

Assistant Secretary – Insular, International and Ocean Affairs

CONTINGENCY PLAN

September 2025



Department of the Interior
Assistant Secretary – Insular, International and Ocean Affairs
Contingency Plan for a Potential Lapse in Appropriations
September 2025

Overview

Mission Summary

Insular and International Affairs (AS-IIA): The Assistant Secretary promotes the economic, social, and political development of the U.S.-affiliated insular areas, and coordinates engagement on the Department's domestic responsibilities that extend beyond the borders of the United States. The Assistant Secretary also coordinates the Department's Ocean, Great Lakes, and Coastal activities.

Office of Insular Affairs: The Assistant Secretary discharges the duties of the Secretary regarding the administration of laws, functions, responsibilities, and authorities related to U.S.- affiliated insular areas, as well as all financial and administrative matters vested in the Secretary by the President and the Congress. The Office of Insular Affairs maintains operations at Main Interior with field offices in Hawaii, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and Guam. Personnel are also assigned to U.S. embassies in Majuro, Marshall Islands and Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia.

Office of International Affairs: The Office of International Affairs coordinates engagement on the Department's domestic responsibilities that extend beyond the borders of the United States, which are bilateral and multilateral, regional and global. The Office approves and tracks foreign travel for all Departmental employees and processes official passport and visa transactions in coordination with the State Department and foreign embassies. The Office also manages the international technical assistance, utilizing reimbursable funding from the State Department to field multi-bureau teams in the full range of DOI expertise for government-to-government technical exchanges with foreign countries.

Orderly Shutdown

In the immediate office of the Assistant Secretary there are 5 employees. The presidentially appointed and Senate confirmed Assistant Secretary is excepted from furlough. The Deputy Assistant Secretary, Special Advisor, Special Assistant and the Chief of Staff are excepted.

The Office of Insular Affairs has 25 employees on board including two American Samoa justices. Employees will be designated as exempt and funded by multi-year carryover during a short-term lapse.¹ Once multi-year funding is exhausted, four employees are responsible for management of mandatory programs and appropriations, which are activities necessarily implied by law, and will be excepted. The two American Samoa justices will also be excepted, allowing the American Samoa Judiciary to continue operating their courts as necessary to protect human life and property.

The Office of International Affairs has 45 employees which are funded by both multi-year reimbursable funds and the Working Capital Fund. Employees will be designated as exempt using multi-year reimbursable funds. Once multi-year reimbursable funds are exhausted, all 45 employees will be furloughed as their activities are not necessarily implied by law.

The Ocean, Great Lakes, and Coastal Program has two employees funded by the Working Capital Fund that will be furloughed.

¹ Employees participating in the Deferred Resignation Program whose resignation dates extend beyond September 30, 2025 may be exempt to the extent there are sufficient available balances, otherwise they will be furloughed.

Lapse Plan Summary Overview

Lapse Plan Summary Overview	
Estimated time (to nearest half day) required to complete shutdown activities:	0.50
Total number of agency employees expected to be on board before implementation of the plan:	77
Total number of agency employees expected to be furloughed under the plan (unduplicated count):	2
Total number of employees to be retained under the plan for each of the following categories (may include duplicated counts):	
Compensation is financed by a resource other than annual appropriations:	70
Necessary to perform activities expressly authorized by law:	1
Necessary to perform activities necessarily implied by law:	10
Necessary to the discharge of the President's constitutional duties and powers:	0
Necessary to protect life and property:	2

Brief summary of significant agency activities that will continue during a lapse:

- Management of existing financial assistance agreements
- Engagement with insular partners and international partners
- American Samoa Justices operate their courts
- Budget planning and preparation for future budget years.

Brief summary of significant agency activities that will cease during a lapse:

- Issuance of new financial assistance agreements subject to annual appropriations process
- Coordination of the Department's Ocean, Great Lakes, and Coastal activities
- Non-critical mission travel

Shutdown activities that will not be completed within one-half day:

None

Shutdown activities once multi-year funding is exhausted:

Activities that will continue

- Limited management of mandatory financial assistance programs
- Limited engagement with insular partners
- Emergency international travel, if needed, for national security and/or to save lives and property
- American Samoa Justices operate their courts
- Budget planning and preparation for future budget years.

