

2017 Government Shutdown FAQ

On June 1, 2017, all executive branch State employees were sent a letter notifying them of a potential for a government shutdown and a layoff or furlough notice. Going forward, should the Legislature not pass a budget prior to July 1, 2017, many government services will need to be shut down.

The following is a general summary of questions to address the potential government shutdown; as we continue to get more answers, we will update the FAQ, please check back for additional information. Your department Human Resource staff or your Union reps are also available to answer specific questions.

Who can help answer specific or individual questions?

Your department Human Resource staff is available to help answer questions and discuss your individual circumstances. Below are links to other resources:

- Department Human Resource Staff <http://doa.alaska.gov/dop/serviceCenters/contact/>
- Your Union <http://doa.alaska.gov/dop/LaborRelations/unionContactList/>
- Retirement and Benefits <http://doa.alaska.gov/drb/>
- Employee Assistance Program
<http://doa.alaska.gov/drb/alaskaCare/employee/information/eap.html>

If you are a classified employee represented by a Union, or an AMHS employee, please make sure to read the provisions of your collective bargaining agreement (your union is also available for questions). Partially Exempt employees should review the Personnel Rules. Exempt employees should review department policies.

Who will receive layoff/furlough notices?

All executive branch State employees will receive a layoff notice. This includes but is not limited to: classified, partially exempt, exempt, excluded employees, non-permanent employees, interns, and Alaska Marine Highway System vessel employees. Note: these notices will be sent to your address on file with the State.

I have heard that my Department, Division, or position may remain open and working during the shutdown, can I ignore my layoff/furlough notice?

No. You will receive a letter or email officially rescinding the layoff/furlough notice. Until you receive such notice, the layoff/furlough stands.

How will I be notified when to return to work after the shutdown?

To ensure timely receipt of a recall notice, all employees **must** subscribe to receive email or text updates **by close of business June 30, 2017**; please visit the Department of Administration website: <http://doa.alaska.gov/> to sign up (note: personal email address and cell phone should be used). In addition, we have set up a phone number to call to retrieve a recorded message regarding the shutdown; call 907-465-4411 (in Juneau) or 844-465-4688 (toll free in-state).

Classified Employees

General Information

1. How much advance notice of layoff must be given?

Permanent employees: Every effort will be made to give thirty (30) calendar days' written notice before the effective date of layoff. At the very least, ten (10) working days' notice will be given.

Probationary employees: Every effort will be made to give ten (10) working days' written notice before the date of layoff.

2. What day will I be laid off?

The effective date will be July 1, 2017.

3. How long will I be laid off?

That is uncertain and cannot be determined until a budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2017 is adopted.

4. When will I know for sure whether I'm going to be laid off?

You will receive the layoff notice in early June 2017. The fiscal year ends at 11:59pm, June 30, 2017. Unless a budget for the new fiscal year budget has been adopted, your layoff will be effective July 1, 2017.

5. Will State Employees have to reapply for their jobs when it's time to come back?

No. Employees will be recalled back to work.

6. Who should I notify with my change of address and information?

It is important that we have your correct contact information. To update your information, please complete the Address Change Form on the Division of Personnel & Labor Relations Website.

<http://doa.alaska.gov/dop/docpool/pdf/stdforms/AddressAuthorization.pdf>

7. Once notified of recall, how much time do I have to report back to work?

In general, the State will expect employees to return to work as soon as possible after receiving the recall notice. Specific information related to this will be included in the recall notice. Employees are also encouraged to refer to the layoff provisions of their collective bargaining agreement or contact their union representatives.

8. Why don't you just furlough staff instead of laying them off?

Not all collective bargaining agreements allow the State to automatically place employees on furlough and those that do limit the furlough to fifteen hours.

9. If I'm laid off while I'm in the middle of a task that needs to be completed (such as a field survey), can I complete that work despite my layoff?

No, unless you are notified otherwise.

10. If I'm traveling for the state, can I complete that travel despite my layoff?

If possible, travel should be completed by July 1, 2017. However, please work with your supervisor to determine your travel dates.

