



NEWS RELEASE

Defense Commissary Agency

Public Affairs

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Commissaries plan for Monday furloughs

*By Kevin L. Robinson,
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FORT LEE, Va. – 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.

Normally a seven-day a week operation, the commissary located on Fort George G. Meade in Maryland, is among the stores which will close on Mondays. 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 H. 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, 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."

-DeCA-

About DeCA: *The Defense Commissary Agency operates a worldwide chain of commissaries providing groceries to military personnel, retirees and their families in a safe and secure shopping environment. Authorized patrons purchase items at cost plus a 5-percent surcharge, which covers the costs of building new commissaries and*

modernizing existing ones. By shopping regularly in the commissary, patrons save an average of 30 percent or more on their purchases compared to commercial prices – savings amounting to thousands of dollars annually. A core military family support element, and a valued part of military pay and benefits, commissaries contribute to family readiness, enhance the quality of life for America's military and their families, and help recruit and retain the best and brightest men and women to serve their country.

Stay Connected to Your Commissary Benefit

COMMISSARIES.COM: Visit www.commissaries.com to learn more about the Defense Commissary Agency: check out the latest news, find a store near you, see what's on sale, create a shopping list, learn of food and product recalls, scan employment opportunities, read frequently asked questions, submit a customer comment form online through DeCA's Your Action Line and more.

COMMISSARY CONNECTION: Stay connected with the latest news about your most valued benefit, Hot Links to additional savings, shopping sprees, contests, commissary promotions, events and more, go to www.commissaries.com/subscribe.cfm and subscribe to the Commissary Connection newsletter.

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YOUTUBE: To see DeCA's latest videos, visit www.youtube.com/DefenseCommissary.

TWITTER: To see DeCA's latest "tweets," visit www.twitter.com/YourCommissary.

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