



Risk Management Agency

RISK MANAGEMENT AGENCY (RMA) SHUTDOWN CONTINGENCY PLAN

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Background

The Risk Management Agency (RMA) is part of the Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC) Mission Area in the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). RMA manages the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation and the Federal crop insurance program through a partnership with private industry Approved Insurance Providers (AIPs). This Shutdown Contingency Plan (Shutdown Plan) outlines the latest shutdown planning and activities for this organization. RMA is serviced by the Farm Service Agency (FSA) for administrative activities including Human Resources, Procurement, Security, and Facilities. They have various responsibilities under this plan.

Summary of Operations during Lapse of Appropriations

RMA will not immediately or completely shut down upon appropriations lapse.

RMA is funded partially through non-discretionary funding that falls under the exception criteria to a shutdown if funding bills are not passed. As a result, RMA will continue essential operations utilizing the \$9 million in funding targeted to support Program and Financial Integrity in a period where there is not an appropriated funding bill. RMA will fund a partial staff presence of approximately 15 exempted employees for an estimated 6-8 hours per day at an estimated weekly cost of \$46,400. These exempted employees are essential to ensure the following functions: 1) continued escrow funding; 2) accurate processing of AIP financial operations; 3) continued program payments; and 4) maintaining the Federal crop insurance price support function.

- *Deputy Administrator for Compliance/Acting Administrator (\$3,400 estimated weekly cost)*
- *Deputy Administrator for Insurance Services (\$3,400 estimated weekly cost)*
- *Deputy Administrator for Product Management (\$3,400 estimated weekly cost)*
- *Senior Actuary (\$3,400 estimated weekly cost)*
- *Product Analysis and Accounting Division Director and 6 staff members – systems must be up and running; with four contractors (\$24,000 estimated weekly cost)*
- *Actuarial and Product Design Division Director and 3 staff members (\$8,800 estimated weekly cost)*

If RMA exhausts non-discretionary funding, we will commence agency-wide shutdown with minimal on call staffing as described below. At that time, RMA will not maintain any routine daily activities until an appropriations bill is passed. RMA will not maintain any staff to pay contractual obligations or perform regulatory functions.

Estimate of Time Needed to Complete Shutdown Activities

RMA will need approximately ½ day to complete all shutdown activities.

Analysis of Employees On Board and Retained

RMA employs approximately 461 employees. No employees will be retained in any of the approved employment categories.

- Category I – Military, Law Enforcement or Directly Provide Health Services

- Category II – Compensation Financed by Resources Other than Annual Appropriations
- Category III - Necessary to protect life and property, are Authorized by Law, Implied by Law, or have Constitutional Duties and Powers

Activities to Be Continued

There will be no operational activities continued. There will be no RMA employees reporting to work, except as described below.

Unforeseen issues may arise during any shutdown period that impacts the protection of Federal property, including the government's financial interests and risks associated with them. In order to adequately address these situations and minimize the impacts to the government, they will be coordinated by the following RMA employees who will periodically check email and voicemail up to two hours a day, or as necessary, and address any unforeseen or emerging issues appropriately:

- Administrator;
- Associate Administrator(s);
- Deputy Administrator, Product Management;
- Deputy Administrator, Insurance Services;
- Deputy Administrator, Compliance;
- Chief Information Officer; and
- Chief Financial Officer.

In addition, other mission critical employees, as authorized by the RMA Executive Management Team (EMT) listed above, will monitor email and voicemail in the event that unforeseen issues arise necessitating consultation. The RMA EMT will be responsible for implementing and adjusting the plan to respond to the length of the lapse in appropriations and changes in external circumstances.

Preparation for Activities to be Continued during Shutdown

If any unplanned activities are determined by the Administrator to be necessary in the midst of a shutdown, appropriate personnel would be recalled to work. The supervisors of those persons will develop a detailed list of who will be working and what tasks they will be performing and provide those to FSA Human Resources contacts. Any recall effort should include appropriate information technology, administrative, finance, contracting, and human resources personnel. At minimum, staff will be available to track time and complete necessary personnel actions.

