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The Honorable David N. Henderson
Chairman, Committee on Post Office
and Civil Service
House of Representatives



Dear Mr. Chairman:

In response to your request, dated December 18, 1975, we have reviewed strike prevention and contingency planning of selected Federal agencies, including the United States Postal Service.

You were concerned with the occurrence of strikes and related actions in Federal agencies and asked for information which would provide the Committee with some insight on such incidents. Enclosure I contains information on work disruptions at the agencies included in our review and highlights of other disruptions in the Federal service. A strike is defined as any concerted action by employees to withdraw or limit their services or to interrupt operations. A strike may involve various activities, such as employees as a group deliberately staying away from work, a slowdown of production, a sickout, a sitin, walking off the job, and similar concerted actions.

Although lengthy strikes have not been characteristic of disruptions in the Federal Government, there have been many incidents which have seriously disrupted public services. In March 1970 a nationwide stike of postal employees resulted in limited mail service for many areas and a complete halt in deliveries in a number of large cities. The strike lasted a week and involved more than 150,000 postal employees across the country. In June 1969 and again in March 1970, air travel service was seriously disrupted because of various job actions by many of the nation's air traffic controllers. More recently, a strike involving about 500 Federal employees in the Panama Canal Zone caused a weeklong slowdown of canal traffic.

You also requested that we determine whether Federal agencies have developed plans which would help them to maintain services in the event of a strike. Enclosure II lists the agencies we contacted and discusses the planning policies and practices of those agencies.

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Although the Civil Service Commission has emphasized the need for agencies to develop strike prevention and contingency plans, there is no general requirement that agencies do so. Therefore the policies of each agency are varied. In some agencies we contacted, officials said there was no present need for such planning; in other agencies, contingency plans are required.

STRIKE PREVENTION

Our review at selected agencies disclosed that none had a formal strike prevention plan. However, each agency approaches strike prevention in various ways. Basic to preventive measures is the maintenance of good employee-management relations, primarily through administering of labor management relations programs. Federal labor management relations are governed by Executive Order 11491, as amended, which sets out the respective rights and obligations of labor organizations and agency management. Unlike those of other Federal agencies, labor relations in the Postal Service closely parallel those of the private sector. The Postal Reorganization Act (1970) established the Postal Service as an independent agency and also based its labor management relations program in statute. Although strikes are prohibited, binding arbitration is available for unresolved labor disputes.

Agency officials cited several other personnel practices which contributed to strike prevention. These include:

- Provision of adequate machinery for adjusting employee grievances.
- Management training in labor relations.
- Open communication between management, employees, and and their representatives.
- Use of collective bargaining process for resolving conflicts.

Many agency officials commented that, because their employee-management relations were excellent, the likelihood of disruptive activities by employees was minimal. Although we did not assess the employee and labor relations of these agencies, it is possible that, even in an atmosphere of excellent labor management relations, matters--such as pay increase decisions--which are outside the sphere of agencies' control could prompt strikes or related incidents by Federal employees.

STRIKE CONTINGENCY PLANS

The Civil Service Commission has stated that strike contingency plans are needed to meet such commitments as:

- Providing uninterrupted service to the public.
- Assuring availability of supplies and materials.
- Establishing (1) ultimate limits to which the agency can go, using its own resources, to assure continual service and (2) critical needs and their priorities.
- Maintaining (1) security (plant, personnel, and equipment), (2) effective communication throughout the organization, and (3) public protection and safety including protection of managers, working employees, and their families.
- Assuring that (1) the rights of employees who work during the strike are maintained and (2) appropriate legal action can be taken.

As previously stated, there is no general requirement for agencies to develop contingency plans. We found that many agencies had no specific contingency policies, nor had they developed guidance for subordinate activities. Fourteen departments and agencies were contacted to determine their policies and practices on strike contingency planning. Seven agencies had written policies and guidance, four agencies had draft plans or were preparing draft documents, and the remaining agencies had no written policies or guidance. At 15 field activities of various agencies contacted, 9 had developed some form of contingency plan in case of work stoppages.

Although the scope and detail of the planning efforts varied, most of the contingency plans we reviewed addressed essential agency operations and the procedures and alternative actions available to management in dealing with contingency situations.

Many of the plans contained several features which, we think, should be considered in strike contingency planning. These include:

- Designating specific duties and responsibilities of management.

- Clearly delineating and emphasizing communication channels and procedures to be used during a strike.
- Assessing priority work and alternative methods for doing the work.
- Establishing security arrangements for safety of personnel and facilities.
- Establishing procedures for documenting and reporting contingency situations.
- Forming contingency committees or control centers to be activated in the event of a strike.
- Exploring legal steps which can be taken for various situations.

The possibility of strikes and related incidents, despite legal prohibitions and sound labor relations, should not be overlooked. Agency management should be prepared to deal with such incidents promptly and uniformly to lessen their effect. In our opinion, detailed, advance operational planning probably is not necessary in all agencies, but most should at least formulate agencywide policies and establish uniform guidelines and procedures for dealing with work stoppages.

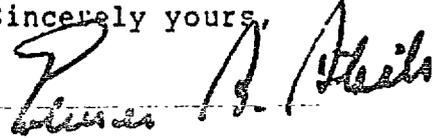
We are recommending that the Civil Service Commission (1) require and periodically monitor (perhaps as part of its evaluation program) contingency planning in those agencies which it determines provide essential public services and (2) develop and provide general policy and procedural guidance to other Federal agencies for dealing with strikes and related incidents.

