



SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
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MAR 14 2025

MEMORANDUM FOR SENIOR PENTAGON LEADERSHIP
COMMANDERS OF THE COMBATANT COMMANDS
DEFENSE AGENCY AND DOD FIELD ACTIVITY DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: Guidance Regarding the Department of Defense Civilian Hiring Freeze

On February 28, 2025, in my memorandum, "Immediate Civilian Hiring Freeze for Alignment with National Defense Priorities," I imposed a moratorium on hiring Department of Defense civilians. The Department will continue to operate under this hiring freeze as we optimize our Federal workforce, reduce inefficiencies, and align our resources to the President's top national security priorities.

While the Department remains under the hiring freeze, DoD will only hire mission-essential employees into positions that directly contribute to our warfighting readiness. I have already identified exemptions for positions essential to immigration enforcement, national security, and public safety in my February 28, 2025 memorandum.

The Secretaries of the Military Departments may approve hiring freeze exemptions for the civilian workforce of their respective Military Departments after review by the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (USD(P&R)). USD(P&R) will review and approve all exemption requests for other organizations within the Department. This authority may not be further delegated.

The above exemption authorities should use, and the DoD Component heads should request, exemptions to sustain the workforce at readiness-centric facilities including, but not limited to, shipyards, depots, and medical treatment facilities. USD(P&R) will publish additional guidance governing hiring freeze exemption requests.

The U.S. military remains the most lethal fighting force the world has ever known. Every dollar counts as we defend the homeland, deter adversaries abroad, and prepare our Service members to triumph in combat.

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