11. I am a new employee in probationary status. How will this affect my probationary period?

Your probationary period will be moved 1 month for every 23 days of leave without pay you have in a leave year (January 1 – December 31). Time in layoff status is considered leave without pay for this purpose.

12. I recently accepted a position and I am currently in probationary status, however, I have permanent status in another job. How will this affect me? Can I go back to my old job?

No. Layoff is applicable to your current job classification. Generally speaking, employees do not have rights to other job classifications (bumping, etc.) unless specified in their current collective bargaining agreement.

Benefits, Pay & Leave

13. If I'm laid off, when will I receive my last paycheck? Will workers be around to process that paycheck?

The Department of Administration will retain staff to process payroll.

14. Will those who have to work continue to receive pay?

Yes.

15. Will state employees who are laid off due to the shutdown get paid eventually? Even if they were not working?

No. Employees on layoff will not get paid for time during the shutdown.

16. What happens to my health coverage when I am laid off??

Contact the following plan or Trust Administrator for information on continuing health insurance while on layoff.

- ASEA Union Benefits Trust Administrator 1-866-553-8206
- LTC Trust Administrator 907-276-7611
- PSEA Health Trust 907-337-1979
- MM&P Health Trust 1-877-667-5522

Employees in AlaskaCare who would otherwise have been eligible for coverage in July, if not for the shutdown, will receive health benefits for the month of July.

SU and CEA Employees: Coverage ends thirty (30) calendar days from the effective date of layoff.

Contact Retirement and Benefits at 907-465-4460 or 1-800-821-2251 for more information on continuing your health and life insurance while on layoff.

COBRA: For questions related to COBRA, please visit the Retirement & Benefits website, or your union's health trust. <http://doa.alaska.gov/drb/cobra/cobraInfo.html>.

17. I am currently on Family Medical Leave (FMLA/AFLA). Will my FMLA/AFLA continue while in layoff? Will my Family Medical Leave entitlements start over upon recall?

A layoff terminates FMLA/AFLA entitlements. Whether family leave entitlements will start over upon recall will depend in part on how long the layoff lasts. The length of the layoff could also affect whether any family leave entitlements are available after recall. **For more information or to discuss your individual situation please contact your department HR staff.**

18. What happens to my leave accounts when I am laid off?

Annual/Personal Leave

Under current contracts, leave balances must be paid out within 7 days of layoff. We are in communications with union representatives on this issue.

Sick/Excess Sick Leave

If you have a sick or medical leave bank, your balance will remain intact while you are laid off and will be available for use if you return to employment within the period of your layoff rights. If you do not return to work within the period of your layoff rights, you will be separated and your sick leave balance will be canceled.

19. Can I cash in my leave?

Yes. You can cash in your leave prior to the first day of the shutdown.

20. If I cash out my leave now and a shutdown does not occur, can I have the leave put back into my account (buying back leave)?

No.

21. If I cash out my leave now and change my mind or get notice that the shutdown will not occur or my layoff is rescinded, can I cancel my request.

No, once submitted, a request cannot be cancelled.

22. What happens to my Flex Time?

Flex time will be lost and cannot be re-credited to you once the shutdown ends.

23. What happens to my Compensatory Time (Comp Time)?

You will receive a lump sum payment for your compensatory time.

24. I am currently scheduled for a vacation during the layoff dates. Will I still receive pay? Can I still take my vacation?

No, personal/annual and sick leave will not be processed or paid out during the shutdown. Note: if you have vacation scheduled, we encourage you to discuss this with your supervisor prior to July 1 in case you receive a recall notice while on vacation.

25. If my leave is cashed out, what happens when I return to work and need to take leave or have a vacation scheduled?

Decisions about granting leave requests have been (if already scheduled) or will be made by your supervisor. If you do not have leave, you will be placed in Leave Without Pay (LWOP) Status. It is important to discuss leave and LWOP status with your supervisor and/or department Human Resource staff.

26. I was already planning on retiring, what should I do now? How will the layoff affect my retirement?

Please consult with a Retirement & Benefits Counselor. You may schedule an appointment with a Retirement & Benefits Counselor by calling (907) 465-4460 or visit <http://doa.alaska.gov/drbl/>.

