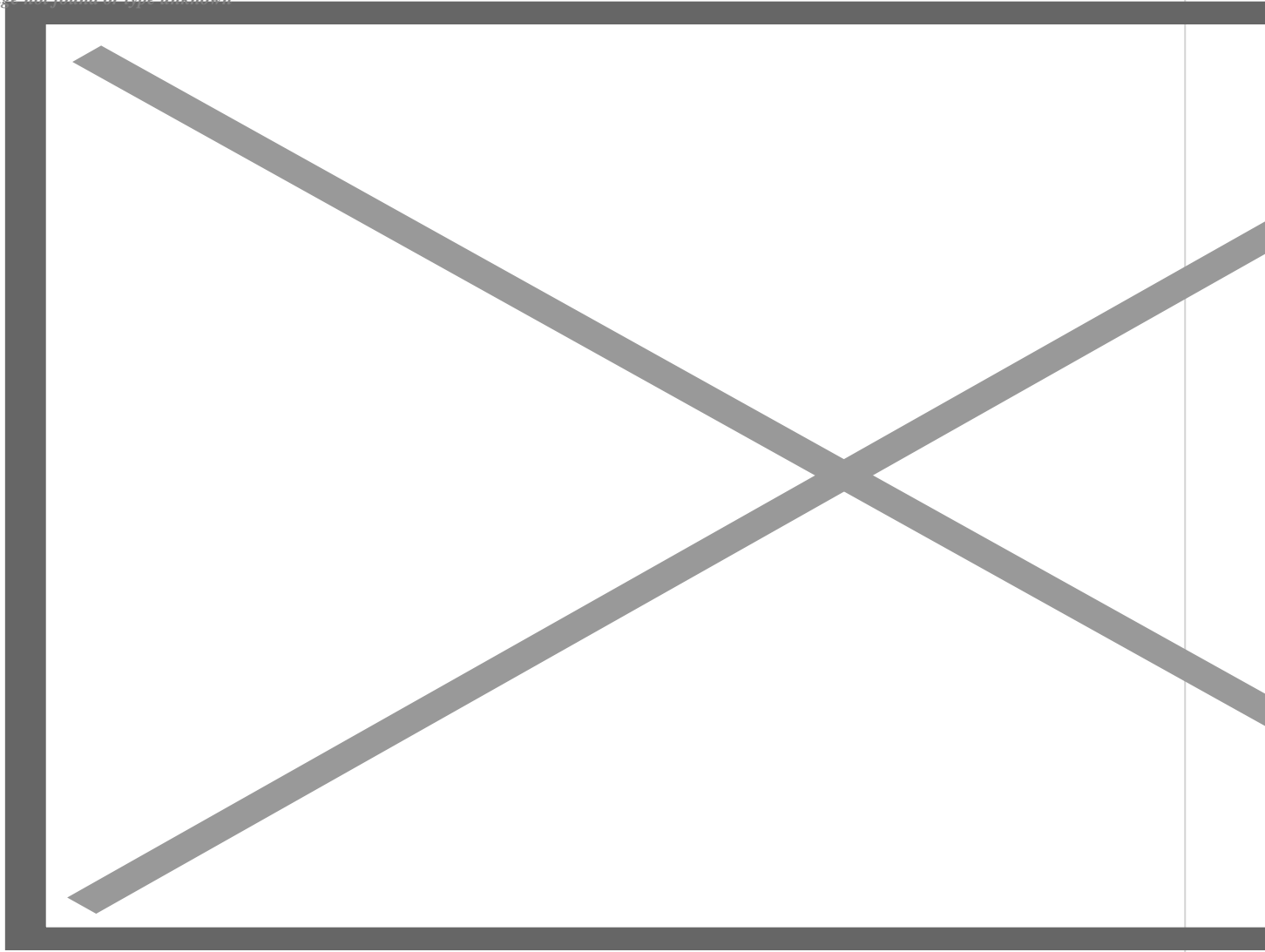


# *Trump administration approves firing squads*

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**Execution by a firing squad in the olden days. (Photo: Internet)**

Washington, November 28 (RHC)-- The administration of President Donald Trump is paving the way for additional methods of executing prisoners who have been sentenced to death in the United States.

The Justice Department is quietly amending its execution protocols, no longer requiring federal death sentences to be carried out by lethal injection and clearing the way to use other methods like firing squads and poison gas.

The amended rule, published on Friday in the Federal Register, allows the U.S. government to conduct executions by lethal injection or use “any other manner prescribed by the law of the state in which the sentence was imposed.”

A number of states allow other methods of execution, including electrocution, inhaling nitrogen gas or death by firing squad. It remains unclear whether the Justice Department will seek to use any methods other than lethal injection for executions in the future.

The rule – which goes into effect on December 24th -- just in time for Christmas -- comes as the Justice Department has scheduled five executions during the lame-duck period, including three just days before President-elect Joe Biden takes office.

A Justice Department official told The Associated Press news agency the federal government “will never execute an inmate by firing squad or electrocution unless the relevant state has itself authorized that method of execution.”

The official said two executions scheduled in December would be done by lethal injection but did not provide information about three others scheduled in January. The official spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity in order to discuss the internal department protocols.

The change is likely to set off intense criticism from Democrats and anti-death penalty advocates, as the Trump administration tries to push through a number of rule changes before Trump leaves office. A spokesperson for Biden told the AP earlier this month that the president-elect “opposes the death penalty now and in the future” and would work to end its use. But he did not say whether executions would be paused immediately once Biden takes office.

Attorney General William Barr restarted federal executions this year after a 17-year hiatus. This year, the Justice Department has put to death more people than during the previous half-century, despite waning public support from both Democrats and Republicans for its use.

Before the Trump administration resumed executions this year, the federal government had put only three inmates to death since 1988.

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