Activities that will cease

- All discretionary financial assistance management and oversight
- Most engagement with insular partners and all engagement with international partners
- International technical assistance, inter and intra-agency coordination on international programs and associated U.S. foreign policy, and staff support for senior officials on international matters
- Coordination of the Department's Ocean, Great Lakes, and Coastal activities
- International travel approvals and oversight
- Operations of the Department's passport office
- All mission travel, international and domestic

In the immediate office of the Assistant Secretary there are 5 employees. The presidentially appointed and Senate confirmed Assistant Secretary is excepted from furlough. The Deputy Assistant Secretary, Special Advisor, Special Assistant and the Chief of Staff are excepted.

For the Office of Insular Affairs, once multi-year carryover is exhausted, four employees will be designated as excepted to support ongoing administration of non-lapsing appropriations for mandatory commitments implied by law including the Compacts of Free Association. The two American Samoa justices will also be excepted American Samoa Judiciary to continue operating their courts and to protect human life and property. The remaining 21 employees will be furloughed.

Once multi-year reimbursable funding is exhausted, all 45 Office of International Affairs employees will be furloughed.

The Ocean, Great Lakes, and Coastal Program has two employees funded by the Working Capital Fund and will be furloughed.

Actions to Resume Orderly Operations

Communications

DOI will notify furloughed employees if it is permissible to take home computers and check emails periodically (e.g., twice a day) noting Shutdown Update in the subject line. This can provide valuable information to staff, such as, you are being called back as exempt or excepted status, info on benefits and pay, when the shutdown may end, time period of furlough is being extended, etc.

Lead timekeepers will be available to assist non-furloughed supervisors and managers so that hours are tracked correctly in the time and attendance system as exempt, excepted, or furloughed. This helps ensure employees are correctly paid during and after shutdown.

Flexibilities Available to Supervisors

If an employee has an issue returning to work, for instance, due to leave planned in advance, DOI encourages supervisors to allow employees to use normal leave, such as accrued annual leave, compensatory time, credit hours, etc. Employees should coordinate this approval with the supervisor when notified of the return to work.

Resuming Normal Operations

Furloughed employees are expected to monitor public broadcasts and the Internet, including but not limited to DOI.gov, for information and public notices relevant to any appropriation or continuing resolution for DOI passed by Congress and signed by the President. They will be expected to return to regular duty on the next workday immediately after the end of the lapse in appropriations.

Additional Information

Designation of Excepted Personnel:

Title and Function	Justification for Excepted Designation
Assistant Secretary Insular, International and Ocean Affairs	Function needed to provide leadership and policy direction and to respond to exigencies
Deputy Assistant Secretary, Insular, International and Ocean Affairs	This position performs activities necessary for the continuation of exempt and excepted activities and is necessary for the management of exempt functions during a lapse in appropriations.
Special Advisor, Insular, International and Ocean Affairs	This position performs activities necessary for the continuation of exempt and excepted activities and is necessary for the management of exempt functions during a lapse in appropriations.
Special Assistant, Insular, International and Ocean Affairs	This position performs activities necessary for the continuation of exempt and excepted activities and is necessary for the management of exempt functions during a lapse in appropriations.
Chief of Staff, Insular, International and Ocean Affairs	This position performs activities necessary for the continuation of exempt and excepted activities and is necessary for the management of exempt functions during a lapse in appropriations.
Budget Officer	Will maintain required budget execution activities in support of non-lapsing appropriations
Budget Analyst	Will maintain internal controls for required budget execution activities in support of non-lapsing appropriations
Grant Managers (2)	Will maintain payments for Compact of Free Association and Capital Improvement Project payments (non-lapsing appropriations)
American Samoa Supreme Court Justices (2)	Presiding and Associate Judges for American Samoa Judiciary system which are necessary for law and order