



MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 1, 2019

SUBJECT: Updated Off-Cycle Back Pay Questions and Answers for Employees

TO: FPPS User Group Representatives

FROM: Julie Bednar, Acting Chief
Systems Migration and Services Division

On January 28, 2019, the Interior Business Center (IBC) shared with you some common questions and answers (Q & As) for you to share with employees in your agencies regarding processing back pay for federal employees who were not paid during the partial government shutdown.

Following are some additional Q & As that have resulted from the off-cycle payments which were issued earlier this week.

Although not technical FPPS or time & attendance system questions, these Q & As may be useful as employees have questions about back pay payments and other benefits issues. Feel free to share the Q & As with employees in your agencies in compliance with your internal agency communication protocols.

FPPS UG Representatives should feel free to contact me at 303-969-6638 or via email at julie_p_bednar@ibc.doi.gov if you have any questions.

Employee questions should be directed to the Customer Support Center (CSC) at 888-367-1622 Option 3 or via email at Payroll_Helpdesk@ios.doi.gov.

Questions and Answers for Back Pay During Lapse of Appropriations

February 1, 2019

Question 1: Why did I not receive an off-cycle payment yet?

Answer: There are a number of scenarios that would have impacted whether you received an off-cycle payment to date, including:

- If you had a pending separation personnel action that was not completed in the Federal Personnel and Payroll System (FPPS). Depending on when an employee was separated from the Department of the Interior, the employee may or may not be entitled to back pay.
- If you are a reemployed annuitant who does not have an off-set salary. Reemployed annuitants whose salary is not off-set will receive an off-cycle payment by Friday, February 1, 2019.
- If you are a reemployed annuitant who has an off-set salary. Reemployed annuitants whose salary is off-set due to their retirement annuity will be paid through a separate manual payroll process which is targeted for completion before the processing cycle for Pay Period (PP) 03.
- If you reported partial shutdown retroactive hours on the amended time card, you will receive an off-cycle payment by Friday, February 1, 2019.
- If you are an intermittent employee who worked during the shutdown. You will receive retroactive back pay during the processing cycle for PP 03, with the official pay date of February 12, 2019.

Question 2: Why did I not receive my regular paycheck in these off-cycle payments?

Answer: The off-cycle interim payments for PP 01 and PP 02 that employees received during the week of January 28, 2019, were interim (i.e. not full) payments of back pay. The primary reasons for the interim payments are: a) it takes a longer time to run a "regular gross to net" pay calculate process and that "regular" process would not have been possible to accomplish this week; b) the priority was to get some pay relief this week to employees who had not received pay during the shutdown; and c) the off-cycle interim payments were calculated in a way to minimize the possibility of overpayments once the majority of corrections are made in the next regular payroll processing cycle for PP 03. Instructions were provided to timekeepers and certifiers for entering amended timecards to be completed this week, so that these amendments could be included in the PP 03 pay calculate process. You should expect another adjustment in the processing cycle for PP 03 (January 20, 2019 - February 2, 2019); official payday occurs on February 12, 2019, but you may see your deposit earlier based on your financial institution's time frames.

Question 3: I thought the off-cycle payments were going to be "close to" what my regular paycheck would be. However, the off-cycle payments were several hundred dollars different. What is the reason for these differences?

Answer: Off-cycle interim payments were calculated in a way to minimize the possibility of overpayments so that employees would not owe a debt to the federal government, while also paying employees as quickly as possible during the week of January 28, 2019. For the off-cycle payments, estimated tax rates were used to calculate pay and voluntary deductions were not subtracted from the off-cycle payments. The difference between your regular tax exemptions and voluntary deductions (such as a specific dollar amount for Thrift Savings Plan allotment or allotment to a bank for a savings account) are some examples of payroll items that would cause the differences in pay.

Question 4: I am a retired veteran and I did not receive an off cycle payment yet. What happened?

Answer: The off-cycle payment process used specific filters in the payroll system to capture the majority of affected employees who were not paid any funds during the government shutdown. Depending on how your personnel records are coded, you fell into one of the three following processing cycles:

- a. Not a retiree/not a retired annuitant - employees who are not civilian or military retirees were captured in the first round of off-cycle payments and were paid an off-cycle payment on January 30 and 31, 2019.
- b. Retiree with no salary offset - employees who are civilian or military retirees and who are paid their full civilian salary (without an offset for their retirement annuity) will be paid an off-cycle payment to be transmitted to financial institutions as of February 1, 2019. Deposits into accounts will depend on your financial institution.
- c. Retiree with salary offset - employees who are civilian or military retirees and who do have an off-set of their current civilian salary will be paid an off-cycle payment using a manual payroll process which is expected to be completed before the next regular paycheck is issued for PP 03.

If you are unsure of whether you are a reemployed annuitant with a salary off-set code on your personnel record, please contact your servicing HR Office.

Question 5: If I worked as exempt (i.e., paid) some of the time during the shutdown, and was furloughed for other times during the shutdown, when will I receive an off-cycle payment for the furlough back pay time?

Answer: You will receive an off-cycle payment for any furlough time during PP 01 and PP 02 by Friday, February 1, 2019.

Question 6: What is going to happen with my Thrift Savings Plan (TSP)/Roth when PP 03 recalculations occur?

Answer: The automatic agency contributions to TSP/Roth will be adjusted through the recalculation process for PP 03. If your TSP/Roth voluntary contributions were not collected, you will be contacted individually by the Interior Business Center payroll staff to determine whether you want make-up contributions taken from future paychecks.

Question 7: In my off-cycle payment, my federal and state tax deductions were higher than in my regular paychecks. Will the recalculation in PP 03 correct these tax deductions?

Answer: Yes, your tax deductions for the prior pay periods impacted by the shutdown will be reconciled in PP 03 based on your regular tax withholdings.

Question 8: What voluntary deductions were not taken from the off-cycle payments?

Answer: The list includes:

- Military service deposits
- Associations
- Union Dues
- Charities
- Personal Account Allotments
- Miscellaneous Voluntary Deductions

Question 9: Were deductions for my optional benefits, like vision and dental, taken out of the off-cycle payment?

Answer: No. IBC is working with the vendor providers for BENEFEDS and the long term care insurance provider to obtain files that will catch up these deductions in a future pay period(s).

Question 10: How are all of these adjustments in my pay going to be reflected in my leave and earnings statement (LES)?

Answer: During the week of February 4, 2019, the IBC will share with the FPPS User Group representatives an explanation of the LES for PP 03. This LES should reflect the corrections that were made based on timecard amendments submitted by January 29, 2019. Stay tuned for a follow-up communication on this topic.