

Commandant's message on possible government shutdown

Teammates:

As I am sure you are tracking in the news, there is uncertainty about the outcome of Congressional actions regarding the federal budget. You are also no doubt aware of the possibility that Congress may not complete a full fiscal year 2014 appropriation of funds – or even a continuing resolution -- prior to October 1st. For those of you who know me, you know that I am an “optimistic and realistic idealist” – and the optimistic idealist in me notes there is time for Congress to prevent a lapse, but the realistic aspects of command mean I must prepare our outfit for all possibilities, to include a government shutdown at midnight Monday night (September 30th).

That is why today we are notifying our civilian employees and all leaders, military and civilian, of their individual and organizational status during a potential government shutdown to give as much clarity as possible to each individual should this happen. Bottom line, we are driven to a minimum mission-essential manning and a minimum-essential activity posture to limit spending any monies. Here is what that means to you: my uniformed military and contract personnel should expect to continue to work; my US Government Civilians will each be notified today (Friday, September 27th) of their potential status as “excepted” or “non-excepted.” These terms are important: “excepted” means your job is deemed mission essential at this time, under these conditions, to continuing select operations that have also been deemed “excepted;” “non-excepted” simply means at this point in time, under these particular conditions, you are not part of an “excepted activity.” As you can also imagine, activities such as travel, some specific medical, dental and personnel support activities will be curtailed or limited as we go to a budget-saving, minimum-manning status.

While no decision has been made and this is only for planning, should a government shut-down come to pass, non-excepted employees would receive a formal furlough notice on Tuesday, October 1st. Please note this is not like the last furlough we endured: the previous furlough meant no work and no pay; this type of furlough imposed during a government shutdown will result in a directive to not come to work, but retroactive pay could be appropriated by Congress after the fact (but no guarantees).

This sort of thing is driven by law. In such a lapse of appropriations, the Department of Defense can only conduct activities designed to protect safety of life and property and any other specific military operations approved by the Secretary of Defense. For us, the good news is that execution of

professional military education at the US Army War College is considered an “excepted activity.” We will continue to go to school and conduct mission essential leader development activities. Medical care, dental care, and support services on Carlisle Barracks will continue, although some with limited manning. So, all the great people of this region of the Commonwealth who count on us for service and support should plan for closures or limited activity among some of our key services. We will post details for these adjustments by all electronic means if this comes to pass.

I repeat for emphasis and understanding: we are not yet at the point of government shutdown but we are preparing for one. Ask your chain of command and supervisors any questions you might have on this – I will try to answer them as quickly as possible. I find myself once again asking my outstanding team for their patience and perseverance as we weather this period of uncertainty together. With what you have been through this summer, I remain deeply appreciative of your sense of duty and your professionalism – I am proud to serve with each of you.

Tony Cucolo

Major General, US Army

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