

**Changes to OPM Guidance for Administrative Furloughs**  
**March 25, 2013**

**Guidance on Shutdown Furloughs; Foreign Area Allowances,  
Differentials, and Danger Pay; and VERA/VSIPs**

The changes below are included in the March 25, 2013, update to OPM's [Guidance for Administrative Furloughs](#).

*Shutdown Furloughs*

In section A. (General), we are revising Question A.3. to provide a general description of shutdown furloughs as follows:

**3. What human resources guidance applies for furloughs that are caused by a lapse of appropriations (i.e., shutdown furloughs)?**

**A.** In the event that funds are not available through an appropriations law or continuing resolution, a "shutdown" furlough occurs. A shutdown furlough is necessary when an agency no longer has the necessary funds to operate and must shut down those activities which are not excepted pursuant to the Antideficiency Act. For additional information on shutdown furloughs, see OPM's Guidance for Shutdown Furloughs at <http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/furlough-guidance/#url=Shutdown-Furlough>.

*Foreign Area Allowances, Differentials, and Danger Pay*

We are adding a new Section Q. (Foreign Area Allowances, Differentials, and Danger Pay) as follows:

**Q. Foreign Area Allowances, Differentials, and Danger Pay**

**1. Do administrative furloughs interrupt or reduce civilian Living Quarters Allowances (LQA) or a Post Cost of Living Allowances (COLA)?**

**A.** An administrative furlough doesn't interrupt Post COLA if the nonpay status period, including periods outside the employee's regular tour of duty (e.g., weekends), does not exceed 14 consecutive calendar days. If an employee is in furlough status that results in a continuous nonpay status period that exceeds 14 consecutive calendar days, then the Post COLA is interrupted for the duration of the furlough status. (Source: [http://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content\\_id=231&menu\\_id=92](http://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=231&menu_id=92), DSSR 051.2) LQA continues without interruption while the employee is in nonpay status not in excess of 30 consecutive calendar days at any one time. For periods in nonpay status longer than 30 consecutive calendar days, LQA payment shall be suspended as of the day the employee enters such status, and payment is not to be made for any part of such period. (Source: [http://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content\\_id=231&menu\\_id=92](http://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=231&menu_id=92), DSSR 051.2 and DSSR 132.2b(2))

**2. Do administrative furloughs interrupt Danger Pay or Post Hardship Differentials for civilians stationed at a those posts? Do they impact differential eligibility for TDY employees at such posts?**

A. Yes. Employees do not receive Danger Pay or Post Hardship Differential for any furlough days. (Source: [http://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content\\_id=231&menu\\_id=92](http://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=231&menu_id=92), DSSR 052.2)

Furlough days do not count toward differential eligibility for TDY employees. (Source: [http://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content\\_id=231&menu\\_id=92](http://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=231&menu_id=92), DSSR 052.2 and DSSR 541)

**3. Do administrative furloughs interrupt Difficult-To-Staff Incentive Differentials (SND) for civilians stationed at a those posts?**

A. No. Length of furlough does not affect SND eligibility. This benefit is based on continuing presence at post. (Source: [http://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content\\_id=231&menu\\_id=92](http://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=231&menu_id=92), DSSR 1020)

**4. Do administrative furloughs interrupt evacuation payments/Subsistence Expense Allowances (SEAs) for civilians evacuated and working from safehavens?**

A. An administrative furlough doesn't interrupt an SEA if the nonpay status period, including periods outside the employee's regular tour of duty (e.g., weekends), does not exceed 14 consecutive calendar days. If an employee is in furlough status that results in a continuous nonpay status period that exceeds 14 consecutive calendar days, then the SEA is interrupted for the duration of the furlough status. (Source: [http://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content\\_id=231&menu\\_id=92](http://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=231&menu_id=92), DSSR 051.2)

**5. I have transferred back to Washington, DC, from a foreign post and am using the subsistence expense portion of the Home Service Transfer Allowance. Do administrative furloughs interrupt my eligibility for reimbursement?**

A. An administrative furlough doesn't interrupt an HSTA if the nonpay status period, including periods outside the employee's regular tour of duty (e.g., weekends), does not exceed 14 consecutive calendar days. If an employee is in furlough status that results in a continuous nonpay status period that exceeds 14 consecutive calendar days, then the HSTA is interrupted for the duration of the furlough status. (Source: [http://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content\\_id=231&menu\\_id=92](http://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=231&menu_id=92), DSSR 051.2)

**6. I am transferring from Washington, DC, to Pakistan. I've been authorized the pre-departure subsistence expense portion of the Foreign Transfer Allowance. Do administrative furloughs interrupt my eligibility for reimbursement?**

A. An administrative furlough doesn't interrupt an FTA if the nonpay status period, including periods outside the employee's regular tour of duty (e.g., weekends), does not

exceed 14 consecutive calendar days. If an employee is in furlough status that results in a continuous nonpay status period that exceeds 14 consecutive calendar days, then the FTA are interrupted for the duration of the furlough status. (Source: [http://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content\\_id=231&menu\\_id=92](http://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=231&menu_id=92), DSSR 051.2)

**7. I am stationed at a foreign post and my family is on Separate Maintenance Allowance (SMA) in the United States. Do administrative furloughs interrupt the SMA?**

**A.** An administrative furlough doesn't interrupt an SMA if the nonpay status period, including periods outside the employee's regular tour of duty (e.g., weekends), does not exceed 14 consecutive calendar days. If an employee is in furlough status that results in a continuous nonpay status period that exceeds 14 consecutive calendar days, then the SMA is interrupted for the duration of the furlough status. (Source: [http://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content\\_id=231&menu\\_id=92](http://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=231&menu_id=92), DSSR 051.2)

*VERA/VSIP*

We are adding a new section R. (VERA/VSIP) and a new Question R.1. as follows. This guidance was formerly posted as Question H.1. of OPM's "Supplemental Guidance for Sequestration and Administrative Furloughs," which we are removing from the OPM website in conjunction with this update.

**R. VERA/VSIP**

**1. Can agencies offer early retirements (VERAs) or separation incentives (VSIPs) to furloughed employees? Can VERA/VSIP be offered during sequestration? Can VERA/VSIP be offered in lieu of a furlough?**

**A.** Both Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA) and Voluntary Separation Incentive Payments (VSIP) are programs to incentivize voluntary separations to avoid involuntary personnel actions associated with an agency's decision to restructure its workforce. Agencies with OPM-approved VERA and or VSIP may continue offering these options to covered employees during a furlough.

VERA and VSIP result in permanent separations from the agency workforce. (Please note that VSIP recipients may not be reemployed by the Federal Government within 5 years unless they repay the VSIP to the agency that paid it.) Furloughs are associated with temporary issues, such as lack of work or funds, with the intention that employees would return to their jobs after the furlough. The agency would decide which option to take based on its situation, e.g., the need to permanently reduce or restructure its workforce or to save funds by furloughing employees.