



Natural Resources Conservation Service  
1400 Independence Avenue SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250

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**Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)**  
**Contingency Plan for Agency Shutdown Procedures**  
April 7, 2011

This plan assumes some Agency activities will continue which are necessary to protect life and property, necessary to begin phase down of other activities, and are “excepted” from shutdown procedures, such as:

1. Engineering and construction inspection services, as well as auditing and scheduling of payments for contracts and grants are excepted activities to the extent carryover funds allow.
2. Maintain federally owned facilities, buildings, equipment, and other physical property, including plant, tree, and shrub stock at Plant Materials Centers funded and operated by NRCS.
3. Excepted positions and support of excepted personnel for shutdown activities (as needed).

This plan assumes that all funding for continuing operations beginning on the first day of an appropriations hiatus would come from the following sources:

1. Remaining discretionary prior year unobligated available balances (carryover), within authorized apportionment, unless the debt ceiling is reached.
2. Remaining permanent appropriation balances including prior year unobligated balances (carryover) and current year collections within authorized apportionment unless debt ceiling is reached.

We estimate that it will take the Agency 5 days to complete orderly shutdown procedures.

The following plan addresses activities not excluded from shutdown procedures:

Prior to Day 1, the following activities need to be completed:

The Chief, Deputy Chief for Management, State Conservationists and other personnel will identify those functions which need to be performed and are associated with an orderly interruption of normal activities - such functions may include, but are not limited to:

- Identify measures to secure records, personal property, real property, and facilities that will be maintained and protected until appropriate disposition is accomplished.
- Identify all potential meetings, hearings and other previously arranged Agency business that may need to be cancelled.
- Identify all excepted employees and ensure employees have been identified consistently and fairly in compliance with applicable personnel regulations.
- Identify employees whose presence at work will be required to perform functions associated with the orderly shutdown of program activities - this includes employee name, title and function the employee will perform for shutdown.
- Identifying what information technology systems support is needed to maintain services and information technology infrastructure.
- Identifying all employees in travel status.
- Identifying what instructions and procedures Human Resources Management will provide to employees for the shutdown period.
- Identifying appropriate Department contacts for communications purposes and orderly shutdown of the Agency.
- Initiating bargaining over furlough related topics.



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- Notify employees who have been determined to be in excepted status.

First Half of Day 1 (first day funds are not available):

All employees are directed to check-in with their supervisors to report status on current activities, receive any additional assignments, or other pertinent information for an orderly shutdown. For those employees teleworking, “check-in” with supervisors may be done via telephone. Managers and supervisors will coordinate the following activities intended to shutdown Agency operations:

- Communicate shutdown instructions and procedures to all employees.
- Notify employees of furlough status who have not been determined to be in excepted status.
- Contact employees on leave and communicate their leave has been cancelled - they will not be eligible to charge time during a shutdown period to annual, sick or credit leave.
- Contact employees in travel status and direct them to return to duty station.
- Ensure all employees to be released complete time and attendance entries and submit to approving official.
- Delay all employee transfers of station.
- Ensure all records, personal property, and real property are secured.
- Cancel all meetings, hearings and previously arranged NRCS business.

The Deputy Chief for Management will be responsible for:

- Providing instructions and procedures to managers and supervisors for all employees during the shutdown period. This will include provisions for call back of employees in the event it is determined they are needed to complete shutdown procedures.
- Providing specific instructions for employees to complete time and attendance report.
- Ensuring individual furlough notices will be prepared, reviewed and approved.
- Ensuring all employees time and attendance reports are processed by the National Finance Center.
- Notifying employee Unions at all organizational levels about the shutdown process.
- Delaying hiring of new employees.
- Coordinating with Contracting Officers and Grant Specialists to notify all contractors and cooperators of work suspension.
- Daily communications with the Department on the status of shutdown procedures.
- Daily communications with excepted employees (as needed).

Second Half of Day 1:

Managers and supervisors will coordinate the following activities intended to shutdown Agency operations:

- Document the status of cases and projects so they can be resumed, transferred, or otherwise appropriately handled when funding situation for NRCS is determined.
- Prepare files for permanent storage, transfer to related Agencies, or other disposition.
- Complete identification of employees whose presence at work will be required to perform functions associated with the orderly shutdown of activities. This includes:
  - Name of each employee required to shut down operations
  - Title of each employee identified
  - The specific functions each employee will perform to support shutdown
- Contracting Officers will continue contact with all contractors and vendors to let them know work is suspended.



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Day 2:

- Only employees who were previously identified as required to perform functions necessary for orderly shutdown will report for work.
- Employees leading, directing and performing work identified as “excepted” will continue to work.
- Employees will be directed to perform only those activities as enumerated earlier.
- As each shutdown function is completed, the State Conservationist must notify the Deputy Chief for Management and the Director of Human Resources Management Division of completion and identify those employees who were responsible for the task.
- Each employee whose shutdown function is completed will be furloughed immediately and formally notified by their supervisor or appropriate line officer if supervisor is not available.
- There will be daily communications by the Deputy Chief for Management on the status of the shutdown procedures with the Department contacts previously identified.

Day 3 and Until Completion of Shutdown Procedures:

- Only employees who were previously identified as required to perform functions necessary for orderly shutdown of program activities will report for work.
- Employees leading, directing and performing work identified as “excepted” from shutdown procedures will continue to work.
- Employees will be directed to perform only those activities as enumerated earlier.
- Employees completing shutdown functions, continue tasks as outlined under Day 2 for each succeeding day until the Deputy Chief for Management determines the shutdown is complete.
- The Deputy Chief for Management will have daily communications with the Department on the status of shutdown procedures.