but more specifically July for the bulk of employees) and now have taken an additional 4 days that means they have accrued 80 hours of furlough time within the last 12 months. Will this impact their leave accrual and if so, how?

A: For some employees, the first four days of furlough combined with the previous six days of administrative furlough may have put them to the threshold of 80 hours in a non-pay status. If that occurs, the employee will not earn annual and sick leave in the pay period in which the 80-hour accumulation is reached - this may be reflected in the October 11 leave and earnings statement (LES). In the event that back pay is restored, leave also will be restored and changes will be made at a later time.

14. Q: Can employees resume a compressed work schedule while the government is in a shutdown status?

A: There was no DoD-wide guidance or policy preventing compressed work schedules for excepted or exempt employees. Excepted and exempt employees should work with their supervisors to determine the best schedule to address workload.

15. Q: May interns return to work?

A: Unless noted in the DoD guidance, interns should return to duty on their normal schedule as long as they are assigned to one of the excepted functions.

16. Q: How should Commands handle reassignments or appointments during the partial shutdown?

A: Employees who are moving from an excepted position to another excepted position may be routinely processed. Reassignments and/or appointments for furloughed positions may not be executed.