

Department of the Interior Employees

Questions and Answers for Back Pay During Lapse of Appropriations

January 28, 2019

Question 1: How soon can I expect to receive retroactive or back pay?

Answer: Processing retroactive pay is DOI's top priority. Timekeepers and supervisors will prioritize updating and certifying employees' time within the Time and Attendance System. The Interior Business Center (IBC) will process "off-cycle" payments early this week, with pay disbursed to employees no later than Thursday, January 31, 2019. Payments this week will include owed pay for both missed pay periods (*i.e.*, pay for December 23, 2018 through January 19, 2019) and will be made to employees in two distributions: One representing the first pay period and a second payment for the second pay period. Depending on your financial institutions direct deposit timeframes, the actual deposit dates may vary.

Question 2: Will I receive Leave and Earning Statements in *Employee Express* for the two missed pay periods (December 23, 2018 through January 19, 2019)?

Answer: No. Payment will go directly to your financial institution so you should regularly monitor your bank account. You will receive a Leave and Earning Statement (LES) for PP03, which will reconcile any remaining deductions or allotments that were omitted.

Question 3: I was supposed to work on December 22, 2018 (the day after the partial government shutdown began). When will I get back pay for that day?

Answer: For employees who were regularly scheduled to work on Saturday, December 22, 2018, and who were furloughed or excepted, back pay for December 22, 2018, will be processed during the PP03 payroll processing cycle (ending February 2, 2019) based on timecard amendments.

Question 4: Will my back pay received for the two missed pay periods (December 23, 2018 through January 19, 2019) be the same amount as my normal paycheck?

Answer: No, but it should be close. Our top priority is getting you paid as quickly as possible. In order to accomplish this, employees will receive "interim or off-cycle payments." "Interim or Off Cycle" payments are calculated slightly differently than normal payroll payments. You can expect to receive payment for the number of hours that you normally would have worked, minus deductions for taxes, retirement, health benefits, etc. There will be additional pay corrections processed in the following pay periods to ensure your back pay is accurate.

Question 5: When can I expect my full and reconciled back pay payment?

Answer: We are currently in the midst of PP03. If all timecard amendments are inputted timely for the PP03 processing, your payment will include your regular pay for non-lapsed days within PP03, plus any remaining back pay that is due to you for the lapse period that falls in this

current pay period (1/20/2019 through 1/25/2019). The official pay day for PP03 is Tuesday, February 12, 2019, although you may see your direct deposit as early as Friday, February 8, 2019, depending on your financial institution.

Question 6: Will the back pay affect my 2018 wages for tax purposes (e.g., W-2)?

Answer: No. Wages are calculated based on when an employees is paid, not when the wages are earned. You will be paid in calendar year/tax year 2019 (as you would have were we not lapsed) and back pay will be included in your 2019 taxable wages. You can access your 2018 W-2 in www.employeeexpress.gov now.

Question 7: I've heard that lump-sum payments are taxed at a different (higher) rate. Will larger-than-normal taxes be deducted from the back pay, off-cycle payments that I receive?

Answer: The initial off-cycle payments during the week of January 28, 2019, will be calculated using an estimated tax rate, which adjusts for the lump sum nature of the payment. Amendments made in your next regular paycheck (PP03) will ensure that regular tax withholding rates have been calculated for a final corrected back pay.

Question 8: Why was my court-ordered payment (or other allotments, such as union dues) not taken out of the back pay?

Answer: Prior pay period recomputations include only required deductions listed below.

- a. Retirement (CSRS and FERS)
- b. Social Security (OASDI) Tax
- c. Medicare Tax
- d. Federal Income Tax
- e. Basic Health Insurance Premium (FEHB)
- f. Basic Life Insure (FEGLI)
- g. State Income Tax
- h. Local Income Tax
- i. Thrift Savings Plan (TSP)
 - (1) Basic Contributions
 - (2) Catch-up Contributions
- j. Roth Savings Plan
 - (1) Basic Contributions
 - (2) Catch-up Contributions

For other deductions, it depends on the type of deduction as to how retroactive payments will be made. In general, voluntary allotments such as Combined Federal Campaign and allotments to financial institutions will not be deducted from back pay. Another example is court-ordered payments, which may have required employees to continue to make payments via personal checks while in non-pay status. As more information becomes available, we will continue to share it.

If you have specific questions about other allotments, please contact the Customer Support Center at 888-367-1622 or via email at Payroll_Helpdesk@ios.doi.gov.

For additional information that is applicable to all agencies, please refer to the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) Fact Sheet at: <https://chcoc.gov/content/fact-sheet-pay-and-benefits-information-employees-affected-lapse-appropriations>

We will also provide updates on DOI's internal google webpage for employees, supervisors and HR professionals: [Human Capital Crossroads](#)

Moving forward, we will issue additional Q&As as more information comes in from OPM and/or IBC. Thank you again for your dedication and patience. Welcome back!