



Secretary Brooke L. Rollins

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250**

SECRETARY'S MEMORANDUM 1078-008

April 22, 2025

**EXEMPTION OF NATIONAL SECURITY AND PUBLIC SAFETY POSITIONS FROM
THE FEDERAL CIVILIAN HIRING FREEZE**

1. PURPOSE

This Secretary Memorandum (Memo) establishes categorical exemptions from the Federal civilian hiring freeze for positions in job series related to national security and public safety to ensure sufficient personnel are available to carry out those functions that are critical to the safety and security of the American people, our National Forests, the inspection and safety of the Nation's agriculture, and food supply system. *Food Security is National Security.*

2. AUTHORITY

This Memo is issued under the authority of P.L.103-358 Title II (7 USC 6901); Executive Order 14210, *Implementing the President's "Department of Government Efficiency" Workforce Optimization Initiative* (February 11, 2025); Presidential Memoranda of April 17, 2025; and other relevant statutes.

3. BACKGROUND

On January 20, 2025, President Trump ordered a freeze on Federal civilian hiring, while authorizing the Director of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to grant exemptions from this freeze where necessary. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and OPM subsequently issued guidance on January 20, 2025, that implemented the freeze and identified mandatory exemptions for positions related to national security and public safety. Such exemptions recognize these positions' vital importance to the safety and security of the American people and will critically assist the Department of Agriculture (Department) in fulfilling its national security and public safety responsibilities across the Nation.

These responsibilities are predominantly carried out by the Department's front-line workforce to include over 11,000 firefighters and incident support personnel. In addition, there are thousands of food and consumer safety inspectors, employees performing response operations to combat Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI), New World Screwworm, and other pest and disease research and eradication efforts that protect Americans and our food supply on a daily basis.

Wildland fire management represents one of the Department's most visible and resource-intensive public safety functions, with significant implications for communities nationwide. In 2024, the Department employed over 11,000 wildland fire personnel to protect communities, critical infrastructure, and local economies from wildfires that burned more than 8.9 million acres across the United States. The firefighting capabilities include professionals in aviation programs, which provides critical aircraft resources, pilot training, and technical expertise. These operations implement fuel treatments, respond to active fires, and rehabilitate damaged lands.

The Department's law enforcement officers, as well as the Department's homeland security, intelligence, and emergency management personnel, likewise help ensure operational readiness and rapid response capacity during incidents of national significance and coordinate response efforts with the Federal Interagency and the White House National Security Council.

4. EXEMPT NATIONAL SECURITY AND PUBLIC SAFETY POSITIONS

To ensure the Department has sufficient personnel in critical national security and public safety positions, the job series identified in the attachment to this Memo are hereby exempted from the hiring freeze, enabling the Department to fulfill its national security and public safety obligations without interruption. In addition, those positions funded by user fees or other than appropriated funding will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

5. IMPLEMENTATION

- a. **Mission Area and Office of the Secretary (OSEC) Leadership:** Mission Area and OSEC leadership with responsibility for national security and public safety programs carried out by personnel in the exempt series are directed to immediately take all available steps to ensure the appropriate identification and prompt hiring of necessary personnel.
- b. **Assistant Secretary for Administration (ASA):** The Office of the ASA is directed to take all necessary steps to support hiring actions for the relevant positions, coordinating as necessary with OPM and OMB.

6. EFFECT OF THE MEMORANDUM

This Memo is intended to improve the internal management of the Department. Additionally, this Memo and any resulting reports or recommendations are not intended to, and do not create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable by law or equity by a party against the United States, its Departments, Agencies, Instrumentalities, or entities, its officers or employees, or any other person. To the extent there is any inconsistency between the provisions of this Secretarial Order and any Federal laws or regulations, the laws or regulations will supersede.

7. EXPIRATION DATE

This Memo is effective immediately and will remain in effect until it is amended, superseded, or revoked, whichever occurs first.

