

## Commissaries plan for Monday furloughs

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When furloughs are implemented, most military commissaries will close one day a week on Mondays, said the director and CEO of the Defense Commissary Agency. The closures will be for up to 11 days between July 8 and Sept. 30.

Closing commissaries on Mondays would be in addition to any day stores are routinely closed. The 148 stores that routinely close on Mondays would also close the next normal day of operation. Other than the furlough day, there are no other changes planned for store operation hours.

The announcement comes as DeCA follows Department of Defense protocols related to the automatic federal government budget reductions, known as sequestration, which began March 1. Like most DOD activities, DeCA is mandated by the Department to furlough its civil service employees. Furlough notices are scheduled to be delivered to DeCA employees between May 28 and June 5.

DeCA has 247 commissaries with more than 16,000 employees operating in 13 countries and two U.S. territories. Furloughs will impact all of DeCA's more than 14,000 U.S. civilian employees.

"We know that any disruption in commissary operations will impact our patrons," said Joseph Jeu, DeCA's director and CEO. "Also, we understand the tremendous burden this places on our employees, who, when furloughed, will lose 20 percent of their pay.

"We determined that Monday closures would present the least pain for our patrons, employees and industry partners."

As sequestration continues, commissary customers can quickly find out about any changes to their local store's operating schedule by going to [www.commissaries.com](http://www.commissaries.com), clicking on the "Locations" tab, then "Alphabetical Listing," finding their store and clicking on "local store information." Patrons are reminded that because sequestration is so fluid, DeCA's plan for this budget-cutting measure is subject to change.

DeCA decided on Monday closures after weighing the potential disruption to patrons and suppliers of having rolling furloughs, where closure dates would differ from store to store. Universal Monday closures are less disruptive to shoppers and the agency's industry partners – vendors, suppliers and distributors – who deliver products daily to DeCA's commissaries. Store staffs overseas include a mix of U.S. and local national employees. Because they are not U.S. government employees, local national employees are not subject to this furlough actions. Select locations overseas will open if they have an adequate local national staff. However, if an overseas store is closed, its local national staff will report to work and perform other store-related duties.

In January, DoD released guidance to allow defense components to plan for potential budget cuts by reducing operating costs. In line with that direction, DeCA later executed the following budget-cutting measures:

- A hiring freeze on all outside hires
- Curtailment of official travel for all conferences, training and any other events and activities considered noncritical to the agency's mission
- Cancellation of the agency's May Worldwide Case Lot Sales for all commissaries. Instead, stores are conducting smaller-scale events such as outdoor sidewalk sales
- Curtailment of all overtime and compensatory time unless deemed mission-critical
- Review of contract services to restrict any increases
- Curtailment of all monetary awards unless legally required

- Postponement of all Guard and Reserve on-site sales scheduled after July 8 until further notice.

“We are in this together,” Jeu said, “and though limited in our ability by circumstances we cannot control, I assure you we will do all we can to mitigate the impact of sequestration on our patrons, employees and industry partners, and on our mission.”