

USDA GUIDANCE

EMPLOYEE FLEXIBILITIES – METRO PLATFORM IMPROVEMENT PROJECT 2019

General Information

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) has announced it will implement its Platform Improvement Plan (Project) this summer. Metro will shut down six Blue Line and Yellow Line metro stations south of Reagan National Airport this summer for significant concrete repair work on station platforms. Stations closed from May 25 to September 8 include:

1. Franconia-Springfield
2. Van Dorn Street
3. Eisenhower Street
4. Huntington
5. King Street-Old Town (Alexandria)
6. Braddock Road

Work is scheduled to be complete on platforms at Braddock Road, King Street, and Eisenhower Avenue by early September, but will continue into October at Van Dorn Street, and into December at Huntington and Franconia-Springfield. Disruptions in regular commuting patterns are expected and travel impacts to the public could be significant, with trains replaced by free shuttle buses.

For more information on WMATA's project see <https://www.wmata.com/service/rail/platformproject/>.

To receive updates on WMATA delays, service disruptions, advisories, or other changes, please visit: <https://www.metroalerts.info/Login.aspx> and subscribe to WMATA MetroAlerts.

USDA Guidance

- USDA recognizes that these closures can impact individual employee commutes. Therefore, agencies are strongly encouraged to work with their employees on identifying alternative work schedule options that will meet the mission and the employee's needs.
- Agencies are also strongly encouraged to approve leave requests necessitated due to the Metro Platform Improvement Project 2019.
- Agencies should collect information about the number of affected employees so that the Department can continue to evaluate ongoing needs for flexibility.
- Because the metro platform improvement project is temporary, changes to core telework agreements are not anticipated. USDA's telework directive remains in effect and no changes to USDA's telework policy are being made. USDA's telework directive envisions situations where situational telework may be required, but these should be rare. Any rare situational telework approved should be reported to John Decato via email at John.Decato@usda.gov.

Responsibilities

Employees: Employees are responsible for altering their commuting patterns to address Metrorail disruptions.

Managers: Managers are responsible for working with employees to establish or modify work schedules, and to adjust leave plans in accordance with individual agency's policies and procedures, if needed, to fulfill their responsibilities. Managers are encouraged to be flexible in considering adjustments to work schedules as well as the use of leave to address commuting disruptions.

Platform Project Options for USDA employees

Employees should immediately begin working with their supervisors to discuss the use of workplace flexibilities, and policies and procedures for the use of annual leave, leave without pay, previously earned compensatory time off, and/or earned credit hours under a flexible work schedule to alleviate the impact of Metrorail disruptions. Options USDA employees should utilize are:

Transportation: Employees who are metro riders are encouraged to use the WMATA website to see schedules, potential impacts to their commute and alternative modes of transportation. <https://www.wmata.com/service/rail/platformproject/>

Alternate Work Schedules: Employees are encouraged to work with their supervisors to establish or modify alternate work schedule agreements. Please review OPM's supplementary guidance and speak with your servicing Agency Human Resources Office.

Leave: Employees are encouraged to work with their supervisors to request leave to correspond with commuting issues if needed.

Additional Information: Employees should contact their servicing agency human resources office if they have questions or need for further information.