

MEMORANDUM

State of Alaska

Department of Transportation & Public Facilities
Office of the Commissioner

TO: DOT&PF Leadership Team

DATE: June 6, 2025

FROM: Ryan Anderson, P.E.
Commissioner



SUBJECT: Definition of Essential Work
for Hiring Waiver Justification
under Administrative Order
No. 358

As a follow-up to my May 19, 2025 memorandum regarding hiring procedures under Administrative Order No. 358, this directive provides a working definition of “essential state work” to guide waiver justification and ensure alignment with the intent of the Order.

Definition of Essential Work

For the purposes of Administrative Order No. 358, “essential work” refers to tasks, projects, or responsibilities that must continue without delay in order to:

- Protect public health, safety, and welfare
- Maintain core infrastructure operations, especially in transportation and maintenance
- Ensure compliance with legal, regulatory, or federal requirements
- Sustain mission-critical revenue streams, funding deadlines, or time-sensitive deliverables
- Prevent significant disruption to services relied on by Alaskans

This definition is intended to support consistent, equitable evaluation of waiver requests by focusing on the urgency and impact of the work itself—not the value of individual roles. All DOT&PF positions contribute to our mission; this framework exists solely to ensure compliance with Administrative Order 358 and uphold our commitment to fiscal discipline. All procedures in the May 19 memo remain in effect.

Recommendations for Writing Justifications

When addressing the required justification in your waiver request, frame your response around the *essential work* to be performed — not the value of the position or employee. The goal is to demonstrate that the work is critical to the Department’s ability to meet its legal, operational, or public-facing responsibilities.

Use the following guidance to structure your response:

- Be specific about the work: What tasks, services, or outcomes must be maintained? Focus on the work’s impact — not the job title.
- Tie the work to core operations: Explain how this work supports transportation safety, infrastructure delivery, federal compliance, revenue continuity, or uninterrupted service to Alaskans.
- Identify urgency or timing: Is the work tied to a construction season, safety inspection cycle, grant deadline, or emergency response? Clarify why it cannot wait.

- Explain the consequence of delay: Describe what happens — practically — if the work is deferred. Will it cause service gaps, missed deadlines, regulatory violations, or cost overruns?
- Keep it short, factual, and outcome-focused. Avoid general statements. Use bullet points if helpful.

Example (not required format):

This position supports federally mandated airport inspections. Without coverage, we risk noncompliance with FAA Part 139, which could suspend operations at a primary hub airport. The work must continue uninterrupted to protect safety and maintain federal certification.

This approach ensures your justification reflects the intent of AO 358: focusing staffing resources on functions that are time-sensitive, publicly impactful, or legally required.

If you are unsure whether work meets the definition of “essential,” after discussing with regional managers, please contact my office at dot.hiringreq.comm@alaska.gov or Jody Thomas, Jody.Thomas@alaska.gov

Thank you for your continued leadership and coordination.