The recall of employees may be different depending on the time of year that shutdown occurs and the length of the shutdown (short versus long term). For example, if contract change dates are set to expire or price elections are required to be set during the shutdown period, specific employees will be contacted to return to work. Other emergency situations may require activation of Continuity of Operations team members and supporting staff to evaluate and manage emergency response. If there is an emergency situation which would require the

unplanned recall of employees to work, supervisors will instruct employees to carry out authorized activities only.

When either unforeseen circumstances or an emergency dictates that employees would return to duty, they would no longer be furloughed and personnel actions should be processed to put the employees in a work status. Employees would be returned to furlough status when it is determined that they are no longer needed and would remain in that status until the shutdown is discontinued.

Requirements for potential return to work should be evaluated just prior to shutdown, and during shutdown, to ensure adequate preparations are made.

Communications

RMA communications plans include notifications to:

- Employees
- Unions
- Cooperative Agreement Partners
- Information Technology Contractors
- Other Contractors
- Approved Insurance Providers (AIPs)
- Web Page Users
- General Public

A shutdown checklist for managers to instruct them on what activities should take place the first day of a shutdown is included. The list includes completing personnel responsibilities and closing up the office. These activities should be completed as soon as possible. In rare cases, it may take up to two days to complete the necessary shutdown tasks. Normally, it will take one work day or less. In the event that activities are taking more than one day, supervisors should obtain permission from the second-level supervisor to continue shutdown activities.

Re-start instructions will be included in shutdown communications.

Shutdown Implementation Procedures

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

Supervisors Duties in Advance of Shutdown

- Become familiar with shutdown functions including but not limited to:
 - Making necessary contacts outside the Agency to communicate status;
 - Cancelling meetings, hearings and other previously arranged Agency business;
 - Issuing notices to headquarters and field offices regarding termination of activities;
 - Protecting confidential information;
 - Documenting the status of projects so they can be resumed or otherwise appropriately handled when the shutdown ends ;

- Inventory and prepare all records, personal property, real property and facilities to maintain and protect them; and
 - Performing requisite administrative functions such as processing payroll for that period until the expiration of funds, and taking measures necessary to ensure that employees are accorded all due personnel rights.
- Identify functions and/or employees that may later become essential on a one-time or intermittent basis (e.g., for emergencies or in support of another agency's allowable activities).
- Develop procedures required for orderly cessation of activities, including the following tasks:
 - Measures needed for brief suspension of activities; and
 - Comprehensive steps required for lengthy shutdown.
- Obtain clearance for shutdown functions expected to require more than one workday to complete.
- Identify employees whose presence at work will be required to perform functions associated with the orderly cessation of program activities. This includes employee name, title and function the employee will perform.
- Identify the employees required to perform the functions that will continue and those who are necessary for an orderly shutdown. Decisions will be based on
 - The need to limit the number of employees to the minimum necessary to achieve orderly shutdown,
 - The need for both professional and support services, and
 - Consideration of the individuals who are closest to the matters being terminated.
- Identify what Chief Information Officer systems support is needed to maintain essential services and information technology infrastructure.
- Acquaint their employees with procedures for both short-term and long-term shutdown and assign potential shutdown tasks.
- Determine what contracts would continue and to what extent they would be active. Also, that information would be in the communications to the contractor at the earliest possible time.
- Ensure that they have an accurate employee contact list and phone tree to include personal phone numbers, addresses and e-mail addresses.

FSA HR Duties in Advance of Shutdown

FSA HR will prepare a memo to employees advising them of potential furlough and providing answers to frequently asked questions. In addition, HRD will provide a staff plan of all RMA personnel to ensure that all employees receive proper notification.

Budget Office Duties in Advance of Shutdown

Budget Office will prepare

- Estimates of funding for staff needed to continue non-terminating activities,
- Updated information on the impact of the shutdown, and
- Other information requested by USDA, Office of Budget and Program Analysis (OBPA).

External Affairs Duties in Advance of Shutdown

External Affairs will prepare external communications to Stakeholders and process through the Department's Office of Communications and RMA's external communications clearance process.

Activities during Days Before Anticipated Shutdown

The Administrator will issue a memo to employees and/or forward a Department memo, if available, reporting on the status of funding.

Supervisors will plan travel so that employees return to the duty station by midnight the day that funding authorization will expire.