As requested by your office, we are sending a copy of this report to the Chairman, United States Civil Service Commission. Also, as directed by your office, we have not obtained formal agency comments but have discussed our findings with agency officials. As you know, section 236 of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970 requires the head of a Federal agency to submit a written statement on actions taken on our recommendations to the House and Senate Committees on Government Operations not later than 60 days after the date of the report and to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations with the agency's first request

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for appropriations made more than 60 days after the date of the report. We will be in touch with your office soon to arrange for release of the report so that the requirements of section 236 can be set in motion.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Thomas A. Atkins". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal dashed line.

Comptroller General
of the United States

Enclosures - 2

SUMMARY OF STRIKES AND RELATED INCIDENTSAT SELECTED FEDERAL AGENCIES

Following is a brief summary of strikes and related incidents, after the issuance of Executive Order 11491 (1970), at Federal activities included in our review and highlights of other disruptions in the Federal service. Most of the reported information was obtained from a September 1975 Civil Service Commission study of strikes, work stoppages, demonstrations, and related incidents in the Federal service.

The incidence of strikes and other work stoppages in the Federal service has been considerably less than the experiences in State and local governments. For example, there were less than 20 work stoppages in the Federal service from 1970 through 1974, as reported in the Commission's study. During the same period, according to statistics published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Department of Labor, there were 149 work stoppages in State governments and 1,730 in local governments.

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE1970

Primarily because of congressional refusal to grant postal salary increases, postal employees, on March 17, staged a nationwide, weeklong strike. The strike, which began in the New York City area, eventually involved over 150,000 postal employees and seriously disrupted mail services in many parts of the country. Federal troops were called in to process mail in some areas. A Northeast Postal Region official said that daily mail processing by postal supervisors and Federal troops was only 8 percent of a normal 1-day processing workload. In the San Francisco area, Western Region officials reported that, although supervisors and other available employees worked 10-hour shifts, business and residential mail deliveries were not made during the work stoppage.

No disciplinary action was taken against the striking employees, but, according to Northeast Region officials, those who participated in the strike were not paid for the time they were absent.

1974

From January 21 to 24, about 1,500 postal employees at the New York Bulk and Foreign Mail Center and the Meadows

facility in New Jersey went on strike, primarily because of a change in working hours. Mail processing continued, but at a below-normal rate. The Newark District Federal Court ordered the striking employees to return to work and instructed the Postal Service to allow employees to return without discipline or reprisal. The striking employees were not paid for the period of the strike. C

1976

On February 10, fifty letter carriers at the Forest Hills, New York, Station refused to enter the station because of low temperature in the building. The letter carriers returned when heat was restored. A total of 25 man-hours was lost, but no disciplinary action was taken against the employees. Mail service was not disrupted.

PANAMA CANAL COMPANY1973

Because of a series of unresolved issues between the Canal Pilots Association and the Panama Canal Company and a dispute over the disciplining of two pilots, the association conducted a "safety campaign" lasting about 3 weeks, which caused a slowdown in canal transit operations. The issues involved included (1) pay, retirement, housing opportunities, (2) the hiring of Panamanian citizens as pilots, (3) operating procedures, and (4) a demand for a change in management officials. The pilots returned to work and cleared up the canal backlog after receiving a commitment from the Canal Zone Governor to initiate a priority study of the issues raised by the pilots.

In August 1973 the Governor's conclusions on the issues were considered unsatisfactory by the association. Later canal operations showed a marked and continuing deterioration. As a result, the association's rights of recognition were suspended by the Governor, steps were taken to remove five association officials, and a temporary restraining order was obtained against the pilots. Acting as a union, the pilots called a sickout on August 24th. Of the Company's 185 pilots, 115 were involved in the incident, which lasted for 3 days and completely tied up the canal traffic. The association agreed to return the pilots to work, and the Governor, in turn, agreed to restore recognition rights for the association, rehire the employees discharged, and withdraw a suit seeking an injunction.

1976

On March 15 nearly all Canal Zone craftsmen reported off sick, partly in protest of wage system changes proposed by the Panama Canal Company. The craftsmen were joined in the action by the canal pilots. On March 16, members of the local American Federation of Teachers also staged a sickout protesting proposed changes that would affect the Canal Zone teachers. In response to these actions, the Canal Zone Government obtained an injunction against the teachers and withdrew the union recognition rights and dues checkoff privileges of the American Federation of Teachers. Similar actions were threatened against the craftsmen and pilots organizations.

On March 20, the Canal Zone Governor announced opposition to the proposed wage system changes which were developed by the Canal Zone Personnel Policy Coordinating Board. On March 21 the striking employees agreed to return to work. All sanctions imposed against the American Federation of Teachers were withdrawn. At the time of our review, no disciplinary actions had been taken against the employees (about 500) involved in the weeklong strike, which had closed canal transit operations.

