

**Major Functional Series 400: PERSONNEL
ADS Chapter 453 - FURLOUGH - CIVIL SERVICE AND FOREIGN SERVICE**

This Chapter supersedes Handbook 30 Chapters 2 and 8

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453.1 Authority

1. [5 CFR 351](#)
2. [5 CFR 752](#)
3. [5 CFR 359](#)
4. [5 USC 75](#)
5. [5 USC 3595a](#)
6. [5 USC 3501-3504](#)
7. [22 USC 3921, 3925, 3926](#)

453.2 Objective

This chapter provides the authorities, policies, and essential procedures to be followed in furlough actions affect USAID Civil and Foreign Service employees. This chapter pertains to furloughs that are 30 calendar days or less.

453.3 Responsibility

1. The USAID Administrator is responsible for making the final decision on the use, extent, and duration of furloughs.

2. The Deputy Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Management, Office of Human Resources (DAA/M/HR) is responsible for carrying out the furlough in consultation with affected Agency management.

453.4 Definitions (See [ADS GLOSSARY](#))

COMPETITIVE LEVEL
FURLOUGH
NOTICE PERIOD

453.5 POLICY

The following are the official Agency policies and corresponding essential procedures:

453.5.1 FURLOUGH

The Agency shall implement a furlough without regard to the race, sex, color, age, religion, national origin, handicapping conditions, marital status or political affiliation of the affected employees.

Agency management and operating officials shall explore other means of

responding to the need for a furlough before implementing a furlough.

A furlough shall not last for more than 30 days over a one year period and shall be used only when it seems certain that the reduction is temporary. Furloughed employees must be returned to duty in the position from which furloughed. A furlough is not a commitment of recall.

The Agency shall make certain that the burden of any furlough is equitably shared by both FS and CS employees. The Agency must ensure that the sharing of the burden will not interfere with appropriations or the effective and efficient management of the Agency's programs, operations, or resources.

Reduction in force (RIF) procedures must be followed to furlough an employee when the furlough will be for more than 30 consecutive days, or more than 22 work days if done on a noncontinuous basis, and is caused by a shortage of funds or other nondisciplinary reasons. (See [ADS 452](#), [455](#), and [456](#))

The rights and entitlements of employees will be protected during periods of furlough as permitted by statute and regulation.

E453.5.1 Furlough - N/A

453.5.2 NOTICE

For furloughs of 30 days or less the employee will be given 30 days advance written notice by letter, cable, or other means stating the specific reasons for the furlough and its duration. There is an exception to the 30 days advance written notice and the opportunity to answer. The exception pertains to unforeseeable circumstances such as sudden emergencies requiring immediate curtailment of activities.

E453.5.2 Notice

a) The advance notice of a proposed furlough shall include, but is not limited to:

1. Reason for furlough;
2. Maximum length of the furlough (more definite and detailed specifications if known, e.g. the specific dates and length of the furlough);
3. When some, but not all employees in a particular class or [competitive level](#) are being furloughed, the notice of proposal shall state the basis for selecting a particular employee for [furlough](#);
4. Notice that regulations and records pertinent to the action

are available and location of such regulations and records;

5. Right of employees to respond within ten workdays to the proposed furlough. Extension of the ten workday time limit shall be considered, provided the employee gives specific reasons for the requested extension.

6. Entitlement to a reasonable amount of official time to prepare response;

7. Entitlement to representation;

8. A statement of applicable appeal and grievance rights; and

9. Prohibition of unpaid voluntary services.

b) The advance written notice and opportunity to respond are not necessary for implementing a furlough without pay when the furlough is due to unforeseen emergency circumstances. Emergency circumstances are:

- lapses of appropriations,
- sudden breakdowns in equipment,
- acts of nature, or
- other circumstances requiring immediate curtailment of activities.

