

Investigative Standards for Background Investigations for Access to Classified Information

1. Introduction. The following investigative standards are established for all United States Government civilian and military personnel, consultants, contractors, employees of contractors, licensees, certificate holders or grantees and their employees and other individuals who require access to classified information, to include Sensitive Compartmented Information and Special Access Programs, and are to be used by government departments and agencies as the investigative basis for final clearance determinations. However, nothing in these standards prohibits an agency from using any lawful investigative procedures in addition to these requirements in order to resolve any issue identified in the course of a background investigation or reinvestigation.

2. The Three Standards. There are three standards (Table 1 in the Appendix summarizes when to use each one):

(a) The investigation and reinvestigation standards for "L" access authorizations and for access to CONFIDENTIAL and SECRET (including all SECRET-level Special Access Programs not specifically approved for enhanced investigative requirements by an official authorized to establish Special Access Programs by sect. 4.4 of Executive Order 12958);

(b) The investigation standard for "Q" access authorizations and for access to TOP SECRET (including Top SECRET Special Access Programs) and Sensitive Compartmented Information; and

(c) The reinvestigation standard for continued access to the levels listed in para. 2(b).

3. Exception to Periods of Coverage. Some elements of standards specify a period of coverage (eg., seven years). Where appropriate, such coverage may be shortened to the period from the subject's eighteenth birthday to the present or to two years, whichever is longer.

4. Expanding Investigations. Investigations and reinvestigations may be expanded under the provisions of Executive Order 12968 and other applicable statutes and Executive Orders.

5. Transferability. Investigations that satisfy the requirements of a given standard and are current meet the investigative requirements for all levels specified for the standard. They shall be mutually and reciprocally accepted by all agencies.

6. Breaks in Service. If a person who requires access has been retired or separated from US government employment for less than two years and is the subject of an investigation that is otherwise current, the agency regrating the access will, as a minimum, review an updated Standard Form 86 and applicable records. A reinvestigation is not required unless the review indicates the person may no longer satisfy the standards of Executive Order 12968 (see Table 2).

7. The National Agency Check. The National Agency Check is a part of all investigations and reinvestigations. It consists of a review of (a) investigative and criminal history files of the FBI, including a technical fingerprint search;

- (b) OPM's Security/Suitability Investigations Index;
- (c) DoD's Defense Clearance and Investigations Index; and
- (d) such other national agencies (e.g., CIA, INS) as appropriate to the individual's background.

STANDARD A

National Agency Check with Local Agency Checks and Credit Check (NACLC)

8. **Applicability.** Standard A applies to investigations and reinvestigations for (a) access to CONFIDENTIAL and SECRET (including all SECRET-level Special Access Programs not specifically approved for enhanced investigative requirements by an official authorized to establish Special Access Programs by sect. 4.4 of Executive Order 12958), and (b) "L" access authorizations.
9. **For Reinvestigations: When to Reinvestigate.** The reinvestigation may be initiated at any time following completion of, but not later than ten years (fifteen years for CONFIDENTIAL) from the date of, the previous investigation or reinvestigation. (Table 2 reflects the specific requirements for when to request a reinvestigation, including when there has been a break in service.)
10. **Investigative Requirements.** Investigative requirements are as follows: (a) **Completion of Forms:** Completion of Standard Form 86, including applicable releases and supporting documentation.
- (b) **National Agency Check:** Completion of a National Agency Check.
 - (c) **Financial Review:** Verification of the subject's financial status, including credit bureau checks covering all locations where the subject has resided, been employed, or attended school for six months or more for the past seven years.
 - (d) **Date and Place of Birth:** Corroboration of date and place of birth through a check of appropriate documentation, if not completed in any previous investigation; a check of Bureau of Vital Statistics records when any discrepancy is found to exist.
 - (e) **Local Agency Checks:** As a minimum, all investigations will include checks of law enforcement agencies having jurisdiction where the subject has lived, worked, and/or attended school within the last five years, and, if applicable, of the appropriate agency for any identified arrests within the last five years.
11. **Expanding for Issues.** The investigation may be expanded if necessary to determine if access is clearly consistent with the national security.

STANDARD B

Single Scope Background Investigation (SSBI)

12. **Applicability.** Standard B applies to initial investigations for (a) access to TOP SECRET (including TOP SECRET Special Access Programs) and Sensitive Compartmented Information; and
- (b) "Q" access authorizations.

13. Investigative Requirements. Investigative requirements are as follows: (a) **Completion of Forms:** Completion of standard Form 86, including applicable releases and supporting documentation.

(b) **National Agency Check:** Completion of a National Agency Check.

(c) **National Agency Check for the Spouse or Cohabitant (if applicable):** Completion of a National Agency Check, without fingerprint cards, for the spouse or cohabitant.

(d) **Date and Place of Birth:** Corroboration of date and place of birth through a check of appropriate documentation; a check of Bureau of Vital Statistics records when any discrepancy is found to exist.

(e) **Citizenship:** For individuals born outside the United States, verification of US citizenship directly from the appropriate registration authority; verification of US citizenship or legal status of foreign-born immediate family members (spouse, cohabitant, father, mother, sons, daughters, brothers, sisters).

(f) **Education:** Corroboration of most recent or most significant claimed attendance, degree, or diploma. Interviews of appropriate educational sources if education is a primary activity of the subject during the most recent three years.