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY1971

On June 17, of 42 non-appropriated-fund employees at the Philadelphia Naval Publication and Forms Center, 19 did not report for work. The next day, 18 of the employees came to work and requested sick leave for the previous day's absence. The issues which prompted the sickout action generally involved employee dissatisfaction concerning low pay and overwork. Management investigated the incident and concluded that the employees had engaged in a concerted action to withhold their services. Some employees submitted physician's certificates to justify the request for sick leave, but management determined them to be invalid. All 19 employees involved in the incident were listed as absent without official leave for the time absent and given letters of reprimand. In addition, two supervisors who had participated in the action were suspended for the time they were absent.

1974

On May 1, of 99 inspectors of the Nuclear Test Inspection Division, Mare Island Naval Shipyard, Vallejo,

California, 61 called in to request sick leave for that day. On May 3, of 38 inspectors in the Non-destructive Test Branch, 9 requested leave for the day. Later shipyard officials interviewed all the inspectors regarding the leave incidents. As a result, leave for 19 of the 63 nuclear test inspectors and 5 of the 9 non-destructive-test inspectors was disapproved.

Marine Island officials concluded that the incidents involving the inspectors were an apparent effort to stage a sickout. Letters of reprimand were given to 24 inspectors, and 15 of the inspectors were also given suspensions, which averaged about 1 day.

1974

On May 16, sixty physical science technicians at the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard called in sick, protesting pay difficulties associated with a pay schedule conversion. The sickout, which lasted 3 days, was settled with the cooperation of the Metal Trades Council, which represented the technicians involved in the incident. The employees were withheld pay for the time absent.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

ARMY AND AIR FORCE EXCHANGE SERVICE

1973

On May 1, sixty-one employees at the Army and Air Force Exchange Service in Charleston, Ohio, went on strike with support of the American Federation of Government Employees. The strike was prompted by a proposed reduction in certain classifications. The incident lasted 5 days. As a result, the 61 employees were docked pay for the time absent, and management filed an unfair labor practice against the union. Three employees were discharged, and the unfair labor practice complaint was withdrawn by management. Also the union and management signed a joint statement agreeing to take responsibility to notify employees of the consequences of withholding their services.

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

1971

In January, 90 mailhandlers of the Bureau of Customs, New York, refused to work voluntary overtime duty and

threatened a strike, primarily because pay checks were being received late and often were inaccurate with respect to overtime credit. These grievances were presented to management through the union. The conflict was resolved when management corrected the problems with check deliveries.

1972

A work stoppage, involving 51 employees, occurred on September 15 at the Detroit Service Data Center of the Internal Revenue Service. The employees walked off the job during a shift, in protest over hot working conditions caused by a lack of air-conditioning. The employees were placed in absent-without-official-leave status for the remainder of the shift. The Center's workload was not seriously affected because other employees were reassigned into the unit, and overtime was approved. Upon investigation, the Center gave the employees involved in the incident letters of severe reprimand instead of suspending them.

FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

1970

An estimated one-fourth of the air traffic controllers in the United States called in sick on March 25. The action lasted from March 25 to April 8, 1970. The Federal Aviation Administration filed an unfair labor practice complaint against the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization which represented the employees involved in the incident. The Department of Labor investigated and determined the action was concerted and constituted a strike. As a result, the Department suspended the Union's recognition for 1 year.

According to officials of the Federal Aviation Administration, 250 air traffic controllers were to be discharged for their involvement in the strike. However, before these actions were effected, the Administrator of the agency, in reporting the incident to the Congress, stated publicly that only 84 air traffic controllers were to be discharged. Subsequently, only 84 controllers were discharged, and the remaining controllers were suspended. Of the 84 employees discharged, 83 were later rehired by the Administration.

1971-75

Officials of the Federal Aviation Administration's Eastern Region commented that after 1970 there were occasional work slowdowns. However, these incidents are not documented

ENCLOSURE I

ENCLOSURE I

because they are not readily discernible. For example, flight instructions can be delayed by several seconds with the cumulative effect of causing traffic delays, but such action cannot be easily detected.

1976

In protest over delays in completing new classification standards, for air traffic controllers, the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization initiated a work-by-the-book campaign on July 27. The work slowdown lasted 5 days and caused, nationwide, air traffic delays. The air traffic controllers ended the job action after agreement was reached with the Civil Service Commission and the Federal Aviation Administration regarding the issuance of the proposed pay classification standards.

The Controllers Organization threatened further job actions if the agreement on the classification standards was not met. There were no disciplinary actions taken against the employees or the organization.

STRIKE CONTINGENCY PLANNINGPOLICIES AND PRACTICES OF SELECTED FEDERALAGENCIES

This enclosure discusses the strike contingency planning practices of the Federal agencies included in our review. The agencies and various field activities contacted are listed below, followed by a summary of the results of our review at each agency.

<u>Agency contacted</u>	<u>Field activity visited</u>
United States Postal Service	Northeast Region, New York, New York Western Region, San Bruno, Calif.
Department of Defense: Department of the Army	Picatinny Arsenal, Dover, N.J. West Point Military Academy, N.Y. U.S. Army Support Command, Hawaii
Department of the Navy	Mare Island Naval Shipyard, Vallejo, Calif. Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard, Hawaii Navy Public Works Center, Hawaii
Department of the Air Force	McClellan Air Force Base, Sacramento, Calif. Pacific Air Force Command, Hawaii Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii
Department of the Treasury: U.S. Customs Service	U.S. Customs Service, Region II, New York, New York.
Internal Revenue Service	Internal Revenue Service, Northeast Region, New York, New York
Department of Health, Education, and Welfare: Social Security Administration	Region II, New York, New York Northeastern Program Service Center, New York, New York

<u>Agency contacted</u>	<u>Field activity visited</u>
Federal Aviation Administration	Eastern Region, Jamaica, N.Y.
(Department of Agriculture	None
Veterans Administration	None
National Oceanic and Atmos- pheric Administration	None
General Services Administration	None

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

The United States Postal Service, established in 1970 as an independent Federal agency, is made up of 5 regional offices, 63 postal districts, and the headquarters operations.

