

How a Government Shutdown Could Affect Your Travel Plans



STAN HONDA/AFP/Getty Images

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A [government shutdown](#) is looming as the U.S. Senate struggles to pass a short-term [spending](#) resolution to fund the operations of the federal government.

The last shutdown, in October 2013, saw the federal government furlough 800,000 employees for more than two weeks.

Anyone traveling this weekend or in the foreseeable future could face roadblocks or inconveniences if the government shuts down – from national parks closing to delays at passport processing.

Here's how a government shutdown could affect your travel plans:

The TSA and air traffic control

The good news is that Transportation Security Administration agents, border security agents, air traffic controllers and immigration enforcement officials are considered essential personnel. They will continue working through the shutdown.

The impact on air travel should be minimal.

Just 13% of the Homeland Security department would be furloughed in the event of a government shutdown, the [Washington Post reports](#).

Airports and flights should run on schedule, though there may be some delays if "non-essential" employees are furloughed in a shutdown.

National parks

Anyone with trips to national parks or monuments in the near future should monitor the situation closely.

While national parks and monuments typically close during a government shutdown, the [Washington Post reports](#) that Department of Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke is coming up with a plan to [allow national parks and monuments to remain open](#). It is an unprecedented move and leaves open the question of how many park rangers will be on hand to help visitors. As of Thursday, park officials were not

sure what would happen in the event of a shutdown, and there was still "wide confusion" about how to keep the parks open, according to the *Post*.

CNBC reports that [national parks closed](#) during the 2013 government shutdown, leading to a loss of \$500 million in visitor spending and 750,000 daily park visitors.

Passports

Passport [processing](#) is funded in part by fees and with money appropriated by Congress, and will [continue](#) operating during a government shutdown. However, some delays are possible, according to [CNBC](#).

Visas

According to the [Los Angeles Times](#), offices abroad that issue foreign travel visas to those wanting to come to the U.S. will be closed, resulting in potential delays in visa processing. The State Department says consular operations both domestic and abroad will operate as long as there is enough money to [support](#) them.

Washington D.C. and museums

Popular tourist sites in Washington D.C. will likely close during a government shutdown, affecting destinations like the Smithsonian museums, Lincoln Memorial, the Library of Congress and the National Archives.

That is, unless the Secretary of the Interior can come up with a plan to keep them open during the furlough.

Those in D.C. this weekend are in luck: both the National Zoo and the Smithsonian Institution announced that they would remain open Saturday and Sunday and close Monday in the event of a shutdown at midnight Friday. Smithsonian museums located in New York City would close if the government shuts down.