(g) **Employment.** Verification of all employments for the past seven years, personal interviews of sources (supervisors, coworkers, or both) for each employment of six months or more; corroboration through records or sources of all periods of unemployment exceeding sixty days; verification of all prior federal and military service, including discharge type. For military members, all service within one branch of the armed forces will be considered as on employment, regardless of assignments.

(h) **References:** Four references, of whom at least two are developed; to the extent practicable, all should have social knowledge of the subject and collectively span at least the last seven years.

(i) **Former Spouse:** An interview of any former spouse divorced within the last ten years.

(j) **Neighborhoods:** Confirmation of all residences for the last three years through appropriate interviews with neighbors and through records reviews.

(k) **Financial Review:** Verification of the subject's financial status, including credit bureau checks covering all locations where subject has resided, been employed, and/or attended school for six months or more for the last seven years.

(l) **Local Agency Checks:** A check of appropriate criminal history records covering all locations where, for the last ten years, the subject has resided, been employed, and/or attended school for six months or more, including current residence regardless of duration. (NOTE: If no residence, employment, or education exceeds six months, local agency checks should be performed as deemed appropriate.)

(m) **Public Records:** Verification of divorces, bankruptcies, and other court actions, whether civil or criminal, involving the subject.

(n) **Subject Interview:** A subject interview, conducted by trained security, investigative, or counterintelligence personnel. During the investigation, additional subject interviews may be conducted to collect relevant information, to resolve significant inconsistencies, or both. Sworn statements and unsworn declarations may be taken whenever appropriate.

(o) **Polygraph (only in agencies with approved personnel security polygraph programs):** In departments or agencies with policies sanctioning the use of the polygraph for personnel security purposes, the investigation may include a polygraph examination, conducted by a qualified polygraph examiner.

14. **Expanding the Investigation.** The investigation may be expanded as necessary. As appropriate, interviews with anyone able to provide information or to resolve issues, including but not limited to cohabitants, relatives, psychiatrists, psychologists, other medical professionals, and law enforcement professionals may be conducted.

STANDARD C

Single-Scope Background Investigation— Periodic Reinvestigation (SSBI-PR)

15. **Applicability.** Standard C applies to reinvestigations for (a) access to TOP SECRET (including TOP SECRET Special Access Programs) and Sensitive Compartmented Information; and

(b) "Q" access authorizations.

16. **When to Reinvestigate.** The reinvestigation may be initiated at any time following completion of, but not later than five years from the date of, the previous investigation (see Table 2).

17. **Reinvestigative Requirements.** Reinvestigative requirements are as follows: (a) **Completion of Forms:** Completion of Standard Form 86, including applicable releases and supporting documentation.

(b) **National Agency Check:** Completion of a National Agency Check (fingerprint cards are required only if there has not been a previous valid technical check of the FBI).

(c) **National Agency Check for the Spouse or Cohabitant (if applicable):** Completion of a National Agency Check, without fingerprint cards, for the spouse or cohabitant. The National Agency Check for the spouse or cohabitant is not required if already completed in conjunction with a previous investigation or reinvestigation.

(d) **Employment:** Verification of all employments since the last investigation. Attempts to interview a sufficient number of sources (supervisors, coworkers, or both) at all employments of six months or more. For military members, all service within one branch of the armed forces will be considered as one employment, regardless of assignments.

(e) **References:** Interviews with two character references who are knowledgeable of the subject; at least one will be a developed reference. To the extent practical, both should have social knowledge of the subject and collectively span the entire period of the reinvestigation. As appropriate, additional interviews may be conducted, including with cohabitants and relatives.

(f) **Neighborhoods:** Interviews of two neighbors in the vicinity of the subject's most recent residence of six months or more. Confirmation of current residence regardless of length.

(g) **Financial Review: (1) Financial Status:** Verification of the subject's financial status, including credit bureau checks covering all locations where subject has resided, been employed, and/or attended school for six months or more for the period covered by the reinvestigation;

(2) **Check of Treasury's Financial Data Base:** Agencies may request the Department of the Treasury, under terms and conditions prescribed by the Secretary of the Treasury, to search automated data bases consisting of reports of currency transactions by financial institutions, international transportation of currency or monetary instruments, foreign bank and financial accounts, and transactions under \$10,000 that are reported as possible money laundering violations.

(h) **Local Agency Checks:** A check of appropriate criminal history records covering all locations where, during the period covered by the reinvestigation, the subject has resided, been employed, and/or attended school for six months or more, including current residence regardless of duration. (NOTE: If no residence, employment or education exceeds six months, local agency checks should be performed as deemed appropriate.)

(i) **Former Spouse.** An interview with any former spouse unless the divorce took place before the date of the last investigation or reinvestigation.

(j) **Public Records:** Verification of divorces, bankruptcies and other court actions, whether civil or criminal, involving the subject since the date of the last investigation.

(k) **Subject Interview:** A subject interview, conducted by trained security, investigative, or counterintelligence personnel. During the reinvestigation, additional subject interviews may be conducted to collect relevant information, to resolve significant inconsistencies, or both. Sworn statements and unsworn declarations may be taken whenever appropriate.

18. **Expanding the Reinvestigation.** The reinvestigation may be expanded as necessary. As appropriate, interviews with anyone able to provide information or to resolve issues, including but not limited to cohabitants, relatives, psychiatrists, psychologists, other medical professionals, and law enforcement professionals may be conducted.