Because of previous experiences with work disruptions, the Postal Service established contingency planning committees in local postal installations, regional offices, and headquarters to provide uniform planning and procedures to assure the maintenance of operations in the event of a work stoppage.

To coordinate the development of contingency plans and the establishment of uniform operational procedures, the Postal Service headquarters developed broad policy and procedural guidelines for use by postal activities in developing contingency plans. The guidelines establish policy, planning requirements, and procedural guidance in the following areas:

- Personnel.
- Operations.
- Communications and reporting.
- Security.
- Public information and customer relations.
- Use of legal actions (injunctions, restraining orders, etc.)

--Use of courier service.

A discussion of our review of contingency planning at the Postal Service's Northeast and Western Regions follows.

United States Postal Service's
Northeast Region and
New York District Office

The United States Postal Service's Northeast Region, which is headquartered in New York City, is responsible for postal operations in 10 districts covering all of New England, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and parts of New York State and New Jersey.

Regional operations are carried out by five functional departments.

<u>Department</u>	<u>Functions</u>
Mail Processing	Industrial engineering, processing procedures, mail volume forecasting, transportation plans and services, distribution systems, and equipment and facility maintenance.
Customer Service	Commercial sales, retail services, delivery and collection, and fleet management.
Finance	All financial and administrative activities.
Employee and Labor Relations	Development, implementation, and control of employee and labor relations, compensation policies, standards, and procedures.
Real Estate and Building	Acquisition of real property and fixed mechanization, including leasing, design, planning, construction, modification, repair, improvement, and disposal of all Postal Service owned and based facilities.

In accordance with headquarters' instructions, the Northeast Region and the New York District Office

established emergency coordinating committees, composed of representatives from various functional areas. These committees developed the region's and district's plans on the basis of policy and procedural guidance contained in the Postal Service headquarters' planning instructions for work stoppages.

< In the event of an imminent or actual work stoppage, the headquarters control center would be activated to provide a direct line of communication with the regions. ~~Similar control~~ centers would be established by the Northeast Region and the New York District to facilitate communication.

All official communications from districts to headquarters must go through the regional control center. All official communication between the headquarters and the regions must go through the headquarters control center. Official instructions directing action would be transmitted by teletype.

Identified operations which must be maintained during a work stoppage are mail processing, customer services, employee and labor relations, and the inspection service. The national, regional, and district contingency plans contain procedures and policies pertaining to these critical areas.

In the event of a work stoppage, the Postmaster General can authorize the placing or lifting of mail embargoes. Regional Postmaster Generals do not have this power, although they can make recommendations to the Postmaster General concerning this use.

One priority during a work stoppage is the dispatching and delivering of Treasury and military checks. To accomplish this, checks will be issued early and regional and local post offices will maintain close communications with disbursing agencies.

The Northeast Region plan includes alternate and simplified procedures for collecting, accepting, and distributing mail by untrained personnel, including the military. Consideration is given to delivering Federal, welfare, and unemployment checks and food stamps.

In the event mail services are disrupted, the Customer Service Department will establish a separate communication

center to answer inquiries concerning available mail services. To maintain consistency, headquarters will provide technical assistance to regions and districts regarding the legal and administrative issues of the work stoppage. Information on the status of the work stoppage will be provided by headquarters or approved prior to its dissemination. The Northeast Region and the New York District customer information centers would be put into operation to handle local inquiries, including meetings with major mail users to discuss their critical mail needs.

Maintaining an adequate number of workers is important if services are to be kept operable during work stoppages. Strike contingency plans at all three levels are consistent concerning annual and sick leave and provide that:

- Leave approved before the work stoppage may be continued until the end of the approved period.
- No new leave may be granted after notice of a work stoppage has been received, except when approved by the postmaster.
- Employees not reporting for work will be considered absent without official leave.

Replacing employees engaged in a work stoppage can be approved only by headquarters. However, Regional Postmaster Generals meet with military personnel for obtaining their assistance. The districts develop estimates on the number of military personnel needed to keep their functional area operable. For a possible July 1975 job action, the New York District estimated it would need about 25,000 military personnel if a strike lasted over 72 hours.

The Postal Inspection Service is responsible for overall Postal Service security, including protecting mail in post offices or in public places awaiting pickup; placing security forces at public and work entrances; providing guards for mail loading and unloading; providing convoys for mail transportation; securing mail at public facilities; and protecting postal funds, property, equipment, buildings, and personnel.

