

October 17, 2013

MEMORANDUM FOR: All FEMA Employees

FROM: W. Craig Fugate /s/
Administrator

Richard Serino /s/
Deputy Administrator

SUBJECT: Welcome Back

Dear FEMA colleague –

We are writing you this note to share the very good news that the government shutdown, which began on October 1st, has come to an end. Let us be among the first to welcome back our furloughed employees today and to thank all who were able to continue to work during these challenging times. We are also very pleased to inform you that the bill the President signed after it passed Congress includes approval of retroactive pay for all employees impacted by lapsed appropriations. And we look forward to meeting with you at 2pm for an all hands meeting in the NRCC.

As we have often said, every FEMA employee is essential to our shared mission to support our citizens and first responders. We recognize that every member of the FEMA team was affected by the shutdown. Disaster response activities and most of the work of the Federal Insurance and Mitigation Administration continued, but disaster recovery work was delayed, and the remainder of the agency's activity was limited to immediate threats to life safety and the protection of property.

Our permanent, full-time staff serves as the backbone and nervous system of the Agency and helps enable our disaster workforce to be so effective. This shutdown required us to furlough some 3,700 employees - 86% of the members of the permanent workforce paid out of lapsed appropriations – and many aspects of the FEMA mission did not get done over the last three weeks. The work each FEMA employee does on a daily basis is critical to that mission and that is why we are so pleased to have the whole team back together.

We made every effort during the shutdown to keep you informed and to make sure you were aware of resources available to help, and we intend to keep the communication going as we all return to work. It will take time for FEMA to get back to business as usual and we are taking a number of steps to reduce the hassles you might face.

As you return to work and resume normal duties, we ask that you have patience and we encourage you to take some time to reconnect with your colleagues. Our direction to the Agency's senior management team is to take care of our employees and make sure we are fully mission-ready. We are all emergency managers and we must remain focused on the nation's ability to respond to all types of disasters, including no-notice catastrophic events.

After we have taken care of our folks and reaffirmed our capability to respond to disasters, we will then be able to turn our full focus on catching up on all of our important work, as well as stakeholder outreach. We expect the entire FEMA team will be eager to turn to what we do best, but supervisors and managers have realistic expectations that we will not be back to full speed right away.

We want to leave you with one last thought – please take a moment to remember why you do what you do. We are here because we believe in the importance of service, effective emergency management, and supporting our citizens when they most need help. Every FEMA employee plays an important role in that effort and you are good at your jobs.

Let's get back to work and take pride in what we accomplish every day on behalf of survivors, communities, and the country.

Sincerely,
Craig and Rich