Communications Plans will be activated to include the following:

Notifications	Responsible Party	Time Table of Release	Trigger for Release
Union Representatives	FSA Human Resources	Draft plans are to be shared with Union representatives for comment as soon as practical.	Completion of a Draft Plan.
All Employees – Status updates from Executive Management Team (EMT)	Administrator or Designee	Beginning the week of anticipated shutdown. To continue throughout the week. More messages the closer we get to anticipated shutdown.	As soon as possible address what can be told to employees. Convey public information. Provide assurance of open dialogue.
Employees – Notification letter to discuss pay, benefits, unemployment, time and attendance procedures, telework, and return to work. This notice should be acknowledged via signature or electronic means. Supervisors – Verification of notification will be conducted and staff plan checklist will be completed.	FSA HR will develop a memorandum to be signed by the Administrator	Delivered to employees by the morning of day 1 of a shutdown.	Release upon notification by FSA HR.
	Supervisors will send their notification checklist to Associate Deputy Administrators.	Notification checklist compiled and returned to FSA HR by end of first day.	Send to FSA HR once verification has been done on employee notifications.

Notifications	Responsible Party	Time Table of Release	Trigger for Release
Employees – Questions and Answers sheet	FSA HR	Release along with letter to employees	Release upon notification by FSA HR.
Cooperative Agreement Partnerships	Program Managers for Partnerships Activity	Letter to be released one or two days before shutdown	Notification by Administrator
Contracts through outside Agencies including Information Technology Contracts	Contracting Officers' Technical Representative (COTR) will work with Contracting Officer (CO) to draft and release notification	Notification of plan is needed at least 4 days prior to shutdown	Notification by Administrator
Other Contracts through FSA Procurement	COTR will work with CO to draft notification	Notification to be released by CO one or two days before shutdown	Notification by FSA
Approved Insurance Providers	Insurance Services Reinsurance Services Division will prepare and clear with Office of General Counsel (OGC)	Notification to be released or phone call or letter (TBD) the morning of the actual shutdown	Notification by Administrator
Travel and Purchase Card Holders – Card holder do's and don'ts	Office of the Chief Financial Officer	One to two days before anticipated shutdown	Notification by Administrator
General Public (including producers and policy holders) – via Web with a standard USDA wide Notification of Agency Closure Also notify via e-mail to stakeholder mailing list a simple closure notice	External Affairs	The morning of the actual shutdown	Notification by Administrator

Employees will be responsible for securing their workspace and orderly shutdown activities as described below:

- The first day, all employees will report to work in person or via telework to receive assignments of duties or other information for an orderly shutdown. For those teleworking, report may be done via telephone or e-mail.
 - If reporting via telework, employees should have the ability remotely to create out of office messages in their e-mail and to have knowledge of how to change their voice mail remotely.

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

- Communicate close down instructions and procedures to all employees.
- Supervisors will inform their employees of the activities in which they should engage.
- Prepare to contact any employees on leave and communicate that their leave is cancelled.
- Ensure all records; personal property and real property are secured.
- Cancel all meetings, hearings and previously arranged business.
- Provide notification checklist to the Associate Deputy Administrator
- Validate existing communication strategy (call trees) and employee contact information for future communication need.
- Based on guidance from Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and Office of Budget and Program Analysis (OBPA), the Administrator will instruct managers to implement procedures for either short-term or long-term cessation of activities.
- FSA HR will draft a memo from the Administrator informing employees of immediate furlough upon completion of assigned shutdown activities and advising them of the appropriate source of information on when to return to work.
- Contracting officers will notify contractors of their operating status.
- As employees are about to be released, the employee should complete time sheet entry and submit to approving authority. Supervisors will approve timesheets.
- Each cost center manager will send recurring daily status reports through the management chain reporting on the status of the shutdown.
- For continuing activities, status reports will be provided to the Administrator on a regular basis for his review and information to provide to the Secretary.
- The Administrator will provide the Secretary reports on the status of the shutdown daily.