On the basis of these responsibilities, the Northeast Region Inspection Service developed general strike contingency guidelines to be followed by divisions. As a

result, the regional and New York Division plans outlined instructions for

- establishing a control center to coordinate intelligence, U.S. attorney liaison, and operations and security unit activities;
- determining where mail is located and what classes and quantities are affected, with the primary concern to protect the movement of mail behind picket lines;
- insuring security of the mail at postal branches and stations;
- developing data on union activities, officers, and delegates; and
- putting into operation a courier service network to deliver high-priority Government mail between affected areas.

United States Postal Service
Western Region

The Postal Service's Western Region headquartered at San Bruno, California, encompasses the States of Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Washington, Utah, and Wyoming, along with Guam and the Pacific Islands. The region has 15 district offices which operate (1) 68 sectional center facilities which perform the bulk of the mail-processing and transporting activities and (2) 4,280 local associate offices which are designed to meet the mail needs of a moderate-sized city or metropolitan area.

Postal operating functions are carried out by the Customer Service Department and the Mail Processing Department. The Customer Services Department provides (1) public services, such as postal retail services and distribution of food stamps, (2) customer cooperative services to large-volume mailers, and (3) the actual letter collection and delivery services. The major craft employees engaged in providing customer services are the window clerks, city and rural carriers, special-delivery messengers, and motor vehicle employees.

The Mail Processing Department handles the "middle" activities required to process the mail. This includes sorting, transporting from one area to another, and dispatching for carrier delivery. The major craft employees involved in mail processing are the distribution clerks and mail handlers.

The Western Region strike contingency plan, entitled "Western Region Contingency Guidelines for Work Stoppages," dated July 1975, was developed from the headquarters guidance and individual plans submitted by the various operating departments.

Essential features of the Western Region contingency plan follow.

- Forming a contingency planning committee. The Regional Postmaster General is to establish a regional contingency committee to prepare a regional plan and guidelines in case of work stoppages. The committee, which will consist of directors from the various departments and divisions will activate the Regional Communication Control Center which directs regional activities during a work stoppage.
- Relations with labor organization. The Regional Postmaster General is to establish procedures for contacting appropriate union officials to end a potential or actual work stoppage.
- Operational procedures. Mail processing and customer services will be maintained to the extent possible in case of a work stoppage through the use of supervisors, other available employees, and the employment of extra personnel. However, employment of extra personnel to replace employees engaged in the work stoppage is not to be initiated without specific authority from headquarters.
- Communication control centers. Regional and local control centers are to be established to assure direct lines of communication within the postal organization and to handle questions related to the work stoppage.
- Securing mail and personnel. During periods of work stoppages, increased surveillance is to be given to

protecting the mail; greater consideration is also given to employee safety,

--Public information and customer relations. Regional communication procedures are to be established to inform the public about a work stoppage and its effects on customer services.

The contingency plan establishes a system of priorities for the Customer Services and Mail Processing Departments. The plan requires the processing of preferential and priority mail before second-, third-, and fourth-class mail. Regional officials said there was a common system of mail priorities, as follows:

1. Express mail.
2. Special-delivery mail.
3. Foreign mail.
4. Air priority mail.
5. Government Treasury checks.
6. Business mail.
7. First-class mail.
8. Second-class mail.
9. Third-class mail.

The plan also gives priority to (1) customer service activities, according to different levels of carriers available for mail deliveries and (2) delivering and collecting business mail and delivering preferential mail, such as air mail, parcel post, and prescriptions.

The Contingency Committee Coordinator stated that the regional contingency plan, in conjunction with headquarters guidelines, provides regionwide consistency in dealing with work stoppages by (1) providing operational guidelines for maintaining maximum service, (2) providing an outline of major functions, responsibilities, (3) establishing a consistent means of communication and coordination with higher postal levels, and (4) developing consistent approaches for local post offices to deal with anticipated problems. For

example, the Mail Processing Contingency Plan requires each sectional center facility to submit pro forma contingency plan worksheets, which provide a structured format where various sectional center facilities' plans can be compared.

There is no specific requirement to update the Western Region plan, and it has not been updated since its preparation in July 1975. The Regional Emergency Preparedness Coordinator is to periodically review and update all contingency plans.

According to postal officials, the region did not distribute the regional plan to field offices because of the sensitive nature of the labor contract. The region's policy is to distribute the contingency plan only when a work stoppage is imminent. Although the overall plan has not been sent to the field, the operational department guidelines for mail processing and customer services have been distributed to provide general guidance and direction in the event of a work stoppage.

Three district and two sectional center contingency plans for handling work stoppages were also reviewed. These plans covered the same essential factors as the regional plan. However, they were more specific in the operational areas of mail processing and customer services than the regional plan.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

In an October 1970 memorandum, the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) established Defense-wide policy for dealing with strikes and related incidents. To provide for continuation of work operations and dealings with employees and labor organization, Defense components were to develop work stoppage contingency plans consistent with policy and procedural guidelines provided by the Assistant Secretary.

The following sections discuss our review of planning practices at selected activities of the Departments of the Army, Navy, and Air Force.

Department of the Army

In November 1970 the Department of the Army issued guidelines for dealing with strikes and related incidents. Each subordinate activity having a great number of civilian

employees was required to develop contingency plans consistent with the department guidelines. The major planning areas addressed in the guidelines included communications, maintenance of operations, administrative matters, and security measures.

