IMPACTS OF A GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN: EXECUTIVE AND CONGRESSIONAL MEETINGS

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US Policy and Regulatory Alert

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INTRODUCTION

Current federal funding expires this Saturday. As we approach the deadline, it is looking less likely that Congress will pass a continuing resolution, a short-term stopgap measure that continues appropriations, to avoid a government shutdown. Our Government Shutdown Task Force will continuously monitor the situation and assist clients impacted by the shutdown. This is the third alert in a series focused on the potential impacts of government shutdowns. Today's focus: What is the impact on executive and congressional meetings?

EXECUTIVE MEETINGS

As it stands now, none of the 12 annual appropriations bills have been enacted, meaning a shutdown would impact all federal government agencies. If an extended shutdown occurs, federal agencies will be forced to close or reduce operations. Industry meetings with executive branch employees will not be held. “Non-excepted” employees will not be able to access their work phones or email. It is hard to know if your meeting will be impacted without knowing the length of a shutdown, so check in with your agency contact before 30 September to see what your options are.

CONGRESSIONAL MEETINGS

Congressional offices decide on an office-by-office basis who is “excepted” versus non-excepted. Some of our clients reserve space in Committee rooms, the Capitol Visitor Center (CVC), the House Visitor Center, or the Senate Visitor Center via congressional offices. These meetings will need to be rescheduled. The Library of Congress and CVC will also be closed. Just like in federal government agencies, non-excepted employees will be prohibited from using government devices. Both the Executive Branch and some congressional offices will have an incentive to make visible signs of shutdown effects, and as such may pull down certain types of meetings. It is unlikely that congressional hearings or business meetings will take place during a shutdown. This will lead to an even more delayed nominations process, as well. It's hard to reschedule or know if your meeting will be impacted without knowing how long the government will be closed or who will be designated as excepted personnel. Be proactive in reaching out to your congressional contact before 30 September to see what your options are.

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FLYING TO DC

Air traffic controllers and Transportation Security Administration agents are generally labeled excepted and have to work without pay. In years past, many did not show up to work which drastically affected air travel capabilities. Training for new air traffic controllers would stop and could add to a shortage of workers. According to the Department of State's contingency plan, “Consular operations domestically and abroad will remain 100% operational as long as there are sufficient fees to support operations. This includes passports, visas, and assisting US citizens abroad.” The only situation where you may be impacted is if your passport agency is located in a government building impacted by the shutdown.

REMAIN FLEXIBLE

As always, with any type of government meeting, it is important to stay patient and flexible. We know a lot of hard work is put into organizing and scheduling meetings. Unfortunately, nobody knows how long a shutdown will take place so it is hard to predict if a previously scheduled meeting would be impacted. If you have a meeting scheduled within a week of 30 September, prioritize rescheduling now while you can still connect with your contact.

Be on the lookout for more alerts in this series focused on the impacts of government shutdowns.

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