

October 7, 2013

MEMORANDUM FOR: All FEMA Employees

FROM: W. Craig Fugate /s/  
Administrator

SUBJECT: POTUS Visit and Shutdown Update

We were honored today to have President Obama visit the FEMA Headquarters National Response Coordination Center to greet staff and personally thank the Agency. He said that FEMA remains prepared for disasters but our “job has been made more difficult” by the government shutdown. The President knows the hard work we do and expressed his personal appreciation for all of our efforts.

As we enter the second week of the lapse of appropriations, I join the President in thanking those of you who answered the call to respond to the threats of Tropical Storm Karen and dangerous severe weather in the Midwest over the weekend. Late last week, we recalled a small group of emergency managers to be in a position to support state, local and tribal governments and despite the government shutdown and furloughs, they came in and contributed to FEMA’s efforts to reduce the immediate threats to the safety of life and property presented by these weather events. Unfortunately, our appropriations remain lapsed and with the immediate emergency threat behind us, the law required the ‘re-furlough’ of most of those who responded. I appreciate this latest example of our employees’ flexibility and dedication to our mission.

Yesterday I had the solemn honor of attending the annual National Fallen Firefighters Memorial to remember 81 firefighters who lost their lives protecting others. The government shutdown forced the public ceremony off of our National Emergency Training Center campus. Mount St. Mary’s University was a gracious host and the Foundation did an excellent job overcoming the challenge of moving the event at the last minute. Even though we couldn’t hold the public event on campus, we were able to give the families of the fallen firefighters an opportunity to make a small private visit to the grounds of the Memorial on campus on Saturday. I also had the honor of reading a message from President Obama at the Memorial that concluded with: “The selflessness of America’s fallen firefighters embodies the true nature of courage, and together we pay tribute to their memory and to the strength and resilience of their families. As you gather to honor the extraordinary sacrifices of the firefighters we have lost, know that their legacies will live forever in the heart of our Nation.”

As the shutdown continues into a second week, I am reassured by the support of the President, by the example our recalled employees set over the weekend, and by the strength of our community evident at the Fallen Firefighters Memorial events. Please continue to be patient with the legislative process and we will work to keep you informed.

Below please find our regular reminders:

Status of FY 2014 Appropriations

- The lapse and furloughs continue

Employee Resources:

- For specific questions, please email [lapse@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:lapse@fema.dhs.gov) and we will get back to you with responses as soon as possible.
- We have established a resource page on [fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov/lapse-appropriations-employee-resource-page) (outside of the firewall) that you can access at <http://www.fema.gov/lapse-appropriations-employee-resource-page>
- OPM is continuing to update guidance on shut-down furloughs on its website <http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/furlough-guidance/#url=Shutdown-Furlough>
- The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is available for employees to get counseling or advice as needed. Employees can call (800) 222-0364 or (888) 262-7848 (TTY) from anywhere in the United States to receive immediate assistance, 24-hours a day, 365 days a year. You can also obtain information and resources online at the Federal Occupational health website at <http://www.foh.hhs.gov/services/eap/eap.asp>
- For those that have contributed to the federal Thrift Savings Plan (TSP), you may be able to take advantage of a general purpose loan. Visit [www.tsp.gov](http://www.tsp.gov) for more information on this program.

Thank you again for your dedication as we work through this situation together.

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