In such cases, the Agency shall provide employees as much written notice of furlough action as possible.

c) Except for unforeseen and compelling circumstances, employees who wish to respond to the notice of a proposed furlough shall have up to ten workdays either orally or in writing. Written responses must be sent to the Deputy Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Management, Office of Human Resources (DAA/M/HR) together with documentary evidence in support of the appeal. When an employee gives an oral response, the Agency must make a written summary of the conversation. A copy of the summary must be provided to the employee for review. If corrections to the document are necessary, the employee must provide them as expeditiously as possible within three workdays. The DAA/M/HR, or designee, shall make the final decision in each case.

d) Each employee is entitled to a reasonable amount (normally up to four hours) of official time to prepare the response. Employee representatives shall be entitled to a reasonable amount of official time to assist employees with their responses. In making a response, employees have a right to the representative of their choice. However, the Deputy Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Management, Office of Human Resources (DAA/M/HR) retains the right to disallow the choice of an individual as a representative (i.e., including but not limited to conflict of interest). If a representative is disallowed, the Agency must fully state the reasons and provide the employee with

reasonable time to find another representative. The Agency's decision will be submitted in writing at the earliest practical date or by the effective date of the furlough.

e) The notice of final decision to furlough must include but is not limited to:

1. Decision and the reasons;
2. Maximum length of furlough;
3. Prohibition on unpaid voluntary services; and
4. Information for employees as to how to submit for management's consideration the employee's preferences for alternate furlough days, if appropriate.

453.5.3 EMPLOYEE STATUS WHILE ON FURLOUGH

a) Employees in a furlough status cannot be required to perform official duties, nor can the Agency accept the voluntary services of employees in furlough status.

b) Employees on detail or other assignment whose salaries are not paid out of the Agency's operating expenses account are not subject to furlough when the reason for the furlough is a shortage of funds.

c) Employees may engage in outside employment while on furlough except for regular conflict of interest or Hatch Act restrictions. Employees must obtain Agency approval for outside employment.

d) Employees on court duty while on furlough may retain court pay.

e) Employees cannot be furloughed on holidays.

f) For career tenure, the first 30 calendar days of a furlough is creditable service.

g) For severance pay, non-pay status is fully creditable for the 12-month continuous employment period requirement. An aggregate of six months non-pay status in a year is creditable service in the computation of severance pay.

h) For completion of probation, an aggregate of 22 workdays in a non-pay status is creditable service. Non-pay status in excess of the authorized amount extends the qualifying period.

i) Time spent in furlough status will count toward time-in-class

calculations.

j) For Civil Service within-grade increases - an aggregate of two workweeks non-pay status in a waiting period is creditable service for steps 2, 3 and 4 of the; four workweeks for steps 5, 6 and 7; six workweeks for steps 8, 9, 10. For prevailing rate employees, an aggregate of one workweek non-pay status is creditable service for step 2; three weeks for step 3; four weeks for 4 and 5. For Foreign Service Entitlement to within-class increases remains unchanged by time in a furlough status.

E453.5.3 Employee Status While on Furlough - N/A

453.5.4 LEAVE WHILE ON FURLOUGH

An employee shall not be placed on paid leave in lieu of furlough.

For annual and sick leave, an aggregate of no more than six months non-pay status in a year is creditable service in computing annual leave accrual rates.

E453.5.4 Leave While on Furlough - N/A

453.5.5 BENEFITS WHILE ON FURLOUGH

Health Benefits: enrollment continues for 365 days with the government continuing payment of its contribution and employees paying for their share. The employee's share shall be deducted from any remaining biweekly pay; if pay is insufficient, the employee may pay the costs either during or after returning from a furlough by check or payroll deduction.

Life Insurance: enrollment continues for 12 consecutive months without cost to the employee. Any premiums missed because of the furlough are paid by the government.

Retirement: for retirement purposes, an aggregate non-pay status of six months in any calendar year is creditable service. Coverage continues at no cost to the employee while in a non-pay status. When in a non-pay status for a portion of a pay period, contributions are adjusted in proportion to their basic pay.

