

Special Instructions for Agencies Affected by a Possible Lapse in Appropriations Starting on January 31, 2026

These special instructions apply to agencies and employees affected by a possible lapse in appropriations starting on Saturday, January 31, 2026. The instructions supplement Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and [Office of Personnel Management \(OPM\) shutdown guidance](#). For purpose of this guidance, lapse-affected employees include “furloughed employees” and “excepted employees” who may legally work without appropriated funding. “Exempt” employees (those paid using funding with continuing availability) are not covered by these instructions.

Payroll

- If there is a lapse commencing on January 31, Federal civilian paychecks for the January 11 – January 24 pay period should be issued on time. Employees should receive a partial paycheck covering the portion of the January 25 – February 7 pay period that elapsed before January 31 (that is, January 25 – January 30) on the normal pay date for that pay period.
- Lapse-affected employees may not be paid for any period of time occurring during a lapse in appropriations, including for performing excepted work. Agencies should follow their time and attendance and payroll provider instructions to document January 25 – January 30 pre-lapse work as part of orderly shutdown activities and any excepted work performed during the lapse. Retroactive pay for excepted work will be provided after the lapse has ended. Congress will determine via legislation whether furloughed employees receive pay for furlough periods.

Leave and other time off

- Agencies must cancel all previously scheduled paid leave and other paid time off for lapse-affected employees.
- Supervisors may approve intermittent absences for excepted employees, subject to supervisory approval. Excepted employees excused from duty must either be placed in (1) furlough status or (2) paid leave status under 31 U.S.C. 1341(c)(3) if requested by the employee. Agencies may also use work schedule flexibilities for excepted employees who need time off.

Orderly shutdown

- Orderly shutdown activities for furloughed employees (including receipt of a furlough notice) generally should not exceed 4 hours. Employees generally should not perform orderly shutdown activities on Saturday, January 31 if they have a Monday-Friday schedule, on an alternative work schedule (AWS) day off, or on a day in which the employee had been scheduled to be on leave. An agency may allow an employee to perform orderly shutdown activities on the first workday on which the employee was scheduled to return to duty after the lapse commences. An agency should not direct employees to perform orderly shutdown activities outside of their regular work schedule to avoid overtime pay and other premium pay obligations.

Furlough notices

- Sample furlough notices are available in OPM's [Guidance for Shutdown Furloughs](#).
- The sample furlough notices for excepted employees may be modified so that a single notice can be provided to cover any holidays (e.g., Washington's Birthday on February 16) or other approved absences on a regular workday during the lapse. Excepted employees must receive a furlough notice if they are excused from duty on a holiday. Agencies may send an email to those employees stating that they are being placed in a furlough status due to a holiday instead of individualized furlough notices. If an excepted employee works on a holiday, holiday premium pay may apply.