



Preparation for Possible Government "Shutdown"

Fact Sheet
Office of the Spokesman
Washington, DC
April 8, 2011

The State Department is a national security agency and will continue working to advance the national interest even in the event of a shutdown and reduced staff.

Shutdown Timeline:

The sixth continuing resolution for FY 2011 expires at midnight, Friday, April 8. If a seventh continuing resolution or FY 2011 funding bill is not enacted by that time, a lapse in appropriations would occur. The Department will then implement its "Guidance on Operations during a Lapse in Appropriations" to be used in the event of a shutdown.

Employees worldwide will report to work on the first day of the workweek as usual, through Monday morning EDT, April 11, and the Guidance will be implemented. (Note: Some posts begin a new workweek on Saturday or Sunday.)

Thereafter, limited operations will continue with excepted employees.

If Appropriations Lapse:

The Department has issued updated "Guidance on Operations during a Lapse in Appropriations" to be used in the event of a shutdown, and as requested by OMB, has published this guidance on its website.

- See <http://www.state.gov/m/rls/160305.htm>
- The Department will continue to carry out functions related to:
 - Protecting national security
 - Protecting health and life-safety, particularly ensuring the safety of U.S. citizens abroad

Operations in a Nutshell:

Should funding lapse and a shutdown occur, Federal departments and agencies will not be permitted to incur expenses to perform activities funded by annual appropriations, except those related to the orderly suspension of operations or performance of excepted activities.

- Services and programs that will remain operational:
- Certain overseas posts will remain at close to full staff. These posts include, but are not limited to, Japan, Malta, Afghanistan, Iraq, Haiti, Pakistan, Yemen, Sudan, and Cote d'Ivoire.
- Emergency passport services, including expedited passports already being processed.
- Emergency consular/visa services (i.e., those for life/death or medical emergencies, humanitarian cases involving minor children, and diplomatic travel) would continue.
- The Department will continue drug interdiction and law enforcement functions, and continue criminal investigations.
- Most locally employed staff overseas will keep working because of provisions in local national labor laws.
- Diplomatic reporting, involving most bilateral and multilateral issues, arms control issues will continue.
- Embassy and Consulate Security will be carried out.
- Defense Trade Controls licenses (this process is 100% fee-funded)

Services and programs that will be closed:

- Routine passport issuance.
- Routine visa issuance.
- Approximately 65% of domestic personnel will be furloughed; 10% of overseas personnel will be furloughed.

Overseas operations at Embassies and Consulates:

- We anticipate a significantly higher level of operations at our embassies and consulates than in Washington because of our essential diplomatic reporting function and our need to carry out diplomacy with host nations.
- One of the Department's highest priorities is to assist U.S. citizens abroad. The Department will post specific guidance at www.Travel.state.gov on what

consular services will be provided overseas.

Emergency services for U.S. citizens:

Posts will be able to provide only those services related to U.S. citizen emergencies necessary for the safety of human life or otherwise to carry out excepted activities, which include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Emergency passport issuance
- Deaths
- Arrests and detentions
- Welfare and whereabouts requests related to in-process parental child abduction cases and other instances where refusal to act would result in the endangerment of a U.S. citizen
- Emergency repatriation, Emergency Medical and Dietary Assistance (EMDA), and medical evacuation loans
- Continued payment to overseas beneficiaries of federal benefits already received by posts
- Assistance in extraditions and prisoner transfers that are in their final stages;
- Support for in-process emergency adoption cases (such as when the child's health or safety is at risk) that are at the point of visa issuance, when the adoptive parents are in country to pick up the child to return to the United States
- Assistance in returning abducted children to the United States from abroad or from the United States to the child's home country
- All necessary consular functions at posts involved in crisis management activities, until the Department determines the crisis to have passed.

The most up-to-date information will be available on Travel.State.Gov.

Visa services:

- In the event of a government shutdown, the Department will provide limited, emergency visa services only. Routine visas will not be issued.
- Embassies and consulates may accept and adjudicate only the following visa applications:
 - Nonimmigrant visas for life and death situations, medical emergencies, and diplomatic emergencies;
 - Immigrant visa applications for person who are adopting children with serious medical issues that require immediate treatment. Cases should already be at the point of visa issuance and the adopting parents and child should be ready for immediately return to the United States. In these urgent cases, post can conduct I-604 investigations outside the Embassy/Consulate if necessary; and
 - Immigrant visa cases in which the beneficiary will otherwise turn 21 and lose claim to immigrant status.
- We will make every effort to notify visa applicants as soon as possible. We would also advise visa applicants to check our website Travel.State.Gov or the website of the U.S. Embassy or Consulate at which they have an appointment before their scheduled interviews.
- Impact: The Department's consular officers around the world routinely adjudicate approximately 200,000 applications each week. (This includes issuances and refusals.)

Passports:

- Passport offices will be closed for the acceptance of new applications. Only limited, emergency passport services will be provided.
- Impact: The Department normally issues approximately 290,000 passports each week during the April timeframe.
- If you need an emergency passport, please contact 1-877-487-2778 for assistance.

Closing Passport Offices:

- While passport applicants pay a passport fee, this fee does not cover the full cost of operations. For passports, the Department relies on a mix of fee-funded and appropriation-funded employees, and the process is dependent on support services that will be scaled back or eliminated during a shutdown.
- Because passport operations depend in part on appropriated funds, they must close during a government shutdown.
- Passport Day in the USA Cancelled:
 - Due to the possible government shutdown, the Department of State must cancel "Passport Day in the USA," which had been scheduled for Saturday, April 9, 2011. During this annual event, passport agencies and participating passport acceptance facilities nationwide open their doors for U.S. citizens to receive passport services without an appointment. We regret that we cannot offer this service as planned.

Visa Waiver Program:

- Please contact the Department of Homeland Security for questions about the administration of the Visa Waiver Program.

PRN: 2011/554