/s/ Brooke L. Rollins
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture

ATTACHMENT: HIRING EXEMPTIONS

Sub-Category of Exemption	Job Series	Position Title
National Security/Law Enforcement/Investigation	1801	Inspection, Investigation, Enforcement and Compliance (All Titles)
National Security/Law Enforcement/Investigation	1810	Investigator/Inspector
National Security/Law Enforcement/Investigation	1811	Criminal Investigator, Supervisory Criminal Investigator
National Security/Law Enforcement/Investigation	0089	Emergency Management (All Titles)
National Security/Law Enforcement/Investigation	0080	Security Specialist
National Security/Law Enforcement/Investigation	0132	Intelligence Analyst
National Security/Law Enforcement/Investigation	2210	IT Specialist (Cybersecurity)
Public Safety and Inspection (Multiple Agencies)	0018	Safety and Occupational Health Specialist
Public Safety and Inspection (Multiple Agencies)	0690	Industrial Hygiene and Safety
Public Safety and Inspection (Multiple Agencies)	0701	Veterinarian (All Titles)
Public Safety and Inspection (Multiple Agencies)	1102	Contract Specialists (Food and Emergency Response)
Public Safety and Inspection (Multiple Agencies)	1301	Physical Scientist
Public Safety and Inspection (AMS)	1147	Agriculture Commodity Series
Public Safety and Inspection (AMS)	1850	Warehouse Examiners
Public Safety and Inspection (FSIS)	1862	Consumer Safety Inspector
Public Safety and Inspection (FSIS)	1863	Food Safety Inspector

Public Safety and Inspection (APHIS)	0028	Environmental Protection Specialist
Public Safety and Inspection (APHIS)	0150	Geographic Information Specialist
Public Safety and Inspection (APHIS)	0301	Document/Permit Examiner, Import and Export
Public Safety and Inspection (APHIS)	0401	Natural Resources Mgmt & Biological Sciences (Public Safety/Inspection Function Positions Only)
Public Safety and Inspection (APHIS)	0404	Biological Science Technician (Public Safety/Inspection Positions Only)
Public Safety and Inspection (APHIS)	0410	Zoologist
Public Safety and Inspection (APHIS)	0414	Entomologist
Public Safety and Inspection (APHIS)	0421	Plant Protection & Health (All Titles)
Public Safety and Inspection (APHIS)	0430	Botanist
Public Safety and Inspection (APHIS)	0434	Plant Pathologist
Public Safety and Inspection (APHIS)	0486	Wildlife Biologist
Public Safety and Inspection (APHIS)	0704	Animal Health Technician (All Titles)
Public Safety and Inspection (APHIS)	1712	Training Specialist (Agriculture Inspections and Canine Trainers)
Public Safety and Inspection (APHIS)	3511	Laboratory Worker
Public Safety and Inspection (APHIS)	5001	Tree Climber
Public Safety and Inspection (APHIS)	5031	Insects Production Worker
Public Safety and Inspection (APHIS)	5048	Animal Caretaker
Aviation (Public Safety)	1825	Aviation Safety Inspector - Airworthiness and Avionics
Aviation (Public Safety)	2101	Aviation Officer (All Titles)
Aviation (Public Safety)	2181	Aircraft Operations (All Titles)
Aviation (Public Safety)	8852	Aircraft Mechanic
Aviation (Public Safety)	1670	Equipment Specialist, Aircraft and Fire
Wildland Fire	0301	Fire Chemicals Program Manager
Wildland Fire	0301	Fire Training Specialist

Wildland Fire	0301	All Firefighter Retirement Covered Positions in this Series
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Wildland Fire	0456	Wildland Firefighter
Wildland Fire	0462	Wildland Firefighter, Forestry Technician (All Firefighter Retirement Covered Positions)
Wildland Fire	5716	Fire Engineering Equipment Operator
Wildland Fire Critical Support Position	0301	Incident Business Management Specialist
Wildland Fire Critical Support Position	0856	Electronics Technicians
Wildland Fire Critical Support Position	2151	Dispatcher
Wildland Fire Critical Support Position	5001	Animal Packer
Wildland Fire Critical Support Position	7002	Packer
Fire Support, Emergencies and Animal Health	3502	Laborer
Fire Support, Emergencies and Animal Health	2003	Supply Management Specialist