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Ensuring the Continued Performance of the Mission of the Department of the Interior during the Global Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic

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03/22/2020

Last edited 03/22/2020

Memorandum

To: All Department of the Interior Employees

From: Secretary

Subject: Ensuring the Continued Performance of the Mission of the Department of the Interior during the Global Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic

Introduction

Department of the Interior (Department) employees are among the most dedicated and hard-working members of our Federal workforce. Across the Department, thousands of our heroic employees continue to perform critical missions, such as fighting fires, providing law enforcement, delivering public health services, inspecting oil platforms, and maintaining facilities at National Parks and on public lands. Thousands more are performing their duties from home, including writing and enforcing rules, receiving public input, executing leases, responding to Freedom of Information Act requests, and issuing permits.

I continue to be humbled by the strength, commitment, and resiliency demonstrated by our employees. Now more than ever, it is important that we stand tall for the American people. Thank you for continuing your hard work and service.

While the COVID-19 pandemic has required flexibility and adjustments to the Department's operational posture, the Federal government remains open. During this national emergency, we need to:

- remain operational and continue to fulfill our important mission to the American people;
- contribute to helping resolve our national health crisis and, to the full extent of our powers, help Americans cope with the emergency; and
- ensure our employees are not asked to unnecessarily put themselves at risk.

Purpose and Scope

This memorandum is intended to ensure the operation of the Department while maintaining the health and safety of its employees. It applies to each Region, Bureau, Office, and employee of the Department

Performance of Duties Via Telework for Most Department Employees

Consistent with guidance from the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, the Office of Management and Budget, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and State and local authorities, I have determined that Department employees not performing or supporting [mission essential functions](#) or performing mission critical functions as determined by their State or Regional Director, or equivalent management authority, should telework. Supervisors are hereby directed to instruct employees under their supervision to telework, if telework ready, or encourage telework eligible employees to enter into telework agreements. If a telework-eligible employee is unable to enter into a telework agreement, the supervisor shall grant the employee weather and safety leave for a period not to exceed fourteen calendar days from the date of this memo, which shall be re-evaluated in light of conditions at that time.

Implementation

This memorandum shall be implemented by the Assistant Secretary—Policy, Management and Budget (AS-PMB) and the Heads of Bureaus and Offices, as follows:

The AS-PMB is responsible for:

- Immediately contacting all State and Regional Directors to ensure the awareness and availability of employees who are to continue performing mission critical functions.
- Determining any additional communications or measures necessary to ensure the adoption of this Memorandum across the Department.

Each Bureau/Office head is responsible for:

- Ensuring employees are complying with this Memorandum while continuing to perform their duties.
- Executing their responsibilities under this Memorandum consistent with guidance from the AS - PMB.

Expiration Date

This memorandum is effective immediately. It will remain in effect until it is amended, superseded, or revoked.

David L. Bernhardt
Secretary of the Interior

- Photo Gallery
12/17/2025

[Highlights: "50th Anniversary of Otto Otter"](#)

Objects on view honoring the first fifty years of the Bureau of Reclamation's water safety initiatives.

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- Photo Gallery
08/07/2025

[Highlights: "Naturally Connected: Charley Harper and the Department of the Interior"](#)

Gallery views of the "Naturally Connected" exhibition

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- Photo Gallery
08/07/2025

[Highlights: "DOI Pop! On Air, On Screen & In Print"](#)

Gallery views from the "DOI Pop! On Air, On Screen & In Print" exhibition at the Interior Museum, June 2015-January 2017.

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U.S. Department of the Interior

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