

Federal government shutdown could disrupt lives of Californians

By Cassie Myers, California News Service

The Border Patrol would remain on duty, mail would be delivered, and Social Security checks should go out on time. But a looming government shutdown could stall tax refunds, close national parks and museums, and put tens of thousands of Californians temporarily out of work.

Stopgap measures have kept government operations going since the current budget year began Oct. 1. The latest measure expires at the end of Friday, and with Democrats and Republicans unable to reach an agreement, the White House has told agencies to begin planning for a shutdown on Saturday.

California has a huge population of federal workers, roughly 170,000 according to the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, nearly the same number as Washington itself.

Employees deemed essential, such as air traffic controllers, doctors at VA hospitals, border agents and military personnel, probably will remain on the job as they did during the last major shutdown in 1995. Others, such as Internal Revenue Service employees at 27 California locations, might find their offices closed on Monday.

None would be paid until the dispute is over, though essential employees are likely to be reimbursed with back pay.

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