U.S. Army Support Command, Hawaii

The command's contingency plan, dated April 28, 1971, includes all Army activities that employ civilians in Hawaii. Activities within the command were required to develop certain planning information pertinent to their operation, such as (1) assessing mission priorities, (2) maintaining critical tasks, and (3) determining essential civilian positions which could not be filled from within the activity.

We found that mission priorities, critical tasks, and essential civilian positions were never determined. Further, the command has not updated the plan. Command officials said they were revising some aspects of the plan. However, they had been informed that headquarters was in the process of developing new guidance concerning strike contingency planning for major commands. They were therefore reluctant to begin further revisions until so directed and were preparing a message to Forces Command requesting guidance.

Also command officials were of the opinion that detailed plans, such as are required by the existing plan, are unnecessary and meaningless. They felt that labor relations were good and that they would have time to plan for continuance of essential services after labor relations start to deteriorate. They emphasized that labor unrest had not been a problem in the past.

Picatinny Arsenal, Dover, New Jersey

The arsenal's contingency plan, developed in 1972, contains general instructions to be followed in the event of a work stoppage, but it does not address critical functional areas or operations nor how operations will be maintained. Rather, the plan indicates that essential services and operations are to be determined when a work stoppage is imminent.

Arsenal officials felt there would be enough time after a work stoppage occurred to develop specific plans for

maintaining essential operations in each of the arsenal's directorates. The officials further commented that the arsenal's labor relations were such that they would have ample time to prepare for a possible work disruption.

U.S. Military Academy, West Point, New York

The Academy, which employs about 2,300 civilians who are union represented, does not have a plan for work contingency situations. An Academy official said that an attempt was made to develop a contingency plan using another activity's plan as a guide, but, because of the dissimilarity of mission and operations, this could not be done. He also said that no additional effort would be made since the Department of the Army did not specifically require plans for all activities. In its recently completed evaluation of the Academy's personnel management programs, the Civil Service Commission did not mention the absence of, or the need for, plans for handling work disruptions by employees.

Department of the Navy

In 1971 the Department of the Navy issued a handbook of procedural guidelines for commanding officers of naval activities in the event of a strike or other work disruption by employees. Individual naval activities, although not required, were encouraged to develop local contingency plans in conformance with the overall headquarter's plan. The essential elements of the Navy's contingency plan for work stoppages are outlined below.

- Communications with headquarters--Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Manpower and Reserve Affairs).
- Investigative responsibilities.
- Communications with employees and labor organizations.
- Maintenance of operations.

Communications with the
Assistant Secretary of the Navy

The Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) acts as the chairman of a Central Action Group at headquarters. This group is to provide an installation commander with instructions, advice, and assistance on decisions which must be made in the event of a strike or related incident. The installation commander is to coordinate his decisions and actions with the Central Action Group.

Investigation of related events
and employees involved

The Navy plan requires management to gather information on which to base decisions and actions during a strike or related incident. The quality of these decisions and actions depends on the accuracy and adequacy of this information. Information specified by the plan as being required by management includes

- the causes or underlying factors of the strike;
- the activities, functions, and number of employees involved;
- the names of the employees and their roles in the strike; and
- the role of the union(s) and union officials in the strike.

Communications with employees

In communications with employees, the Navy (1) tries to persuade strikers to return to work and (2) encourages nonstrikers to remain at work.

An essential feature of the plan is that strikers be advised of the seriousness of their actions and the jeopardy in which they have placed themselves. Each striking employee must be told by his supervisor to return to work, and the facts of the conversation must be noted. Strikers are to be advised that their actions are illegal and that they are subject to penalties under the law and regulations, which include possible discharge from employment. Commanders cannot make any promises or offers of immunity to any employees or threaten specific disciplinary actions. The commander, in coordination with the Central Action Group, will determine the appropriate disciplinary action at a later time.

According to the plan, employees desiring to continue to work should be advised under what conditions they should cross strikers' picket lines and of the entrances to be used.

Communications with labor organizations

The plan states that, under Executive Order 11491, labor organizations have the duty and obligation to take affirmative action to bring the strike to an end. The purpose of approaching labor organizations is to get them to openly disavow the strike and to take positive action to get the employees back on the job.

Maintaining operations

The plan instructs the installation commander to make every effort to contain the strike and to continue work operations. It is believed the ability to continue operations exerts a strong influence against continuance of the strike. Striker absences are to be overcome through the use of supervisory personnel and overtime. The plan also provides for the possibility of using, on a temporary-duty basis, military personnel from nearby activities.

None of the naval activities contacted had developed contingency plans. Comments obtained from officials at these activities follow.

Mare Island Naval Shipyard
Vallejo, California

The Mare Island Naval Shipyard has not developed a local strike contingency plan. Officials commented that the shipyard relied on the overall strike contingency guidelines developed by the Department of the Navy. The guidelines provide a detailed checklist of actions and procedures to be followed in the event of a contingency situation.

Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard, Hawaii

The Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard also has not prepared a local contingency plan. Pearl Harbor officials said that departmental guidance would be sought in the event of a strike or related incident and that:

--Labor relations were very good and the likelihood of a massive civilian strike was minimal.

--Because of the good labor relations, management would have plenty of advance notice of a potential strike. This would give them enough time to take appropriate action to avert a strike.

--The shipyard labor organizations are not strong.

--The legal prohibition against Federal employee strikes is an effective deterrent to employees and labor unions.

