

Government Slowdown

April 6, 2011

Federal Activities Continuing During a Funding Gap Period

Although many federal government activities cease during a government “shutdown” (or “slowdown,” as some have called it), many others continue without interruption. Those that continue do so under one of three exemptions to the Antideficiency Act: to provide for national security, to provide for benefit payments and the fulfillment of contract obligations, and to conduct essential activities to protect life and property. Determinations of which activities are exempt are made by each government agency in cooperation with the Office of Management and Budget.

Examples of activities continuing during a government slowdown:

- ❖ Members of the military remain on posts worldwide to defend American interests.
- ❖ Border and coastal protection personnel report to keep the nation’s borders secure.
- ❖ Federal security officers continue to protect federal property and personnel.
- ❖ Congress continues to meet in session and fulfills constitutional duties.
- ❖ The Judicial Branch continues to hear cases and issue rulings.
- ❖ The FBI and Department of Justice continue to pursue criminal investigations.
- ❖ The Treasury Department collects taxes and borrows necessary funds.
- ❖ The Federal Reserve continues to support the money and banking system.
- ❖ The Department of State conducts affairs with our allies and other foreign nations.
- ❖ The CIA, NSA, and related intelligence agencies continue to gather intelligence.
- ❖ Social Security, Medicare, and other mandatory benefit payments continue.
- ❖ Veterans’ hospitals maintain care of inpatients and provide emergency care.
- ❖ The air traffic control system remains in operation.
- ❖ Federal prisons remain guarded, and prisoners are fed.
- ❖ Federal emergency personnel respond to natural disasters.
- ❖ Electrical power is produced and the power grid is maintained.
- ❖ Any activity which has been funded or receives its funding outside of the appropriation process continues without interruption.

The federal government is obligated to pay employees required to work to support those activities during a shutdown, but will not issue checks for that pay until appropriations are provided for the agencies affected.

Primarily adapted from the CRS Report, [Shutdown of the Federal Government](#).

See also: Heritage Foundation, [Government Shutdown 101](#)