E453.5.5 Benefits While on Furlough - N/A

453.5.6 EMPLOYEE RIGHTS

a) The Agency shall not separate a competing employee while an employee with lower retention standing at the same competitive level is on furlough.

b) A reasonable effort shall be made to accommodate expressed personal preferences of employees (e.g., a desire to combine leave without pay and

furlough into a consecutive period or a desire to have some income every pay period) when scheduling furloughs to the extent that the proposal is consistent with work requirements and budgetary constraints.

c) An employee who has been furloughed for more than 30 days may appeal to the Merit Systems Protection Board.

E453.5.6 Employee Rights

Management's consideration for alternate employee furlough days is dependent upon the nature of the furlough and its effect on Agency operations, cost effectiveness, management effectiveness, and safety concerns. Employee requests may include but will not be limited to:

- * Continuous and discontinuous furlough dates;
- * Furlough date(s) to coincide with religious observances;
- * Furlough date(s) to coincide with the beginning or end of the employee's weekly tour of duty; and
- * Other "good cause" requests for a specific date(s) for furlough.

Employees must be advised in writing of the reason(s), if a request is denied.

a) Periods of furlough status shall be documented in accordance with established procedures for recording personnel actions (i.e., issuance of an SF-50).

b) Requests for reconsideration of the Agency's decision must be submitted to the DAA/M/HR. Every effort will be made to respond to requests for reconsideration within ten workdays. The request for reconsideration must address:

1. Changes in the employee's personal circumstances that warrant reconsideration and/or;
2. Substantive changes to previously provided information relating to the Agency's furlough implementation plans.

453.5.7 FURLOUGH - REDUCTION-IN-FORCE (RIF)

a) The Agency may furlough or separate an employee only when the employee has no right of assignment to another position or turns down an offered position satisfying the assignment right. The Agency decides if a furlough is appropriate; if not, the employee is separated.

b) The Agency shall not separate a competing employee while an employee with lower retention standing in the same competitive level is on furlough.

c) The Agency shall not separate an employee through RIF while an employee with lower retention standing in the same competitive level is on furlough.

d) If the situation changes and the Agency determines that a furloughed employee cannot be recalled within the one-year period, the employee must be separated.

E453.5.7 Furlough - Reduction-In-Force (RIF)

If some, but not all, furloughed employees in a competitive level must be separated, then employees are selected for separation by retention standing beginning with the lowest standing employee. A new RIF notice of separation must be given to furloughed employees at least 30 days prior to the end of the one-year furlough period. The separation of a furloughed employee is a new RIF action and the required essential procedures must be followed. (See [ADS 452 CS RIF](#), [454 FS RIF](#), and [455 SES RIF](#))

If a furloughed employee refuses or does not respond to an Agency notice to return to duty, the Agency may separate the employee by RIF effective on the specified date of recall. A new RIF notice of separation is not required.

453.5.8 RECALLING TO DUTY

The Agency must recall employees to duty in the order of their retention standing, beginning with the highest standing employee.

If a law is enacted allowing retroactive payment for period of furlough, then the Agency will change the furlough days to administrative leave days, and compensate each employee accordingly.

E453.5.8 Recalling to Duty - N/A

453.5.9 EXCEPTED SERVICE EMPLOYEES

Probationers, temporary employees, and non-preference eligibles in the excepted service shall be included in any Agency furlough.

E453.5.9 Excepted Service Employees - N/A

453.5.10 LIMITED APPOINTMENTS

Limited appointments shall not be extended by the number of days in furlough status, nor shall such an appointment be extended beyond the five-year

maximum.

E453.5.10 Limited Appointments - N/A

453.5.11 PART-TIME EMPLOYEES

Part-time employees shall be furloughed in proportion to their schedule.

E453.5.11 Part-Time Employees - N/A

453.5.12 RECRUITMENT

The Agency shall not fill a position, except by internal placement, when an employee on furlough is qualified and available for a position at the same or lower grade from which furloughed.

E453.5.12 Recruitment - N/A

453.6 Supplementary Reference - N/A

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