27. If I'm laid off, what will happen to my retirement, SBS, and deferred compensation accounts?

You are strongly encouraged to consult with a Retirement & Benefits Counselor. You may schedule an appointment with a Retirement & Benefits Counselor by calling (907) 465-4460 or visit

<http://doa.alaska.gov/drb/>. For specific questions on Deferred Compensation please email doa.drb.dcp@alaska.gov.

28. I currently reside in state housing, what will happen during the shutdown?

Please contact your Union and your department Human Resource staff to discuss your individual situation.

Other

29. What will happen to my Pay Increment and Merit Anniversary Date?

Your date will be moved 1-month for every 23 days of leave without pay in a leave year (January 1 – December 31), including layoff.

30. If I'm laid off, will I need to return all building keys, identification cards, and other state property?

Not at this time.

31. Will I need to remove my personal property from my office?

No. You do not need to remove your personal items from your work space. Please take home any personal items of value or secure them in a locked portion of your desk while you are gone.

32. What happens to my state email?

Your state email will remain active but should not be used. You are strongly encouraged to set up auto-responses to alert senders that you will not be accessing or responding to email during layoff.

33. I am a notary, what happens to my notary commission if I am laid off?

Please contact the state notary office for questions about your individual notary status.

<https://ltgov.alaska.gov/notaries-public/>

34. Can I volunteer to come back and work during the lay off period?

No, under federal law, employees may not work during layoff.

35. If I accept a non-state job while laid off, am I required to complete an Ethics Disclosure: Outside Employment/Services form?

No.

36. Will the Legislative staff be laid off?

The Legislature operates under a different set of rules. Questions related to legislative staffing will need to be forwarded to the appropriate legislative contact.

37. Will the Court staff be laid off?

The Court operates under a different set of rules. Questions related to court staffing will need to be forwarded to the appropriate court contact.

38. Will University employees be laid off?

Personnel matters are handled by the university system. These employees need to refer their questions to their union and/or respective University.

Additional Provisions for AMHS Employees

*Note: Because AMHS employees are considered exempt but also have a Collective Bargaining agreement, many of the provisions above will apply. Please read your Collective Bargaining Agreement and contact your Union or Human Resource staff if you have questions.

39. I am an AMHS employee. Will I be laid off?

AMHS employees will receive a layoff notice. Whether or how many AMHS employees will be laid off is unknown at this time. Please contact your Human Resource staff or Union for further information.

40. What happens to my health coverage when laid off??

Employees in AlaskaCare who would otherwise have been eligible for coverage in July, if not for the shutdown, will receive health benefits for the month of July.

If a budget is not passed prior to August 1, 2017, COBRA is available. For questions related to COBRA, please visit the Retirement & Benefits website:
<http://doa.alaska.gov/drb/cobra/cobraInfo.html>.

For Master Mates and Pilots, if you have questions please contact your Trust at 1-877-667-5522.

Non-Permanent Employees

41. What will happen to me during the shutdown?

Non-permanent employees will not work until otherwise directed during the shutdown.

42. I am a long-term non-permanent (LTNP) employee. Will I have health insurance?

Employees in AlaskaCare who would otherwise have been eligible for coverage in July, if not for the shutdown, will receive health benefits for the month of July.

If a budget is not passed prior to August 1, 2017, COBRA is available. For questions related to COBRA, please visit the Retirement & Benefits website:
<http://doa.alaska.gov/drb/cobra/cobraInfo.html>.

43. I am a long-term non-permanent (LTNP) employee. What will happen to my leave?

Leave cash-in requests will need to be submitted to the Payroll Office no later than June 30th. Any leave not cashed out by June 30 will remain in your leave bank for use once the shutdown ends. However, you will not be able to use or cash in any leave during the shutdown. Note: Please speak to your department Human Resources staff if you have questions about the status of your non-perm position.

Student, College, Graduate Interns, and Volunteers

44. What will happen to me during the shutdown?

Interns and volunteers will not work until otherwise directed during the shutdown.

