

Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement

CONTINGENCY PLAN

September 2025



Department of the Interior
Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement
Contingency Plan for a Potential Lapse in Appropriations
September 2025

Overview

The Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE) regulates and enforces the responsible development of energy and mineral resources on the Outer Continental Shelf to protect the environment and enhance safety. The headquarters office for BSEE is in the Main Interior Building in Washington, DC, with technical and administrative support offices in Sterling, VA, and regional offices in New Orleans, LA; Camarillo, CA; and Anchorage, AK.

Orderly Shutdown

BSEE’s mission and statutory authorities are imperative to the Administration’s priorities. Critical operations, if disrupted, would cause significant and irreparable damage to the nation’s energy supply, national security, stakeholders, and the public. To ensure continuity of critical offshore operations, worker safety, and natural resource conservation during a lapse in appropriations and subsequent shutdown in government operations, BSEE would continue critical permitting and oversight activities. Critical operations include permitting new wells and well modifications, oil spill response plan reviews, statutorily required investigation and enforcement activities, technical and administrative support, and communications with industry, Congress, and the public. Therefore, it is necessary to retain approximately 67% of the 560 BSEE employees¹ to maintain mission critical operations, mitigate safety issues that may require immediate action, facilitate emergency response activities, and perform critical mission support activities during a lapse in appropriations, all activities for the protection of life or property. BSEE will designate retained employees as “exempt” if prior year funding is available; otherwise, retained employees will be listed as “excepted.”

Lapse Plan Summary Overview

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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:	560
Total number of agency employees expected to be furloughed under the plan (unduplicated count):	190
Total number of employees to be retained under the plan for each of the following categories (may include duplicated counts):	

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	
Compensation is financed by a resource other than annual appropriations:	370
Necessary to perform activities expressly authorized by law:	0
Necessary to perform activities necessarily implied by law:	0
Necessary to the discharge of the President's constitutional duties and powers:	0
Necessary to protect life and property:	370

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

During a lapse in appropriations, BSEE personnel will perform the following exempt and excepted duties to ensure that critical funded operations continue and public safety is maintained, including:

- Receive and review critical plans and documents in support of offshore energy operations;
- Process requests for permit modifications required to sustain drilling, production, and occupational health and safety;
- Statutorily required inspections for OCS operations;
- Oversight of drilling and production operations;
- Statutorily required environmental assessment and planning;
- Budget planning and preparation for FY 2027; and
- Conduct investigations and enforcement activities, as necessary.

BSEE personnel would continue to perform the following critical mission support duties to ensure public safety and continuity of critical permitting and enforcement operations during a lapse:

- Process excepted contracting actions;
- Notify furloughed employees of their status, secure personnel records, and recall employees as necessary during and after the shutdown;
- Maintain progress on critical Executive and Secretarial directed actions to ensure the nation's critical energy supply remains safe and secure;
- Maintain information technology equipment and electronic data that support BSEE, BOEM, and ONRR through shared service agreements; and
- Maintenance of all headquarters and regional facilities that would remain open to exempted or excepted employees during a lapse in appropriations.

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

- National Oil Spill Response Research & Renewable Energy Test Facility non-essential BSEE sponsored testing and continued support of external testing activities;
- Non-essential training;
- Non-critical regulation drafting and promulgation;
- Studies that are not related to major on-going activities; and

- Administrative activities not in direct support of retained workforce.

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

N/A

Exempted employees would be re-designated as “excepted” in the event of an extended shutdown and depletion of current funding sources. The above numbers may fluctuate if a lapse extends beyond five days, or if external circumstances change. The BSEE Director (or those Acting in the Director’s capacity) would be responsible for implementing and adjusting the plan to respond to the length of the lapse or any changes to operational requirements.

Actions to Resume Orderly Operations**Communications**

BSEE would utilize its electronic notification system to alert employees regarding the end of the lapse and the resumption of orderly operations. BSEE would utilize official and personal contact information to ensure timely and accurate communication.

Flexibilities Available to Supervisors

Supervisors will utilize pre-established phone trees. DOI Human Resources will work with supervisors to ensure they are aware of all flexibilities available to those employees who are not able to report back, and that flexibilities are applied to the maximum extent needed.

Resuming Normal Operations

All BSEE offices will analyze any work backlogs upon returning to work. All disbursement of funds will be subject to regular use of funds and disbursement controls.