

THE ARMY SECURITY CLEARANCE: MYTH BUSTER



SECURITY CLEARANCE TERMINOLOGY

- **Security Manager:** Responsible for operating and managing all aspects of a security program.
- **Security Clearance:** Certification that an individual is eligible for access to classified information or be assigned to a highly sensitive job.
- **3 Clearance Levels:** Confidential, Secret and Top Secret.
- **Background Investigation:** Evaluates a person's background to determine if they are eligible to hold a clearance.
- **Eligibility:** The Department of Defense Central Adjudication Facility (DoD CAF) determines if an individual is qualified to handle classified information or perform sensitive duties.
- **Need-To-Know:** An individual must have a need to access classified information in order to perform their job.
- **Access:** The level of classified information required to perform their job. Access is granted by your local organization.
- **Nondisclosure Agreement (Standard Form 312):** A contractual agreement between the U.S. Government and the employee in which the employee agrees to protect and not disclose classified information.
- **Personnel Security Appeals Board (PSAB):** An Army Headquarters' panel responsible for reviewing appeals on security clearance denials and making a final security clearance decision.

➔ **QUESTIONS? CONTACT YOUR LOCAL SECURITY MANAGER**



OBTAINING A CLEARANCE

The security clearance process is a tool that helps ensure that only trustworthy individuals have access to classified and sensitive information.

MYTH

TRUTH

- | | |
|---|--|
| ▪ I can obtain a security clearance on my own. | ▪ Only a Government agency or cleared contractor can submit a security clearance. |
| ▪ Every agency uses different standards to grant security clearances. | ▪ Government standards known as the National Adjudicative Guidelines are used to grant, deny or revoke a security clearance. |
| ▪ Getting a security clearance takes a long time. In the past, it took longer than 2 years. | ▪ Processing times take an average of 34 days for SECRET and 89 days for TOP SECRET. Times depend on the type of investigation and whether serious issues were identified. |
| ▪ If I am denied a clearance, can I appeal? | ▪ A security clearance denial may be appealed through the PSAB. |
| ▪ A security clearance allows access to any level of classified information. | ▪ Access to classified information depends on the level of clearance you have and the information you need to know to do your job. |

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PERIODIC REINVESTIGATION

Clearance eligibility never expires, but is only active for a certain period of time depending on the level of access.

LEVEL	UPDATE DUE EVERY
▪ CONFIDENTIAL	▪ 15 Years
▪ SECRET	▪ 10 Years
▪ TOP SECRET	▪ 5 Years

A periodic reinvestigation must be submitted 30 days before the investigation update is due.

MYTH	TRUTH
▪ I will LOSE my security clearance if my investigation is overdue.	▪ An outdated background investigation is not a basis to remove an individual's security clearance; however, a periodic investigation must be submitted.
▪ I will LOSE my security clearance if I have bad finances or file for bankruptcy.	▪ The circumstances that led to the financial problem as well as the individual's actions to responsibly resolve the problem are considered in making a security clearance decision.
▪ I will LOSE my security clearance if I seek mental health treatment.	▪ Mental health counseling and treatment in and of itself is NOT a reason to deny or revoke your security clearance. Your decision to seek counseling or treatment is viewed as a positive step.



CLEARANCE TRANSITION

Individuals must continue to protect sensitive or classified information even if they no longer require access.

MYTH	TRUTH
▪ My clearance does not transfer to another employer.	▪ Background investigations may be transferred to another Federal agency as long as the investigation meets their requirements.
▪ I will LOSE my security clearance if I am debriefed from access.	▪ A debrief informs the employee that they no longer have access to classified information. However, the employee will continue to have clearance eligibility.
▪ I will LOSE my security clearance if I retire.	▪ Security clearance eligibility remains valid even after retirement or separation.
▪ I will LOSE my security clearance if I leave Federal or military service.	▪ Only a break in Federal service (Military, Civilian, or Contractor employment) greater than 24 months requires a new submission of a security clearance investigation.