Partially Exempt Employees

45. I am a Partially Exempt employee. Will I be laid off?

Partially Exempt employees will receive a layoff notice. How many partially exempt employees will be laid off is unknown at this time. Employees not working will not be paid during the shutdown. Partially exempt employees who are not working during the shutdown will be considered to be in furlough status for the first 10 working days (per the Personnel Rules). After the initial 10 day period, employees will continue to be laid off until called back to work.

46. What day will furlough begin?

The effective date will be July 1, 2017.

47. How long will the shutdown last?

That is uncertain and cannot be determined until a budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2017 is adopted.

48. When will I know for sure whether I am affected by the shutdown?

You will receive the notice in early June 2017.

49. Can I volunteer to come back and work during the shutdown?

No.

50. If I'm traveling for the state, can I complete that travel despite the shutdown?

No, unless you are otherwise notified. All travel will need to be completed by prior to July 1, 2017.

51. When will I receive my last paycheck? Will workers be around to process that paycheck?

The Department of Administration will retain staff to process payroll.

52. Will those who have to work continue to receive pay and benefits?

Yes.

53. Will state employees who do not work during the shutdown get paid any or all of their lost salary eventually?

No.

54. How will I be notified when to return to work?

To ensure timely receipt of a recall notice, all employees must subscribe to receive email or text updates by close of business June 30, 2017; please visit the Department of Administration website: <http://doa.alaska.gov/> to sign up (note: personal email address and cell phone should be used). In addition, we have set up a phone number to call to retrieve a recorded message regarding the partial-shutdown; call 907-465-4411 or 844-465-4688 (toll free in-state). We encourage employees who do not have email or text capability to call the listed phone numbers frequently.

55. Who should I notify with my change of address and information?

It is important that we have your correct contact information. To update your information, please complete the Address Change Form on the Division of Personnel & Labor Relations Website.

<http://doa.alaska.gov/dop/docpool/pdf/stdforms/AddressAuthorization.pdf>

56. Once notified of recall, how much time do I have to report back to work?

In general, the State will expect employees to return to work as soon as possible after receiving the recall notice. Specific information related to this will be included in the recall notice. Please work with your Human Resource staff if you anticipate any issues.

57. Will I have health insurance during the shutdown?

Employees in AlaskaCare who would otherwise have been eligible for coverage in July, if not for the

shutdown, will receive health benefits for the month of July.

If a budget is not passed by August 1, 2017, COBRA is available. For questions related to COBRA, please visit the Retirement & Benefits website: <http://doa.alaska.gov/drb/cobra/cobraInfo.html>.

58. I am currently on Family Medical Leave (FMLA/AFLA). Will my FMLA/AFLA continue during the shutdown? Will my Family Medical Leave entitlements start over upon recall?

FMLA/AFLA entitlements for partially exempt and exempt employees may continue during the shutdown. The length of the shutdown may affect entitlements. **For more information or to discuss your individual situation please contact your department HR staff.**

59. What will happen to my Pay Increment and Merit Anniversary Date?

Your date will be moved 1-month for every 23 days of leave without pay in a leave year (January 1 – December 31).

60. Can I cash in my leave?

Yes. You can cash in your leave prior to the first day of the shutdown.

61. If I cash out my leave now and a shutdown does not occur, can I have the leave put back into my account (buying back leave)?

No.

62. If I cash out my leave now and change my mind or get notice that the shutdown will not occur or my furlough notice is rescinded, can I cancel my request.

No, once submitted, a request cannot be cancelled.

63. Will my leave bank remain intact during the shutdown?

Yes. Any leave not cashed in by June 30, 2017, will remain in your personal leave bank. However, you will not be able to use or cash in any leave during the shutdown.

64. I am currently scheduled for a vacation after July 1. Will I still receive pay? Can I still take my vacation?

No, personal/annual and sick leave will not be processed or paid out during the shutdown. Note: if you have vacation scheduled, we encourage you to discuss this with your supervisor prior to July 1, in case you receive a recall notice while on vacation.

65. I was already planning on retiring, what should I do now? How will the shutdown affect my retirement?

Please consult with a Retirement & Benefits Counselor. You may schedule an appointment with a Retirement & Benefits Counselor by calling (907) 465-4460 or visit <http://doa.alaska.gov/drb/>.

