

Office of Maine Governor Paul LePage

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Governor Declares Civil Emergency Effective Midnight, Ensures Mainers Receive Benefits

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Contact: Adrienne Bennett, Press Secretary, 207-287-2531

AUGUSTA – In the event no budget is signed into law by the end of the fiscal year, Governor Paul R. LePage has signed a proclamation (see attached) declaring a civil emergency and an Executive Order directing state departments and agencies to take the necessary steps for a state government shutdown. The Order is effective at 12:01 a.m. on July 1, 2017 and remains in effect until the state of emergency is terminated by Executive Proclamation or until 5 p.m. on July 3, 2017, whichever is earlier.

“This is not about today or tomorrow,” said Governor Paul LePage. “This is about the future of Maine. The Maine people are taxed enough. I will not tax them anymore and in my budget overall taxes were decreased. Maine has plenty of revenue to fund state government without raising taxes.”

Governor LePage submitted his budget in January to the Legislature. Even after six months of inaction, Speaker of the House Sara Gideon (D-Freeport) extended the session twice during the past two weeks. “We do not want to harm state employees or any other of the 1.3 million Mainers who live in our great state,” Governor LePage said. “They should not have to pay more taxes just because the Speaker of the House and Senate President want to go home for the weekend.”

The LePage Administration announced Friday it will continue to pay most benefits administered by the Department of Health and Human Services.

“We are very fortunate as a State to be in the position to pay welfare and unemployment benefits during a shutdown,” Governor LePage said. “This is only because of the strong fiscal management we have implemented over the past seven years. Previous administrations lived day by day, ran huge deficits and could not make it through a shutdown. Because of our strong fiscal responsibility and financial discipline, we have enough in our accounts to make sure we can provide these payments.”

The Office of the Governor will continue to review requests as necessary. If the state of emergency still exists by 12:00 a.m. on July 3, 2017, the Order will be reviewed and revised accordingly.

Additionally, Governor LePage continues to review designations of emergency personnel on a case-by-case basis and he has already designated the following functions as emergency during a state shutdown to provide for the health and safety of the public and protection of state property, including revenues. State facilities and programs that remain open include:

Department of Health & Human Services:

- TANF, SNAP and MaineCare payments will be made.
- The Office of MaineCare Services will execute the scheduled July 5 MaineCare cycle process, ensuring there is no disruption to claims payments in Maine's Medicaid program. The Department's ability to make this payment is due to the LePage Administration's disciplined financial management of taxpayer resources that fund the MaineCare program.
- The Office of Child and Family Services will execute the scheduled July 5 child care subsidy and child welfare payments, ensuring there is no disruption to Maine's child care and child welfare programs. The Department's ability to make these payments is due to the LePage Administration's disciplined financial management of taxpayer resources that fund these programs.
- The Office for Family Independence will make July payments for the TANF and SNAP programs. Program beneficiaries have access to their respective benefits as previously scheduled. The Office for Family Independence would continue to accept and make eligibility determinations for MaineCare, TANF and SNAP.
- The Office of Child and Family Services will remain operational. Central Intake will be staffed on a 24/7 basis to receive calls related to child abuse and neglect and respond to the needs of children in foster care and adults under public guardianship or conservatorship. Adult and Children Emergency Services (ACES) will accept referrals for Adult Protective Services regarding abuse, neglect or exploitation. Caseworkers will continue working to respond to reports of child abuse and neglect and will provide safe care and shelter for children in the state's legal protective custody.
- DHHS will continue to receive and process child support payments during any shutdown period.
- The Office of Aging and Disability Services will continue to operate the Crisis Prevention and Intervention Team. Referrals for Adult Protective Services will be received by Adult and Children Emergency Services (ACES). This process is standard procedure as followed after-hours and weekends during non-shutdown periods.
- The Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention will continue to operate the Health and Environmental Testing Lab (HETL), and the CDC will function on a

continuity of operations plan that will deploy necessary resources should emergency situations arise, such as those related to public health, infectious disease or foodborne illness. The WIC program will continue to function.

- The Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services will staff four emergency staff members to include one rapid responder for mental health and substance abuse crisis statewide; a data analyst to oversee the Prescription Monitoring Program; a crisis services manager for youth and adult services; and a substance abuse program specialist to handle placement of individuals in the case of an emergency.
- Dorothea Dix Psychiatric Center and Riverview Psychiatric Center will remain fully staffed and operational.

Department of Labor:

Unemployment Benefits

Limited unemployment benefit services would be provided on a limited, emergency basis. The guidance below is for claims filed the week of July 2–8, 2017; the Department of Labor will issue additional guidance if such a shutdown lasts longer than a week.

Unemployment: Filing Claims

- The Unemployment Customer Service Claims Centers would be closed, and customer service representatives would not be available during the shutdown.
- All initial claims for benefits, meaning that they have never filed for unemployment benefits in Maine or have not filed for unemployment in the previous 12 months, must be filed via the website at file4UI.com or maine.gov/labor/unemployment.
- Claimants needing to reopen a benefit year, must also file online at file4UI.com or maine.gov/labor/unemployment.
- Claimants currently filing for unemployment benefits can either use the automated telephone service at 1-800-593-7660 or the website to file a continued claim.
- The department advises claimants to be as accurate as possible in answering the questions when filing. Claims with missing information or errors will be significantly delayed and claimants may need to speak to a customer service representative to resolve their specific issue when State government offices reopen.
- If claimants have to speak to a customer service representative after State government reopens, expect long wait times on the phones. The department anticipates high call volumes when State offices reopen.
- All claimants must still register on the Maine JobLink at maine.gov/joblink. However, if claimants cannot access their older account, they will need to wait until the CareerCenters reopen to have the JobLink account reactivated. This will not affect the processing of the unemployment claim during the shutdown, although the claim could be delayed for other reasons.

State Parks, including:

- All State Parks managed by the Bureau of Parks and Lands in the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
- Baxter State Park
- Maine Wildlife Park, Swan Island, managed by Inland Fisheries & Wildlife

Inland Fisheries & Wildlife:

In addition to the Maine Warden Service, these facilities/programs will remain open with reduced staffing, as appropriate:

- Hatchery
- Moose Collaring Project – Mortality Response
- Online licensing

Department of Environmental Protection:

- The Department will continue responses to environmental cleanup and emergencies.
- Environmental emergency response to oil and hazardous materials releases. Call 800-452-4664.
- DEP's Oil and Hazardous Materials Responders will be on-call, 24/7 to respond to reports of potentially imminent environmental threats.
- High ozone alerts will be issued, if necessary.

Department of Transportation:

- Maine State Ferry Service
- Emergency Traffic Incident Management Center Representatives
- Emergency Bridge Operators
- Emergency Crew Operations/Safety Response
- Emergency Disaster Response
- Construction-related personnel will continue on a limited basis

Department of Administrative and Financial Services

- Limited operations to support emergency functions throughout state government, including the Office of Information Technology and other state operating functions.
- Maine Revenue Services will continue revenue collection.

Credits

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