

What a Government Shutdown Means for You

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A government shutdown occurs when Congress cannot agree on a budget. If a shutdown occurs, the government stops all "non-essential" services, while essential services, such as the armed forces, border protection, air traffic controllers, and police and fire departments will continue to operate.

The following is a list of frequently asked questions on how a government shutdown could impact you and your family.

What Services Will Be Stopped?

During the last shutdown in 1996, the government closed national parks, museums and monuments across the nation. The shutdown also delayed bankruptcy cases and passports were unavailable. Constituents should expect similar results this time around. Most non-essential government employees will be furloughed from their jobs. Federal employees that are furloughed will not receive pay. Additionally, federal contractors will not be paid during this time and will not be eligible for back pay.

Will I Still Get My Social Security Benefits?

Current law suggests that the Social Security Administration has the authority to continue mailing checks, as was the case during the last government shutdown in 1996. Though checks will continue to mail, a number of Social Security employees will be furloughed, which means new Social Security claims may not be processed.

Am I Still Going to Get My Tax Refund?

Unlike the shutdowns of the 1990's, this one is going to take place during the tax preparation and filing season, which may result in delayed tax refunds to a number of Americans.

Will Veteran Benefits Continue?

While VA hospitals will remain open, the last government shutdown saw many veterans' benefits cut or reduced.

Will Unemployment Benefits Be Affected?

Depending on the length of the shutdown, the federal funds that help states pay the costs of their unemployment programs could run out, which would require the state to step in and advance the money to keep their programs running. Otherwise, benefits would be reduced or stopped.

What Services Will Continue?

Services that are deemed essential for the safety of human life and the protection of property will be continued. This includes the armed forces, border patrol, police, fire fighting and federal workers who provide medical care on the job. The Postal Service and the Federal Reserve, which are both self-funded, will also continue to operate.

To find more information on the government shutdown, please visit this helpful guide, [Shutdown of the Federal Government: Causes, Processes, and Effects](#) compiled by the non-partisan Congressional Research Service.