Shutdown Staffing and Checklist

Most RMA staff are to be sent home immediately upon reporting. Approximately, 45 supervisors and managers will remain to accomplish the orderly shutdown of offices while protecting the property and facilities of the agency. That activity will take place in the first half of the first shutdown day, but may take up to a full day, depending on time and attendance processing and other necessary shutdown activities. Additionally, supervisors and managers periodically need to monitor Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and OMB sources for startup instructions throughout the shutdown period.

Shutdown Checklist

Supervisors will Perform all Personnel Responsibilities Including

- **Instruct employees to fill out Time and Attendance**
- **Approve Time and Attendance**
- **Obtain signatures if necessary on shutdown memorandum**

All employees will turn off

- **Printers**
- **Faxes**
- **Computers**
- **Fans**
- **Any auxiliary heat or air conditioning**

Additionally, all employees will

- **secure all government records and safeguard Personally Identifiable Information (PII).**
- **submit Time and Attendance.**
- **cancel scheduled meetings.**
- **record a standard (USDA provided) message on office and cell phones.**
- **remove all food items and take trash to central collection locations to prevent insect and rodent infestations during shutdown.**

Field Office Supervisors will

- **adjust heating ventilation and air-conditioning to conserve energy but sufficient to prevent damage of property.**
- **post a standard (USDA provided) sign on external doors, indicating that the office is closed.**
- **contact the landlord on leased buildings or the security in government buildings and notify them of temporary vacancy of the building due to a government shutdown.**

All supervisors will turn off all lighting and close and lock all doors and turn on alarms, if installed.

Return to Work Procedures are addressed in the Start Up Plan.

All telework-ready employees should take government issued laptops; smart/cellphones and LincPass identification cards with them when they leave the building to facilitate authorized re-activation only.

Day 1 (First Day funds are not available):

There will be communication by the Administrator on the status of the shut down procedures with the Department contacts previously identified.

Employees and supervisors will complete the Shutdown Checklist above.

The FSA HR 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.
- 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 FSA Director of Acquisition Management will be responsible for:

- Coordinating FSA Contracting Officers and RMA contracting officer technical representatives, who will notify all contractors and vendors that work is suspended.

RMA supervisors and managers who manage contracts are responsible for the orderly notification of work suspension for contracts that they manage through Assisted Acquisition Services other than FSA.

Supervisors

- Contact any employee in travel status and direct them to return to their respective duty station immediately.

All in-process and future travel will be discontinued.

Subsequent Workdays of Shutdown

Only employees notified that they are authorized to work will perform assigned duties during a shutdown.

Employees will engage in approved activities only.

When all shutdown functions are completed, the supervisor will notify the Associate Deputy Administrator who will then report to the Deputy Administrator and Administrator. If functions are not completed by close of business (local time) on Day 1 of the shutdown, supervisors will submit a status report, as described above, that identifies functions completed; functions not completed, and estimated time of completion. All employees not performing authorized functions during the shutdown will be placed on furlough immediately during the first day of the shutdown.

The Administrator will provide the Under Secretary, or his/her designee, reports on the status of the shutdown.

Furloughed employees are **prohibited** from engaging in certain activities as listed below.

- Smartphone usage – Do not respond to any e-mails unless authorized.
- Laptop usage – Do not use the laptop until authorized.
- Office Phone messages – Do not check your office land line phone or your office cell phone for messages until authorized.
- Any work, of any kind, unless instructed directly from your supervisor as part of a recall or back to work activity.
- Furloughed employees are prohibited from performing official or unofficial duties and will not be compensated for any unauthorized work. Failure to follow these instructions may result in disciplinary action as described below.

Per the Government Accountability Office (GAO), Principles of Appropriations Law—Vol. II Chapter 6 page 36, the Anti-deficiency Act prohibits:

...Accepting voluntary services for the United States, or employing personal services in excess of that authorized by law, except in cases of emergency involving the safety of human life or the protection of property. 31 U.S.C. § 1342.

Penalties for violation of the act can include administrative discipline, fines, and imprisonment.

Plan Maintenance

This plan should be reviewed and documentation submitted to the OBPA prior to a potential shutdown to ensure a current understanding of available funding and other impacts on the plan.

Enclosures

Enclosures for this document will be provided as separate attachments and include a summary of employment, summary of agency programs and activities, and an agency start up plan.