



U.S. Department of Homeland Security

FACT SHEET: Impact of a Government Shutdown on the DHS Workforce

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The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) workforce is comprised of extraordinary public servants who safeguard this nation around the clock – responding to cyberattacks; protecting and saving lives on land, at sea, and in the air; securing our nation’s borders and critical infrastructure; deploying across the country to help Americans recover from disasters; and so much more. Any lapse in federal funding would disrupt this vital work, leaving Americans less safe as a result.

As the third largest department of the federal government, DHS is home to hundreds of thousands of hard-working individuals devoted to public service. A shutdown would affect every member of the DHS community in some way, putting a strain on our team members’ ability to make ends meet, put food on the table, and more.

72% of the DHS workforce would be required to work without pay

Nearly three in four DHS employees – more than 185,000 people – would be required to continue working through a shutdown, without receiving a paycheck. Those working without pay include law enforcement officers, analysts, investigators, and disaster response officials conducting work such as:

- Safeguarding and securing our borders;
- Processing, detaining, and removing individuals that have unlawfully entered the United States
- Seizing illegal narcotics like fentanyl;
- Identifying, disrupting, and dismantling criminal operations that smuggle weapons, drugs, and migrants;
- Combating child exploitation and child predators;
- Identifying and arresting human traffickers;
- Conducting search and rescue operations;
- Responding to natural disasters;
- Preventing and coordinating responses to cyberattacks and threats to the federal government and other critical infrastructure; and
- Protecting U.S. government leaders and foreign dignitaries.

MORE DETAIL ON THE IMPACTS:

Over 19,000 Unpaid U.S. Border Patrol Agents and 25,000 Unpaid Office of Field Operations Officers: CBP agents and officers working at over 300 ports of entry and protecting more than 6,000 miles of border under challenging circumstances would be required to continue performing their vital missions without pay.

Stopped Funding to Border Communities and Interior Cities: DHS provided over \$770 million this year to support border & interior communities to cover costs associated with sheltering migrants in their cities. Recipients may be unable to draw down on a portion of the funds, and no new awards will be made under a shutdown.

Reduced Cybersecurity and Physical Security Support to the Nation’s Critical Infrastructure: During today’s heightened cyber threat environment, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency’s (CISA) capacity to provide timely and actionable guidance to help partners defend their networks would be degraded. CISA would also be forced to suspend both physical and cybersecurity assessments for government and industry partners, including election officials as well as target rich, cyber poor sectors like water, K-12, and health care, which are prime targets for ransomware.

Hardship for nearly 40,000 Active Military Personnel: The dedicated men and women of the U.S. Coast Guard will only be compensated for their unpaid work if a specific appropriation is passed, unlike all other military service branches. Additionally, unlike civilian employees, they are not able to file for interim support such as unemployment benefits to supplement their income until an appropriation is passed. This creates the most significant hardship for the U.S. Coast Guard’s enlisted service members.

Reduced Readiness of Federal Law Enforcement: Certain Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers (FLETC) trainings for new public safety personnel and ongoing skills for public safety personnel would continue and have employees provide necessary duties without receiving pay.

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However, some basic training and most advanced training would be stopped until the government is funded. FLETC training personnel would be unable to travel to conduct expert training, and scheduled law enforcement training programs for state, local, and tribal agencies across the country would be suspended until a budget is passed. This will impact law enforcement readiness across the country.

Slowed Deployment of Advanced Security Technology at Airports: On average, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) screens 2.5 million passengers per day, exceeding pre-pandemic travel volumes. If the government shuts down, air traffic controllers and TSA Officers would be required to work without pay—potentially leading to significant delays and longer wait times for travelers at airports across the country, based on what occurred during previous shutdowns. Additionally, a government shutdown could potentially delay the deployment of new security technology equipment to airports.

Threaten Long-Term Disaster Relief: This would be the first time that a shutdown coincides with depletion of the Disaster Relief Fund. FEMA would be forced to continue delaying support for community recovery to preserve resources for immediate life and safety concerns deployed in the wake of a catastrophic event—shifting disaster response burdens to the States, territories, Tribes, and local communities.

Long-term Impacts to Hiring and Onboarding: There would be serious delays in onboarding, disruptions in critical roles, and challenges in filling positions in both the short and long-term. As of September 18, 2023, DHS has issued and candidates have accepted nearly 2,500 tentative job offers. The onboarding process required to officially hire these new employees would be paused until the government reopens. This is particularly problematic ahead of the holiday travel season, where more TSA Officers will be needed to screen travelers.

Visit [here \(https://www.dhs.gov/day-life-homeland-security\)](https://www.dhs.gov/day-life-homeland-security) to learn more about what DHS does on a daily basis to safeguard the American people.

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Keywords

[CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION \(CBP\)](#) (/KEYWORDS/CUSTOMS-AND-BORDER-PROTECTION-CBP)

[CYBERSECURITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE SECURITY AGENCY \(CISA\)](#) (/KEYWORDS/CYBERSECURITY-AND-INFRASTRUCTURE-SECURITY-AGENCY-CISA)

[FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY \(FEMA\)](#) (/KEYWORDS/FEDERAL-EMERGENCY-MANAGEMENT-AGENCY-FEMA)

[FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING CENTERS \(FLETC\)](#) (/KEYWORDS/FEDERAL-LAW-ENFORCEMENT-TRAINING-CENTERS-FLETC)

[TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ADMINISTRATION \(TSA\)](#) (/KEYWORDS/TRANSPORTATION-SECURITY-ADMINISTRATION-TSA) [WORKFORCE](#) (/KEYWORDS/WORKFORCE)

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