Navy Public Works Center, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii

The Navy Public Works Center was also contacted to determine whether a local contingency plan had been developed. An official said the Center has not developed a local plan. He commented that the labor relations there were excellent and that the chances of a civilian strike were extremely remote.

Department of the Air Force

Advance contingency planning by all levels of management is considered necessary by the Air Force, to insure a maximum continuance of essential services in the event of a strike, slow down, or other work disruption. The Department therefore requires each major command and subordinate activity to develop contingency plans for threatened or actual work stoppages. General planning guidelines developed by the Department have been provided to assist subordinate activities in developing contingency plans. The results of our review of contingency planning at two Air Force Activities follow.

Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii

A contingency plan covering all base and tenant activities at Hickam Air Force Base was developed in 1971. Major components at the base were required to assess mission-essential activities and critical positions which must be manned in the event of a strike. The plan was updated in 1974, but no substantive changes were made. Three hundred and fifty positions are considered mission essential. Air Force officials said that the strike contingency plan had never been implemented because there had been no threat of a strike by civilian employees.

Two subordinate organizations at Hickam were contacted to find out how they identified critical mission requirements and essential positions which must be maintained in the event of a civilian strike. We found that many of the provisions of the plan were outdated and not applicable to current conditions at these two organizations.

The 15th Transportation Squadron employs 201 civilians, about 80 percent of its total work force. Squadron officials

admitted that their part of the plan was outdated and needed to be revised. The list of mission-essential positions in the plan was no longer current, and the number of positions necessary to maintain critical mission requirements should be reevaluated. Mission-essential activities are not identified in the plan.

The commanding officer of the squadron commented that there had been no threats by civilians to walk off the job but that, if all the civilians did go on strike, he did not have the resources necessary to maintain critical missions. He said that if a strike occurred, the base commander would have to provide him with the personnel to fill mission-essential positions, in order to continue providing these services.

The 619th Military Airlift Support Squadron employs about 250 civilians, about 32 percent of its total work force. Officials said that their part of the plan also was not up to date and needed revision. The essential positions identified in the plan were no longer current, and action has not been taken to update the list. Also mission-essential activities are not identified in the plan. The officials commented that labor relations within the squadron were good and that the labor organizations at Hickam were not strong, making the chances of a strike unlikely.

Air Logistics Center
McClellan Air Force Base
Sacramento, California

The Sacramento Air Logistics Center, at McClellan Air Force Base in Sacramento, California, is one of the five Air Logistics Centers of the Air Force Logistics Command.

In accordance with Department of the Air Force requirements, the Center has developed a strike contingency plan. This plan was developed from and closely follows the Air Force Logistics Command's Labor Strike Contingency Plan, which is based on the guidelines issued by the Department of the Air Force.

The plan requires that daily situation reports be prepared and sent to the command and to Air Force headquarters in the event of a strike. It also states that, without prior Air Force approval, a local commander will not make any concessions or commitments in return for an end to the work stoppage. The plan provides general guidance and instructions

and assigns tasks to local center activities, to insure continuity of essential functions in the event of a strike by its employees.

The Center has made an assessment of the essential functions of its operations. These include:

- Managing vital systems--those first-line systems required to support the Air Force mission.
- Filling requisitions having a priority of 1 through 3.
- Repairing and modifying vital systems.
- Protecting base facilities.
- Maintaining and operating facilities, utilities, communications, and navigation aids.
- Supporting flight operations.

Center officials said that vital systems change as the needs of the Air Force change. The Air Force periodically issues classified technical orders showing the priority of given weapon systems.

If a strike is imminent, the Center's personnel division is to notify the Air Logistics Center Commander and the Command Post of the reasons for the impending strike; the identity and composition of the striking unit; the organizational and functional areas affected; the estimated length of the strike, if possible; and the actions being taken or required to avert the strike. The Command Post is to alert all directorates and staff offices of the impending strike and require them to evaluate, based on current information, the strike's effect on their operations. Such evaluations are to be continual, and any adverse effect discovered should be communicated to the commander and to the Command Post and other components which may be affected.

The Center commander has an option to activate the Logistics Readiness Center. This Control Team is composed of representatives of the major directorates and staff offices. Its functions in a strike situation include:

- Serving as a focal point for all matters concerned with the strike and taking actions to lessen its effect.

- Maintaining an awareness of strike developments and their effects.
- Monitoring the actions taken by Air Logistics Center organizations to adjust to the strike.
- Coordinating and expediting critical logistics actions, requirements, and resources.
- Providing rapid staff coordination of operational and support problems.

In the event of a strike, each directorate and staff office is to continue mission-essential functions. Should the strike cause a shortage of personnel to perform those essential functions, the directorates are to use supervisory personnel and personnel from nonessential functions to the extent that they possess minimum required qualifications. The personnel division keeps a skills inventory list identifying the background skills of each employee, to help the directorates in choosing these personnel.

If the shortage cannot be met from within the directorate, the plan contains procedures for obtaining personnel from outside the directorate. Personnel requirements are to be filled in the following order:

- From qualified personnel performing nonessential functions with other Sacramento Center organizations.
- From qualified personnel from tenant organizations at McClellan Air Force Base.
- From qualified personnel from nearby Mather Air Force Base.
- From personnel provided on a temporary-duty basis by the Air Force Logistics Command.

