

Assistant Secretary for Insular and International Affairs

CONTINGENCY PLAN

September 2023



Department of the Interior
Assistant Secretary for Insular and International Affairs
Contingency Plan for a Potential Lapse in Appropriations
September 2023

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 with regard to 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 Program, utilizing reimbursable funding from the State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development 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, the presidentially appointed and Senate confirmed Assistant Secretary is excepted from furlough. The Deputy Assistant Secretary will be furloughed. The Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary and the Chief of Staff are furloughed. The Special Assistant and Chief of Staff positions are currently filled by employees on a non-reimbursable detail to AS-IIA and are not included in the FTE counts in the lapse plan tables. The Ocean, Great Lakes, and Coastal Program coordinator is furloughed.

The Office of Insular Affairs has 27 employees on board including two American Samoa justices. Four employees are responsible for management of mandatory programs and appropriations, which are activities necessarily implied by law, and will be exempted and funded by multi-year carryover. The 2 American Samoa Justices will also be exempted and funded by multi-year carryover, allowing the American Samoa Judiciary to continue operating their courts as necessary to protect human life and property. Twenty-one employees will be furloughed.

The Office of International Affairs has 21 employees in the International Technical Assistance Program that are exempt and operate with multi-year reimbursable funds. The Office also has 6 employees whose salaries are paid for by the Departmental Office of the Secretary appropriation, and 3 who are paid for by the Working Capital Fund, neither of which carry out activities that are necessarily implied by law, nor will they have sufficient carryover; all 9 of such staff will be furloughed.

Lapse Plan Summary Overview

Short-Term Lapse

Short Lapse Plan (1-5 days) 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:	60
Total number of agency employees expected to be furloughed under the plan (unduplicated count):	32
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:	27
Necessary to perform activities expressly authorized by law:	1
Necessary to perform activities necessarily implied by law:	6
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 funded through mandatory appropriations
- Some engagement with insular partners, and international partners (for those international activities that do not rely upon furloughed technical experts and which are supported by multi-year reimbursable funds from the Department of State and/or USAID, where both agencies are still open in country and providing oversight) American Samoa Justices operate their courts

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

- Management of existing financial assistance agreements funded through discretionary programs and issuance of new financial assistance agreements subject to annual appropriations process
- Coordination of the Department's Ocean, Great Lakes, and Coastal activities
- All non-emergency international travel
- International travel approvals and oversight
- Operations of the Department's passport office

- Insular travel that can be postponed or canceled without significant immediate impacts to mission delivery
- International technical assistance, and inter and intra-agency coordination on international programs and associated U.S. foreign policy, and staff support for senior officials on international matters

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

None

Long-Term Lapse

Extended Lapse Plan (over 5 days) 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:	60
Total number of agency employees expected to be furloughed under the plan (unduplicated count):	32
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:	27
Necessary to perform activities expressly authorized by law:	1
Necessary to perform activities necessarily implied by law:	6
Necessary to the discharge of the President’s constitutional duties and powers:	0
Necessary to protect life and property:	2

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

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, the presidentially appointed and Senate confirmed Assistant Secretary is excepted from furlough. The Deputy Assistant Secretary is furloughed. The Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary and Chief of Staff are furloughed. The Special Assistant and Chief of Staff positions are currently filled by employees on a non-reimbursable detail to AS-IIA and is not included in the FTE counts in the lapse plan tables. The Ocean, Great Lakes, and Coastal Program coordinator is furloughed.

For the Office of Insular Affairs, 4 employees will be designated as exempted to support ongoing administration of non-lapsing appropriations for mandatory commitments implied by law including the Compacts of Free Association. The 2 American Samoa Justices will also be exempted 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 30 Office of International Affairs employees 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 and International Affairs	Function needed to provide leadership and policy direction and to respond to exigencies
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