66. If I'm laid off, what will happen to my retirement, SBS, and deferred compensation accounts?

You are strongly encouraged to consult with a Retirement & Benefits Counselor. You may schedule an appointment with a Retirement & Benefits Counselor by calling (907) 465-4460 or visit <http://doa.alaska.gov/drb/>. For specific questions on Deferred Compensation please email doa.drb.dcp@alaska.gov.

67. Do I have to turn in my state equipment during the shutdown?

Not at this time.

68. Can I work for another employer during the shutdown?

It depends; any requests to engage in outside employment must be submitted on the Outside Employment Ethics Form for consideration and approval. **Please discuss your individual situation or plans with your department Human Resources staff.** Note: attorneys and certain other employees may have internal policies on when outside employment may occur and disclosure forms may be required, please contact your department Human Resource staff to discuss your particular situation.

Exempt Employees

69. I am an Exempt employee. Will I be laid off?

Exempt employees do not have a collective bargaining agreement, and the personnel regulations regarding layoff do not apply to Exempt employees. Please check with your agency regarding your status during the shutdown. Most Exempt employees will not report to work during the shutdown unless directed to do so, nor will you be paid during the shutdown. Exempt employees will be notified when they may return to work.

70. What will be my last day of work?

The effective date will be July 1 2017.

71. How long will the shutdown last?

That is uncertain and cannot be determined until a budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2017 is adopted.

72. When will I know for sure whether I am affected by the shutdown?

You will receive the notice in early June 2017.

73. Can I volunteer to come back and work during the lay off period?

No.

74. How will I be notified when to return to work?

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76. Once notified of recall, how much time do I have to report back to work?

In general, the State will expect employees to return to work as soon as possible after receiving the recall notice. Specific information related to this will be included in the recall notice. Please work with your Human Resource staff if you anticipate any issues.

77. If I'm traveling for the state, can I complete that travel despite the shutdown?

No, unless you are notified otherwise. All travel will need to be completed prior to July 1, 2017.

78. When will I receive my last paycheck? Will workers be around to process that paycheck?

The Department of Administration will retain staff to process payroll.

79. Will those who have to work continue to receive pay?

Yes.

80. Will state employees who do not work during the shutdown get paid any or all of their lost salary eventually?

No.

81. Will I have health insurance during the shutdown?

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If a budget is not passed by August 1, 2017, COBRA is available. For questions related to COBRA, please visit the Retirement & Benefits website: <http://doa.alaska.gov/drb/cobra/cobraInfo.html>.

82. I am currently on Family Medical Leave (FMLA/AFLA). Will my FMLA/AFLA continue during the partial shutdown? Will my Family Medical Leave entitlements start over upon recall?

FMLA/AFLA entitlements for partially exempt and exempt employees may continue during the shutdown. The length of the shutdown may affect entitlements. **For more information or to discuss your individual situation please contact your department HR staff.**

83. What will happen to my Pay Increment and Merit Anniversary Date?

Your date will be moved 1-month for every 23 days of leave without pay in a leave year (January 1 – December 31).

84. Can I cash in my leave?

Yes. You can cash in your leave prior to the first day of the shutdown.

85. If I cash out my leave now and a shutdown does not occur, can I have the leave put back into my account (buying back leave)?

No.

86. If I cash out my leave now and change my mind or get notice that the shutdown will not occur or my furlough notice is rescinded, can I cancel my request.

No, once submitted, a request cannot be cancelled.

87. Will my leave bank remain intact during the shutdown?

Yes. Any leave not cashed in by June 30, 2017, will remain in your personal leave bank. However, you will not be able to use or cash in during the shutdown.

88. I am currently scheduled for a vacation after July 1. Will I still receive pay? Can I still take my vacation?

No, personal/annual and sick leave will not be processed or paid out during the shutdown. Note: if you have vacation scheduled, we encourage you to discuss this with your supervisor prior to July 1, in case you receive a recall notice while on vacation.

89. I was already planning on retiring, what should I do now? How will the shutdown affect my retirement?

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Not necessarily, however, you will want to discuss with your supervisor any specific requirements.

92. Can I work for another employer during the shutdown?

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