Air Force officials said there had never been a strike or other labor-related work disruption at the Center, and they believed that a strike would not receive widespread support from Center employees.

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

The Department of the Treasury, in April 1971, established Department-wide policy for strike contingency planning. The Department also addressed the need for

planning for other emergencies, such as demonstrations and civil disturbances, and provided guidance for preventing confrontations, demonstrations, disruptions, and other situations which could lead to employee dissatisfaction.

Both headquarters and field levels of all Treasury bureaus are required to develop contingency plans.

The guidelines listed the following planning requirements.

- Setting up a reporting system to transmit information to bureau and departmental headquarters.
- Identifying officials authorized to take emergency actions. Consideration should be given to establishing contingency committees.
- Establishing priorities on work to be done and identifying alternative means of doing work.
- Identifying potential emergency workers and skills available.
- Specifying instructions for first-line supervisors.
- Making security arrangements for personnel and property.
- Identifying union leaders to contact.
- Preparing announcements to employees explaining legal requirements and potential consequences of violations.
- Establishing a system for documenting situations, including identifying employee leaders, employees on strike, employees on authorized leave, and employees reporting for work.
- Defining circumstances under which the office would be closed.
- Formulating means of dealing with the news media and with the public.
- Providing for coordination with legal counsel, the Department of Justice, other bureaus, other agencies, the Civil Service Commission, and local law enforcement authorities.

Internal Revenue Service, Northeast Region

Northeast Region officials said that a contingency plan had not been prepared for the region's activities. They explained that Internal Revenue Service headquarters was developing planning guidelines to help regions, districts, and data service centers develop specific plans tailored to local needs. According to the region officials, in the event of a disruption, work can be transferred to another center for processing.

U.S. Customs Service, Region II
New York, New York

Region II, which is headquartered in New York City, comprises three major locations: the New York seaport area; the Kennedy Airport area; and the Newark, New Jersey, area. A regional contingency plan for work stoppages, dated February 1972, was developed by a committee of key officials in the region. The plan contains specific guidelines for dealing with work disruptions for the activities of the three major areas. The plan addresses the major functions within the region and outlines alternative methods for continuing these functions in the event of a strike or related incident. Priorities are established, and essential and nonessential operations are identified. Depending on the scale of the work disruption, certain operations, which are identified in the plan, would be cut back or transferred to other operating areas or regional offices.

The plan also includes general communications and reporting requirements of the regional contingency committee, which, in the event of a work disruption, would advise and assist management.

Department of Health, Education, and Welfare

According to a Department labor relations official, the Department has not developed or issued policy, guidance, or instructions on strike contingency planning. He stated that the Department had encouraged such planning, by its component agencies, through Department-wide labor management relations conferences and management briefings.

Social Security Administration
Northeast Program Service Center
New York, New York

The Northeast Center, one of six Social Security Program Service Centers, has jurisdiction for the New England States

and for the State of New York. The Center's primary operations involve the processing of new claims, benefit entitlements, and changes to active cases.

Although the Center has not developed a contingency plan for its operation, Social Security Administration headquarters has issued a plan to be used by the service centers in dealing with employee disruptions. The contingency plan primarily delineates communication and reporting responsibilities established for the program service centers and consists of separate procedures to be followed in the following categories of work disruptions.

- Strikes (including picketing), work stoppages, and walkouts.
- Sickouts and slowdowns.
- Destruction of property and undermining operations, for example deliberate misrouting.

Each of these categories has three phases of instruction.

- Phase I, potential service disruption.
- Phase II, service disruption occurring.
- Phase III, measures following service disruption.

The plan does not establish a system of service priorities, address functional areas, nor explore alternative methods of continuing operations. A Center official said that, although these factors were not included in the plan, functions which are affected by a job action could be transferred and processed at another program center. This would be done by simply transferring backup tapes from affected centers to other centers. He also stated that, due to the nature of processing operations, this changeover could be done with little effect on service.

FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION
EASTERN REGION

The Eastern Region, headquartered in Jamaica, New York, is responsible for Federal Aviation Administration activities in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Virginia, Maryland, and Delaware.

The Federal Aviation Administration has no written policy or requirement for contingency planning. However, the Eastern Region has developed contingency plans for certain of its operations. Of the region's 12 divisional activities, the Air Traffic and Airway Facilities Divisions are considered most essential to maintaining air transportation service and safety. Contingency plans have been developed for these operations.

Essential features of contingency operations as addressed in the region's plans include:

- Listing specific duties and responsibilities of management personnel.
- Communicating and reporting.
- Establishing a command post.
- Contacting concerned agencies and user organizations.
- Establishing operational priorities.
- Having operating alternatives available to management.

The region's plans did not include considering necessary security measures for equipment, buildings, and personnel. Federal Aviation officials explained that security measures would be implemented as needed and that security arrangements were specifically excluded from the plans because they possibly might become known by the unions.

OTHER AGENCIES

The following agency headquarters had no established policies or guidance for dealing with strikes and other work disruptions.

- General Services Administration.
- Department of Agriculture.
- Veterans Administration.
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Of these agencies, the General Services Administration, the Department of Agriculture, and the Veterans Administration had developed draft planning guidelines which had not been officially approved or distributed.