

US Forest Service

Contingency Plan for Agency Close Down Procedures

December 14, 2011

This plan assumes that Agency activities will continue to the extent we are able to fund using multi-year (carryover) funding. As these funds near exhaustion, this plan will be implemented. Some Agency activities will continue that are essential to protect life and property and therefore are excepted from close down procedures, such as:

1. Fire Suppression including fire fighters and all necessary equipment costs to protect life and property.
2. Law Enforcement personnel and all necessary equipment costs to protect life and property.
3. Emergency and Natural Disasters Response (i.e., floods)
4. Protection of Federal lands, buildings, waterways, equipment and other property and investments owned by the United States when the suspension of such activities would cause an imminent threat to human life and property. This includes nurseries, insectaries, tree seed labs, and the minimum level of staffing to administer permits and contracts needed for protection of National Forest lands.
5. All contracts in support of cyber security and infrastructure operations to support key positions and essential personnel.
6. Protection of Research studies where lack of continuation measurements or maintenance would destroy or endanger validity of research findings. Includes green houses, growth chambers, etc.
7. Job Corps operations unless directed otherwise by Department of Labor.
8. Collection and Payment activities for previous legal obligations.
9. Excepted positions and support of excepted personnel as needed for close down procedures (see attachment template)
10. Emergency and Defense Preparedness

This plan also addresses those employees that are necessary to lead and direct the continuation of activities identified as excepted from close down procedures.

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 balances (carryover), within authorized apportionment.
2. Remaining permanent appropriations balances including prior year unobligated balances (carryover) and current year collections within authorized apportionment.

We have identified the estimated employment by category in the attached document entitled appendix template.

We estimate that it will take the agency 7 days to complete orderly close down procedures.

The following plan addresses procedures for activities not excluded from close down procedures:

Prior to Day 1, the following actions will be completed:

The Chief, Deputy Chiefs, Regional Foresters, Station and Area Directors and applicable Directors listed below will identify those functions that need to be performed that are solely associated with an orderly interruption of normal activities. Such functions may include but are not limited to:

- Identifying measures to secure records, personal property, real property, and facilities that will be maintained and protected until appropriate disposition is accomplished.
- Drafting communication strategy for communicating with Agency employees.
- Drafting communication strategy for making contacts outside the Agency that is necessary to communicate our status.
- Identify all potential meetings, hearings and other previously arranged Agency business that may need to be cancelled.
- Identify all excepted employees who will be performing work under the excepted activities identified on page 1. Include employee name, title and function the employee will perform.
- Identify what Chief Information Officer systems support is needed to maintain essential services and information technology infrastructure.
- Identify all employees in International travel status.
- Identify what instructions and procedures Human Resources Management will provide to employees for the close down period.
- Identify appropriate Department contacts for communications purposes and orderly close down of the agency.
- Initiate bargaining over furlough related topics.
- Develop and issue field guidance for orderly shutdown of Forest Service activities.
- Coordinate shutdown activities with other federal land grant agencies through Department contacts.

First half of Day 1 (First Day funds are not available):

All employees will be directed to report to their supervisors to receive assignments of duties or other pertinent information for an orderly closedown. For those employees teleworking or in travel status, "report" may be done by telephone.

Managers and supervisors will coordinate the following activities intended to terminate Agency's operations:

- Communicate close down instructions and procedures to all employees.
- Distribute furlough notices at headquarters and all field units to all employees who have not been determined to be necessary for the Agency's termination activities
- Contact any employees on leave and communicate that their leave is cancelled.
- Contact any employee in travel status and direct them to return to their duty station, unless they are performing excepted activities while in travel status.

- Ensure all employees to be released complete timesheet entry and submit to approving official.
- Delay any employee transfer of station.
- Ensure all records; personal property and real property are secured.
- Cancel all meetings, hearings and previously arranged Forest Service business.
- Validate existing communication strategy and employee contact information for future communication need.

The Director of Human Resource Management will be responsible for:

- Providing instructions and procedures to managers and supervisors for all employees during the close down period. This will include provisions for call back of employees in the event it is determined they are needed to complete close down procedures.
- Providing specific instructions for employees to complete final time and attendance report.
- Ensuring individual furlough notices will be prepared, reviewed and approved.
- Ensure all employees timesheets are processed by the National Finance Center.
- Delay hiring of new employees.

The Director of Acquisition Management will be responsible for:

- Coordinating with all contracting officers and contracting officer technical representatives to notify all contractors and vendors that work is suspended unless contracts are in support of the excepted functions identified on page 1. Also see NFS guidance attached for further specific instructions.
- Identify all contracts necessary to support the excepted activities identified on page 1.

Second half of Day 1:

Managers and supervisors will coordinate the following activities intended to terminate Agency's operations:

- Document the status of cases and projects so that they can be resumed, transferred, or otherwise appropriately handled when the Forest Service's ultimate funding situation 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 cessation of program activities. This includes:
 - Name of each employee required to continue closedown operations.
 - Title of each employee identified, and
 - The termination function that each identified employee is to perform.
- A finalized listing will be submitted through the Regional Forester, Station Director, Area Director or Washington Office Deputy Chiefs to Deputy Chief for Business Operations no later than the end of Day 2.
- Contracting Officers and contracting officer technical representatives will continue to contact all contractors and vendors to let them know work is suspended.

Day 2:

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 close down procedures on page 1, will continue to work

Employees will be directed to perform only those activities as enumerated earlier.

As each shutdown function is completed, the Line Officer must notify the Line Officer at the next highest level or, at headquarters, the respective Deputy Chief, through channels, 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 the supervisor is not available.

There will be daily communications by the Chief’s Office on the status of the close down procedures with the Department contact and the field leadership. Agency leadership will communicate regularly with OSEC and NRE regarding Forest Service plans and status.

Day 3 and until completion of close down 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 close down procedures on page 1, will continue to work.

Employees will be directed to perform only those activities as enumerated earlier.

Employees completing close down functions, continue tasks as outlined under Day 2 for each succeeding day until the Chief determines the shutdown is complete.

There will be daily communications by the Chief’s Office on the status of the close down procedures with the Department contact and the field leadership. Agency leadership will communicate regularly with OSEC and NRE regarding Forest Service plans and status.