



December 27, 2018

## Frequently Asked Questions from Constituents on the Trump Government Shutdown

### **Will my mail still arrive during the shutdown?**

Yes. The U.S. Postal Service is not affected by a government shutdown. The U.S. Postal Service is an independent entity that is funded through the sale of its products and services, and not by tax dollars.

### **Will I continue to receive my Social Security checks?**

Yes. During a government shutdown, recipients continue to receive their Social Security checks.

### **Will Medicare and Medicaid be interrupted?**

No. The operations of Medicare and Medicaid will operate normally during the shutdown.

### **Can I get taxpayer assistance from IRS personnel during the shutdown?**

It will likely be difficult. If the Trump Shutdown goes into January, it will have a significant impact on the IRS. While the shutdown continues, 90 percent of the IRS staff is furloughed. IRS's "tax filing season" is January-April. Beginning in January, some Americans will start thinking about filing their 2018 taxes, due April 15, 2019. This will be the first year when Americans are filing their taxes under the new GOP tax law, and many will have numerous questions. If the Trump Shutdown continues, the limited IRS staff will be unable to keep up with the questions coming in from taxpayers using the IRS customer service hotline.

### **Can I get a passport during the shutdown?**

Perhaps, with it depending on where you live. The U.S. Passport Agency remains open during the shutdown and continues to issue passports. However, depending on where you live, the State Department could curtail issuing passports where those passport services are offered in buildings run by another agency that is shut down.

**Will I be able to continue visiting the national parks during the shutdown?** The Trump Administration claims that the vast majority of national parks are "open" during the shutdown (on the grounds that barriers have not been put up at the parks to prevent entry.) However, the fact is that there are no services for visitors to National Park Service sites during the shutdown. Services such as restrooms, visitors' centers, campgrounds, information kiosks, trash removal, and interpretative programs are all closed during the shutdown. The vast majority of National Park Service employees are furloughed. Also, law enforcement staffing is sharply curtailed, so visitors' safety will be put at risk.

### **Will the Smithsonian Museums continue to be open during the shutdown?**

The Smithsonian has announced that it has prior-year funds that allow its museums to remain open through Tuesday, January 1. However, it appears that if the shutdown lasts beyond January 1, the museums will have to close.

**Will I be able to obtain a new flood insurance policy or renew my existing flood insurance policy during the shutdown?**

No. Just today, Dec. 27, the Trump Administration's FEMA ruled to not renew the National Flood Insurance Program during the shutdown. The National Association of Realtors (NAR) has stated that today's decision by FEMA "jeopardizes tens of thousands of home sales across America, as NAR estimates up to 40,000 closings are disrupted each month that the NFIP cannot issue flood insurance policies."

**Which federal departments are affected by the Trump Shutdown?**

There are nine federal departments affected by the Trump Shutdown: Homeland Security, Treasury, Agriculture, Interior, HUD, Justice, Commerce, Transportation, and State. In addition, numerous critical smaller independent agencies, including EPA, the Small Business Administration, and NASA, are affected. (The six federal departments that are already fully funded for FY 2019 and are not affected by the Trump Shutdown are: Defense, Veterans Affairs, HHS, Education, Labor, and Energy.)

**How many federal employees have to work without pay during the Trump Shutdown?**

There are approximately 420,000 federal employees, deemed "essential," including FBI agents, DEA agents, Secret Service agents, and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agents, who are being required to work without pay during the Trump Shutdown. None of them will receive a paycheck until the shutdown is over and the government re-opens. The longer the Trump Shutdown lasts, the longer they are working without a paycheck, increasing their families' financial difficulties.

**How many federal employees have been put on unpaid furlough during the Trump Shutdown?**

There are also approximately 380,000 federal employees who have been placed on unpaid furlough during the Trump Shutdown. They are also not receiving any pay during the Trump Shutdown.

**Will the 420,000 federal employees forced to work without pay during the shutdown receive the pay for their work when the shutdown is over?**

Yes. Under federal law, those federal employees forced to work without pay in the shutdown are guaranteed the pay they have earned when the government re-opens.

**Will the 380,000 federal employees who were placed on unpaid furlough during the shutdown receive back pay when the shutdown is over?**

That will be up to the Congress and the White House. Legislation would have to be enacted. The precedent has been that furloughed employees are later paid, through legislation. Indeed, after every previous shutdown, Congress has passed legislation mandating that furloughed workers get paid.

**What is the impact of the Trump Shutdown on small businesses?**

A shutdown halts federal loans to small businesses. During a shutdown, the Small Business Administration stops approving applications for small businesses to obtain loans and guarantees, typically \$1 billion per month. Indeed, on Dec. 22, SBA put a notice on Facebook simply stating, "Due to the lapse in government funding, SBA will remain inactive until further notice."

**What is the impact on home mortgage applications?**

During the shutdown, the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) will see significant delays in loan processing and approvals, due to the furloughing of most employees. Thousands of people trying to buy a new home or refinance a FHA-insured mortgage will likely be put on standby.

**What is the impact on FDA's food safety activities?**

During the Trump Shutdown, the FDA will be unable to support a number of its food safety activities. FDA has furloughed 40 percent of its employees. As a result, it will have to reduce its routine inspections of domestic food facilities. For example, in the 16-day GOP shutdown in 2013, the FDA had to delay nearly 360 food safety inspections.

---

[DemocraticLeader.gov](#) – [Twitter](#) – [YouTube](#) – [Flickr](#) – [Facebook](#) – [The Gavel](#)