



## Placing PCs in Standby Mode—FAQs

### 1. What's being changed?

The way you power down your personal computer (PC) is being changed. Under Executive Order (EO) 82, agencies are directed to turn PCs off at the end of each business day as a power conservation measure. This change to the order will direct agencies instead to place their PCs in “standby” mode each evening.

### 2. Why is this change being implemented?

Standby mode is a part of a larger project to use power management. Placing your agency's PCs into standby mode overnight supports three business goals. They are:

1. Reducing your energy costs and conserving electricity.
2. Speeding up the start-up time for PCs.
3. Reducing the security exposure window between power up of a PC and when updated antivirus software and patches are loaded and put into effect.

### 3. What changes are being made?

The changes will be made in three phases. They are:

**Phase I – Manual standby.** Agency employees are asked to place their PCs in standby mode at the end of the work day. Standby mode uses a fraction of the electricity needed when fully powered up. When employees are ready to use their computers, the time it takes to start up from standby mode is much less than from “off.” After the pilots are completed, VITA and Northrop Grumman plan to update agency computers to change the function of the power button. When that update has been completed, employees can place their computers into (and out of) standby mode with a push of the power button.

**Phase II – Overnight maintenance (wake-on-LAN).** Initial testing showed that not all system updates and maintenance can take place while PCs are in standby mode. Following pilot testing, VITA and Northrop Grumman will make system changes to allow overnight maintenance to be conducted without PCs needing to be fully “on.” System maintenance includes software and antivirus updates and patches. Overnight maintenance avoids conflicts with business day activities. Rollout will be handled agency-by-agency, understanding the different business schedules of agencies.

**Phase III – Power management.** The final phase includes system updates to set computers to switch to standby mode automatically after a certain period of non-use. The time frame should be long enough to avoid unnecessary disruption.

Until Phase II is completed at your agency, updates and patches will not work in standby mode. If your agency is receiving software and/or updates and you are instructed to “leave your computers on at night” the agency computers should not be placed in standby mode.

**4. When will the change be implemented?**

VITA and Northrop Grumman will be working with each agency’s Agency Information Technology Resource (AITR) to phase in this change on an agency-by-agency basis.

**5. How do I place my PC in standby mode when I leave for the day?**

Standby mode can be readily accessed via the same pull-down menu PC users utilize to shut-down their units. Detailed step-by-step instructions can be found by searching the knowledgebase on the VITA eSupport website at <https://esupport.virginia.gov>.

**6. How do I restart my computer from standby?**

Simply press the power button on the PC.

**7. What happens if I turn my computer off at night?**

If a PC is fully shut down in the evening, overnight system patches and anti-virus updates typically will occur after the unit is restarted the next morning. While such updates are being applied, access to business applications may be delayed or response time may be noticeably slowed.

**8. What happens if I forget to place my PC in standby mode before leaving work?**

Your computer will be left powered on and eventually lock, preventing access by unauthorized persons. However, additional electrical power will be used that could have been saved in the standby mode

Once we have completed the entire power management project your computer will automatically turn off after a certain period of non-use, the computer will automatically go into standby mode. This reduces power consumptions and also allows off hour maintenance to occur.

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**9. I frequently need to have my laptop PC away from my office overnight. How does this change in procedure affect me?**

User business needs will continue to dictate when a laptop PC is away from its office base. In such instances, necessary system patches and anti-virus updates typically will be applied when the laptop is next powered up and connected to the COV network.

**10. Will any system patches or anti-virus updates installed via standby mode continue to be tested through standard change control processes before being implemented?**

Yes. Current VITA/Northrop Grumman change control processes, including all current collaboration/testing with customer agencies, will continue to apply.

**11. Will there be additional changes to support the intent of EO 82?**

Yes, but only after overnight standby mode has been tested successfully and rolled out. As an additional power conservation measure, PCs will be automatically placed in standby after two hours of inactivity. This additional change also will be subject to pilot testing and agency-by-agency implementation.

**12. I have other questions about this change in procedure. Who should I contact?**

Additional questions should be directed to your agency's Agency Information Technology Resource (AITR), who can ensure your question is answered.

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